MEDIA RELEASE
Wednesday, May 12th 2011

ACPET Responds to the 2011/2012 Budget
The Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) today released more detail on its reaction to the 2011/2012 Budget, reiterating its initial response that welcomed the focus on education and training, but querying the lack of detail on training reform.

ACPET Acting CEO, Paula Johnston, said education and training reforms will deliver real benefit back to students, communities and Australian industry, and welcomed the Government’s commitment to providing further detail on how these measures will do that.

Ms Johnston outlined five areas of the budget that would impact upon ACPET members:

Boosting Training Participation
ACPET welcomes the additional $182.8 million for language, literacy, and numeracy programs. ACPET members are well placed to support this important investment as part of our commitment to social inclusion.

“This Budget is focused on using the training system as part of the puzzle that promotes the transition from being unemployed or under employed to a more skilled, more employable person. Our members will work with the Government as these critical initiatives are implemented,” Ms Johnston said.

Regional Development and Small Business
ACPET members deliver education and training throughout Australia, and many will welcome incentives for small business along with the Federal Government’s $4.3 billion investment in regional development.

Apprenticeship Reform
ACPET has long advocated for a flexible apprenticeship system that can meet the needs of individual students. A greater focus on accelerating apprentices by recognising their competencies rather than time-based completion will help to achieve that.

We also support the Government’s investment in mentoring for apprentices, which recognises the role training plays in the personal development of students alongside delivering education.

Reform of the National Training System
A new national workforce development fund of $558M over 4 years will give enterprises and industry the key role of co-investing with Government and driving an increase in demand for training and skills. ACPET members are proud to be the industry leaders in developing tailored solutions for enterprises to meet their unique workforce development needs.

Disappointingly, the concept of a student funding entitlement for lower level VET qualifications has not been included. Lower level qualifications serve as an important first
step on the path to lifelong learning.

ACPET hopes the National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development negotiations will take up this issue.

ACPET supports the budget’s recognition of the need to reform the national training system. Funding of approximately $1.4 Billion each year will continue, and additional money of $1.75 Billion over five years for States and Territories that sign up to reform is welcomed. But the budget remains silent on details of what that reform will involve.

Greater detail is also needed on how the new National Workforce and Productivity Agency and Industry Skills Councils will deliver positive outcomes without adding unnecessary bureaucratic burden.

**Higher education**

“Disappointingly the Federal Government has not widened Commonwealth Supported Places to non university higher education institutions. This misses an opportunity to expand student-centred funding and encourage greater student choice,” Ms Johnston said.

The sector still awaits further detail on the review of base funding for higher education.

**Media Contact: Ben Eade, 0406 641 881**