

MEDIA RELEASE

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Peak body supports tough action by regulators in the interests of students

The chief of the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) Rod Camm says the organisation “strongly supports” any legal action taken against unethical providers found to have broken relevant consumer protection laws or other regulations.

The Australian Competition Consumer Commission (ACCC) boss Rod Sims flagged in the media last week that legal action may be taken against several unscrupulous operators.

“It’s imperative that all students are properly informed about their provider, the course and any debt levels incurred before they sign on,” Mr Camm. “The fact that these basic consumer protections have been able to be overlooked and exploited must not be allowed to continue.”

Mr Camm said he fully supported any action by the ACCC and other regulators to make an example of those providers where there is clear evidence to do so.

“In addition, we welcome any additional measures, such as those specified in the federal government’s strengthened vocational education and training (VET) regulations and in ACPET’s new member Code of Ethics, which work to protect the interests of students from exploitation.”

He said ACPET continued to work with state and federal governments, members and relevant regulatory bodies to improve student outcomes.

“As the peak body for private operators, we’re determined to ensure our members are synonymous with quality, and that means putting the student at the heart of everything we do,” Mr Camm said.

He welcomed the inclusion of advice for potential VET students added to the ACCC’s website in early April, but reiterated his call for a national industry ombudsman.

“A national, rigorous and independent complaints process would ensure all students could have confidence in their VET provider and in the mechanism to resolve any disputes.”

He said students would also benefit from access to objective information about the relative performance of VET institutions.

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