

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE
Australian Council for Private Education and Training
Council of Private Higher Education

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Federal government's Higher Education Reforms lack equity

On 1 May 2017 the Australian Government announced its latest [Higher Education Reform Package](#) which it proposes to implement from 2018.

The government should be congratulated for introducing reforms that together with industry input will help to establish a strong higher education system for the future.

While there are many positives in the package of measures, the industry does want to work with the Government in further developing the proposals, with the view to ensuring equity and removing any disadvantage for students.

CEO of the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET), Rod Camm said the sustainability of higher education must be a key focus in the looming debate.

"It is pleasing that student experience, and outcomes are features of the reform package, however equity should also be at the heart of the design," Mr Camm said.

CEO of the Council of Private Higher Education (COPHE), Simon Finn said it is imperative that changes are made to the package to address the inequity of private college students accessing FEE-HELP being levied a 25% loan administration fee that is not paid by university students.

"Failure to address this inequity undermines the reform package," Mr Finn said.

"Private providers lead the nation in quality teaching rankings, filling the top 18 positions in the QILT teaching scores. Students enrolled with these providers continue to be unfairly levied a 25% fee on their HELP loans."

"Australian higher education students deserve a level playing field so they can choose an education provider without imposition of an unjustifiable financial penalty," Mr Finn said.

Mr Camm said students with private providers will be forced to continue paying full fees without government assistance, and will be hit with a double whammy through the lowering of the HELP repayment income threshold to \$42,000.

"They will have to repay their loans on higher fees sooner. We would like to work with government in addressing this issue."

The federal government also proposes to extend public funding (through Commonwealth Supported Places) to students enrolled in sub-bachelor degrees with public universities. Students enrolled with private colleges will not be able to access this government support.

"Higher education reform needs to be considered in the context of the broader sector, including VET, which continues to be underfunded and the reforms will further steer students away from technical training which is strongly aligned to the needs of industry," Mr Camm said.



“The announcement of the reform package is an opportunity for government and industry to come together to refine and develop a coherent approach to funding of tertiary education.”

ACPET and COPHE support the announced reviews of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) and the Higher Education Provider Category Standards. It is imperative that national standards keep pace with changes in the economy. The AQF has fallen behind the drive for portability in the labour market, and it is timely to review the National Provider Standards.

We look forward to working with government to design a higher education system that works for all with equity at its core.

Ends.

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