MEDIA RELEASE

17 February 2012

South Australia leads training transformation

The Commonwealth and South Australian Governments today announced a partnership that will radically reform the State’s vocational education and training system.

The bilateral agreement, signed by Minister for Skills, Senator Chris Evans, and South Australian Premier, Jay Weatherill, is a joint commitment to ensure the VET sector meets the needs of individual students and the broader economy.

The reforms will guarantee students over the age of 16 a government funded training place, provide support for the disadvantaged, make the system more transparent and improve quality and choice.

For the first time in South Australia, the Gillard Government will provide government subsidised Diploma and Advanced Diploma students the opportunity to defer payment of their upfront fees through study-now-pay-later loans, similar to what is currently available for university students.

"By 2015, South Australia alone will need an extra 29,500 people qualified to a Diploma or Advanced Diploma level to meet the growing demand for skilled workers," Senator Evans said.

"Until now, many students have been locked out of achieving these qualifications because they couldn’t afford the fees – our reforms are breaking down those barriers.

"Through VET FEE-HELP, students won’t have to pay their fees until they have a job and are earning a decent income."

The agreement will also include:
- Entitlements to subsidised training for eligible students, linked to designated skill sets and qualifications, at approved providers;
- A shift to a student centred funding model with a focus on student support and outcomes for learners;
- A partnership with industry, education providers, unions and the community with a focus on skills demands;
- A commitment to increase the number of apprentice and trainee commencements and completions, including support for the employer and employee; and
- Improved partnerships between universities and TAFE SA to ensure more effective credit transfer arrangements.

"The Gillard Government is committed to delivering a quality training system for all students across the country," Senator Evans said.

"South Australia is leading the way. With support from all states and territories, students across Australia will have a similar opportunity to take up training.

"By partnering with the State Government, we can ensure South Australian students receive world class training to get the skills they need for the jobs of the future."

Senator Evans’ Media Contact: Amy McKenna 0408 570 603