TAFE welcomes new minister for training and urges policy momentum as portfolio shifts from industry to education

Australia’s TAFE sector today extended its congratulations to the new Assistant Minister for Education and Training, Senator Simon Birmingham, following his elevation to the federal ministry.

TAFE Directors Australia (TDA) Acting CEO Malcolm White said that TAFE Institutes looked forward to working with the Minister across the range of issues impacting the sector.

“There are a number of important areas of policy focus, including ongoing reform to vocational education and training (VET), the review of training packages and measures to support and improve apprentice training and outcomes.

“We congratulate the Minister and look to working with him in this very important area of his portfolio,” Mr White said.

“With the change of responsibility from the Industry portfolio to the Education and Training portfolio, it essential that the momentum is not lost in the departmental changeover.

“It will also be important to ensure that TAFE’s close links with employers and enterprises are recognised and supported – industry is a vital partner of TAFE,” Mr White said.

One of the most important areas remains the federal government’s planned reforms to higher education, which are strongly supported by the TDA.

“It is often forgotten amid all the debate surrounding universities that TAFE students are also major beneficiaries of the deregulation of higher education, and will receive government assistance on the same basis as university students.

“We would also encourage the Minister to take a strong coordination and leadership role in making Commonwealth – State relations work better for VET students, employers and the economy.

“We urge the Minister to see the goal of VET as being an Australian workforce that is globally competitive in skills, with the Commonwealth and States working together to achieve this.

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