MEDIA RELEASE
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Training Sector Growth Great for Victoria

The Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) today welcomed new figures that show continued growth in Victoria’s Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector, with the peak body saying the figures are evidence that the State’s demand-driven funding model is succeeding in growing the sector by creating more diverse training opportunities for students.

Earlier this week, Minister for Higher Education and Skills, Peter Hall, announced a major jump in the number of Victorians undertaking training, with the most recent Skills Victoria quarterly report showing that Victoria’s demand driven VET system is achieving outstanding results in helping Victorians realise their aspirations and providing highly trained job-ready people to support the state’s economy.

ACPET CEO, Claire Field, said a growing training sector was a great thing for Victorian students and employers alike, and would afford them greater choice between a diverse range of training providers, including traditional TAFE institutes alongside high quality private training institutions, which are growing rapidly in response to high student demand.

“ACPET strongly supports reform of the training system in Victoria and across the other States and Territories to provide greater choice and diversity to students and employers,” Ms Field said.

The Skills Victoria quarterly report confirms more training was taking place in skill areas most needed by Victorian businesses, where in the last 12 months, there has been a 23% growth in government funded enrolments related to industries experiencing shortages, including health and social assistance and construction.

“As well, the demand led system is creating more opportunities for Victoria's disadvantaged communities to develop important vocational and job ready skills, Ms Fields noted. “It is encouraging to see strong increases in student enrolments:- up by 26% for culturally and linguistically diverse students, up by 22% for students with a disability and a further 16% increase by Indigenous students”.

Responding to concerns raised by some industry representatives about the ability of regulators to keep pace with growth in the sector, Ms Field said the assertion that private institutions posed a greater regulatory risk than public providers was tired and wrong.

“All providers, both private and TAFE, are regulated against the same quality standards - and ACPET welcomes the commencement of the new national VET regulator, ASQA, to ensure greater consistency of VET regulation in Victoria”

“This is not a private vs public debate. TAFE clearly has an ongoing role to play in the Victorian VET system but the important thing here is that Victoria's training system is offering students genuine choice, which in turn is growing the training sector.

“The days when TAFE was the only option for training are over. A demand-driven system better meets the needs of business and students alike.”

Claire Field is available for comment
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