



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **ACPET calls for equity in higher education reform**

The Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) has called on the Federal Government to level the playing field for private higher education students in considering higher education reforms expected to be announced in coming months.

In a Pre-Budget Submission ACPET called for a consistent Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) loan fee to be applied to all students, regardless of their provider or course, the opening up of Commonwealth tuition subsidies to private provider courses and development of an integrated tertiary education policy and funding framework.

ACPET CEO Rod Camm said current funding arrangements unfairly penalised students who choose to study with Australia's 129 non-university higher education providers and private universities.

"These students do not benefit from tuition support through the Commonwealth Support Places initiative and are also hit with a 25 per cent administration loan fee if they access HELP loans, adding tens of thousands of dollars to the cost of their education," he said.

"Courses offered by private providers comply with the same standards as universities and are overseen by the same national regulator, the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency.

"However, public university students are currently not subjected to any administration fees on their loans which is unjustifiable. Funding arrangements must be fair for students and sustainable for taxpayers. We support a consistent loan fee applied to all higher education students."

Mr Camm said ACPET also supported the extension of Commonwealth Supported Places tuition support to courses delivered by private providers which should also include sub-bachelor degree courses.

"Current funding arrangements push some students into degrees at universities when they would have been better with a VET course," he said.

"We need an integrated, coherent funding approach so that students can choose the most appropriate study and skills development pathway to meet their individual needs and those of industry – not one determined by available funding."

Mr Camm said ACPET also supports lowering the income threshold for repayment of HELP loans .

"The HELP initiative is essential to build Australia's future workforce but it must be sustainable," he said.

"We support the Grattan Institute's recommendation that the loan repayment income threshold be lowered to \$42,000 per annum."

[ENDS]

**Rod Camm is available for interview. Please phone the SAS Group on 07 3221 9222, or directly on 0409 484 051.**