

MEDIA RELEASE

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Private training providers must not all be tarnished with same brush

The chief executive of the peak body for private education Rod Camm has called on the government and regulators to undertake urgent reforms to the VET FEE HELP system to protect both students and colleges from the harmful impacts of a small number of poor quality providers, who undermine the integrity of the entire training system.

“It’s abhorrent to ACPET’s members that stories of unscrupulous behaviour should continue to damage the industry,” Mr Camm said. “Whatever measures can be taken to protect the interest of students and the reputations of quality providers must be acted on, now. We fully accept that there are problems that must be stamped out, but this behaviour is only in a small number of providers and they do not represent the entire industry.”

Mr Camm said the ACPET Board convened an extraordinary meeting today to discuss the appropriate actions that need to be taken to protect the integrity of quality private providers.

The Board resolved that:

- action by government and regulators must be taken to address any issue currently being raised in the media
- anyone with information about poor practice in the sector must take the issue to the relevant regulator
- urgent reform to VET FEE HELP is required to protect the interests of students and the reputations of quality providers.

“ACPET represents organisations which employ more than 44,000 employees in the sector. All are disgusted by the behaviour that is reported in the media and demand action to be taken,” Mr Camm said.

“Our workforce also is disappointed by the gross misrepresentation by some in the media and by TAFE unions that tarnishes all private providers with the same brush,” he said. “We all share the concern about problems and want them eradicated from the industry.”

Mr Camm said reform to VET FEE HELP must include:

- Prohibiting the provision of inducements for enrolment
- Ensuring students only incur debt as their study progresses
- Maximising the information available to students, including specific information on provider performance
- Amending documentation to ensure students are able to fully understand the prices of courses and debt levels
- Establishing clear standards and penalties for brokers
- Ensuring providers are members of peak bodies as demonstration of a commitment to the industry.

Mr Camm said the industry was taking its own steps to rid the sector of inappropriate behaviour, with the strengthening of ACPET's Code of Practice and Code of Ethics.

The Codes, to be officially launched on March 13, establish the professional standards expected of education and training providers, most importantly to act with integrity in all dealings with students. They also detail a framework for agents and brokers working or partnering with an ACPET member, to provide students, the community and government with confidence in the integrity of the agents/brokers used by ACPET members.

"The vast majority in our sector are committed to ensuring it delivers the best outcomes for students, industry and government," Mr Camm said. "The new Code of Practice will help to ensure ACPET membership is a badge synonymous with quality."

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