

MEDIA RELEASE

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Plan to assist job seekers into trades misses opportunity

Private training providers have expressed their surprise and concern at yesterday's Australian Labor Party (ALP) policy announcement to provide pre-apprenticeship training for 10,000 young people and to assist retrenched workers get their trade skills formally recognised.

Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) CEO Rod Camm said that while improving pathways into apprenticeships was an important element in boosting the nation's trade skills and providing real jobs, ACPET had considerable concerns about what the policy was really trying to do.

"Continuing economic uncertainty and government training cuts have reduced the opportunities especially for our young job seekers" he said.

"While the policy intent is supported, the ALP has missed an ideal opportunity to drive home the employment outcomes from this program by using private sector training providers. Put simply, private colleges have a proven ability to provide superior employment outcomes for job seekers and the ALP's decision to only allocate funding to Government-run providers is a serious limitation."

Mr Camm said private sector trainers had strong links with business and industry that will employ program participants.

"To maximise the benefits for participants it is important they have a choice of training provider," he said.

"It's clear there needs to be action to re-invigorate trade training and providing young job seekers with pre-trade training can put them on a path to a successful trade career. The Apprentice Ready program is welcome, however there will be little innovation or flexibility available for students which is a big disappointment.

"It appears the policy is not only about apprenticeships but is also a bailout for struggling TAFEs."

Mr Camm also welcomed the National Skills Recognition Entitlement program that seeks to tap into the experience and knowledge of mature age job seekers.

"This program acknowledges the wealth of experience of many mature job seekers that has simply not been formally recognised," he said.

"It's great to see innovative but proven approaches being considered to boosting the nation's trade skills and supporting mature aged job seekers at the same time, however I call for **student choice to count** in relation to quality providers."

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