THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY FOR TAFE DIRECTORS AUSTRALIA TO BE PART OF THIS CEDA SYMPOSIUM ON THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA.

INTRODUCTION

ON THE EVE OF THE NEXT COAG MEETING ON SKILLS AND VET REFORM SCHEDULED THIS MONTH, AND THE FEDERAL 2012 BUDGET IN MAY, IT IS TIMELY TO LOOK AGAIN AT HIGHER EDUCATION, AND ESPECIALLY ITS RELEVANCE TO ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PRODUCTIVITY IN AUSTRALIA.

TAFE DIRECTORS AUSTRALIA ENDORSED THE BRADLEY REPORT UNDER ITS REVIEW OF HIGHER EDUCATION, WHEREIN BRADLEY RECOMMENDED A DEMAND-LED DIVERSIFIED TERTIARY EDUCATION SYSTEM -- PREFACED WITH ENSURING THIS SUPPORTS THE GROWTH OF A QUALITY AUSTRALIAN SYSTEM, WITH AN EYE TO BEING INTERNATIONALLY COMPETITIVE.

TWO POLICY ISSUES ARISE FROM OUR VIEWPOINT --

1. HISTORICALLY, HOW HAS INNOVATION BEEN APPROACHED FOR HIGHER EDUCATION, AND ITS IMPACT.
   - WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THESE OUTCOMES
   - ARE THERE PARALLEL MODELS APPLYING TODAY?

2. SECOND -- WHAT IS POSSIBLE ECONOMICALLY
   - WE HAVE CONCERN THAT THE OVERARCHING GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE BRADLEY REVIEW IN FACT WAS BEEN IMPACTED ADVERSELY BY THE GOVERNMENT’S CREATING WHAT HAS BEEN PROVEN TO BE AN
UNSUSTAINABLY FUNDING PLATFORM WITH UNCAPPED COMMONWEALTH SUPPORTED PLACES FOR UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES, TO OFFSET THE RUDD PROMISE TO DISCONTINUE FULL-FEE DOMESTIC STUDENT PLACES.

NOW WE HAVE VICE CHANCELLORS CLAMORING FOR FEE FLEXIBILITY, AND THE GOVERNMENT PROCEEDING WITH FULL INDEXATION FOR UNIVERSITIES, AND QUARANTINING ‘CSP’ FUNDING AWAY LARGELY FROM TAFE AND CAPABLY PRIVATE PROVIDERS


DR GAVIN MOODIE IN A 2005 PAPER DEFINED INNOVATION AS THE “TRANSFORMATION OF PRACTICE IN A COMMUNITY OR THE INCORPORATION OF EXISTING KNOWLEDGE INTO ECONOMIC ACTIVITY”.

TAFE DIRECTORS AUSTRALIA (TDA) ARGUES THAT THE GROWTH IN THE NUMBER OF TAFE PROVIDERS DELIVERING HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS IS POTENTIALLY TRANSFORMATIVE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION BRINGING AS IT DOES A DIFFERENT GROUP OF STUDENTS AND STAKEHOLDERS INTO THIS SPACE AND INNOVATIVE IN CONTRIBUTING TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF “FIRMS OR OTHER INSTITUTIONS”.

TAFE DIRECTORS AUSTRALIA

BY WAY OF BACKGROUND, TAFE DIRECTORS AUSTRALIA (TDA) IS THE PEAK NATIONAL BODY INCORPORATED TO REPRESENT AUSTRALIA’S 61 PUBLICLY FUNDED TECHNICAL AND FURTHER EDUCATION (TAFE) INSTITUTES. THE CORE BUSINESS OF TDA IS TO SUPPORT OUR MEMBER INSTITUTES AND LEAD THE ADVOCACY FOR QUALITY SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN AUSTRALIA AT A NATIONAL LEVEL.

AUSTRALIA’S TAFE PROVIDERS HAVE 77% OF PUBLICLY FUNDED STUDENTS AND DELIVER 84% OF PUBLICLY FUNDED ACCREDITED NATIONAL TRAINING IN MORE THAN 1300 LOCATIONS ACROSS ALL STATES AND TERRITORIES.
TAFE PROVIDERS ARE THE MAJOR DELIVERERS OF ACCREDITED TRAINING AND EDUCATION ACROSS THE SPECTRUM OF THE AUSTRALIAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK—INCLUDING SECONDARY SCHOOL CERTIFICATES, VOCATIONAL CERTIFICATES, DIPLOMAS, ADVANCED DIPLOMAS, ASSOCIATE DEGREES, BACHELOR DEGREES AND GRADUATE QUALIFICATIONS.

THEY DO THIS IN A RANGE OF CONTEXTS—INSTITUTIONAL, WORKPLACE AND ONLINE—AND IN PARTNERSHIP WITH A VARIETY OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING SCHOOLS, COLLEGES, UNIVERSITIES, ENTERPRISES AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS.

TAFE INSTITUTES ARE COMPLEX ORGANISATIONS AND ARE ARGUABLY BECOMING MORE COMPLEX AS INDUSTRY DEMANDS MORE TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED, AND HIGHER SKILLED QUALIFICATIONS. ACCORDINGLY, WITH THE TAFE LINK TO INDUSTRY, IT IS NO SURPRISE THAT MANY HAVE SUCCESSFULLY EXTENDED INTO THE HIGHER EDUCATION, AS PART OF THE TERTIARY EDUCATION SPACE.

**TAFE IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

IT HAS BECOME A TRUISM TO SAY THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND HIGHER EDUCATION ARE BLURRING:

THERE ARE SOME UNIVERSITIES THAT OFFER VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING COURSES AND THERE ARE DUAL SECTOR INSTITUTIONS.

- HOWEVER THE INNOVATION IN RECENT YEARS HAS BEEN IN THE NUMBER OF TAFE PROVIDERS (AND PRIVATE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDERS) OFFERING HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS. CURRENTLY IN AUSTRALIA NON UNIVERSITY DEGREES HAVE GROWN TO APPROXIMATELY 6%, (EQUIVALENT TO A LARGE UNIVERSITY).

WHILE THIS PROVISION IS RELATIVELY SMALL IT IS GROWING AS THE DEMAND FOR HIGHER EDUCATION INCREASES AND THERE IS INDUSTRY DEMAND FOR TRAINING IN NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND FOR APPLIED RESEARCH.

IN ADDITION THE LIKELY POLICY WASH-UP, POST THE HE FUNDING REVIEW BY DR JANE LOMAX-SMITH, MAY RESULT IN SOME ELEMENTS OF DIFFERENTIAL PRICING BEING INTRODUCED, AS PER NORTH AMERICA—AND INDEED AS BEING LOBBIED BY GO8. I WILL RETURN TO THIS SPACE.

THOSE TAFE PROVIDERS THAT OFFER HIGHER EDUCATION ARE ON A TRAJECTORY TOWARDS DEVELOPING COMPREHENSIVE HIGHER EDUCATION THAT MATCHES THEIR VET PROVISION. MANY ARE ALSO REPOSITIONING THEMSELVES FROM A BRANDING PERSPECTIVE; TO
BECOME TERTIARY EDUCATION COLLEGES, POLYTECHNICS OR UNIVERSITY COLLEGES. IN THIS WAY THEY ARE PRESENTING A NEW AND INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO THE PROVISION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

**THE EMERGING ‘TERTIARY SECTOR’**

- ELEVEN TAFES ARE NOW REGISTERED TO OFFER HIGHER EDUCATION – ONE ‘PROVIDER’ IS THE JOINT TAFE NSW NETWORK OF 10 INSTITUTES – ALONG WITH THE WHOLE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN SYSTEM AS ONE PROVIDER.

- TAFE OFFERS HIGHER EDUCATION IN EVERY STATE EXCEPT TASMANIA AND IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY WHERE IT IS PART OF THE DUAL-SECTOR UNIVERSITY.

- THE UNIVERSITY OF BALLARAT HAS DEVELOPED A PARTNERSHIP WITH A NUMBER OF REGIONAL TAFE INSTITUTES IN VICTORIA ENABLING THEM TO OFFER THAT UNIVERSITY’S DEGREES (AND NOT BE RELIANT ON DEVELOPING THEIR OWN).

- BOTH THE NSW AND VICTORIAN GOVERNMENTS HAVE DEVELOPED TERTIARY EDUCATION PLANS, WHICH RECOGNIZE THE ROLE OF TAFE IN THE PROVISION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

- THE UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA HAS ANNOUNCED ITS INTENTION TO BECOME AN ‘OMNIVERSITY’, ENCOMPASSING ALL STAGES OF THE EDUCATION PROCESS AND INCLUDING PRIVATE PROVIDERS UNDER THE UNIVERSITY UMBRELLA, ALTHOUGH THIS IS CLEARLY A CONTESTED POSITION

- IN SEPTEMBER 2011, THE QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT APPROVED A NEW DUAL-SECTOR UNIVERSITY THROUGH THE AMALGAMATION OF CENTRAL QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY WITH CENTRAL QUEENSLAND INSTITUTE OF TAFE.

THERE ARE MANY MODELS IN THIS EMERGING TERTIARY SPACE - FROM TAFE PROVIDERS ACHIEVING REGISTRATION AS HIGHER EDUCATION PROVIDERS IN THEIR OWN RIGHT, THROUGH TO OFFERING BACHELOR DEGREES AND OTHER HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH UNIVERSITIES, TO PROVIDING ARTICULATION ARRANGEMENTS FROM VET QUALIFICATIONS TO HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS.

TDA MAINTAINS THAT A NEW TYPE OF INNOVATIVE MULTI-SECTOR PROVIDER TYPE IS EMERGING. THESE PROVIDERS OFFER A RANGE OF VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS, TRADITIONAL VET PROGRAMS CERTIFICATES I-IV, INCLUDING APPRENTICESHIPS, AND DIPLOMAS AND ADVANCED DIPLOMAS AND ARE INCREASING THEIR HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM OFFERINGS: DIPLOMAS, ASSOCIATE DEGREES AND IN A NUMBER OF CASES THEY ALSO OFFER BACHELOR DEGREES IN THEIR OWN RIGHT OR IN PARTNERSHIP WITH UNIVERSITIES,
AND MORE RECENTLY AT LEAST ONE TAFE INSTITUTE SEEKING ACCREDITATION OF A
MASTER’S DEGREE.

IT IS THESE INNOVATIVE APPROACHES AND DEVELOPMENTS THAT ARE CHALLENGING THE
TRADITIONAL UNDERSTANDING OF A HIGHER EDUCATION PROVIDER.

WHAT LIES BEHIND THESE INNOVATIONS?

THE EMERGENCE OF A ‘TERNARY SECTOR’ IN AUSTRALIA MIRRORS DEVELOPMENTS IN
ANGLOPHONE COUNTRIES, IN PARTICULAR THE UK, THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND
CANADA.

THE DRIVERS FOR THESE INNOVATIONS IN ALL THESE COUNTRIES ARE SIMILAR:

- CHANGING ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES AND INDUSTRY PRACTICES
- CHANGING CLIENT EXPECTATIONS AND DEMANDS AND
- GOVERNMENT POLICIES.

THE MID-LEVEL TECHNICAL, PARA-PROFESSIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL OCCUPATIONS FOR
WHICH FURTHER EDUCATION COLLEGES (UK)/COMMUNITY COLLEGES (USA/CANADA)/ TAFE
PROVIDERS AND DUAL SECTOR UNIVERSITIES HAVE TRADITIONALLY PROVIDED TRAINING,
INCREASINGLY REQUIRE, OR EXPECT HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS FOR ENTRY TO
THE OCCUPATION OR FOR CAREER PROGRESSION.

HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE US & UK

AUSTRALIA HAS HAD A MUCH MORE DIFFERENTIATED TERTIARY EDUCATION SYSTEM THAN
EITHER THE NORTH AMERICAN OR THE UK. THE AUSTRALIAN TERTIARY EDUCATION SYSTEM
HAS BEEN DIFFERENTIATED BY THE TYPE OF INSTITUTION AND TYPE OF PROGRAM
OFFERED: TAFE INSTITUTES OFFERED COMPETENCY BASED VET QUALIFICATIONS; AND
UNIVERSITIES OFFERED DEGREES AND POST GRADUATE QUALIFICATIONS.

IN THE US, COMMUNITY COLLEGES HAVE ALWAYS BEEN REGARDED AS PART OF HIGHER
EDUCATION, BUT IN THE PAST WERE DIFFERENTIATED BY OFFERING 2 YEAR HE
QUALIFICATIONS (KNOW THERE AS ASSOCIATE DEGREES).

UNIVERSITIES OFFER 4 YEARS BACHELOR DEGREES.

THIS IS NOW CHANGING.

LAST YEAR ANOTHER TWO STATES JOINED THE 17 US STATES WHICH OVER THE PAST FIVE
YEARS LEGISLATED TO ALLOW THEIR COMMUNITY COLLEGES TO OFFER DEGREES. THEY
HAVE JOINED THE SAME EXPERIENCE AS PIONEERED BY CANADA, WHERE MORE THAN HALF ITS COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM OFFERS DEGREES.

THE GATES FOUNDATION HAS CONTINUED WITH EXTENSIVE FUNDING WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE US, TO PROMOTE WIDER PATHWAYS, AFTER RESEARCH FOUND THAT JUST 30% OF AMERICANS AT COLLEGES WERE CONTINUING TO A FOUR-YEAR DEGREE AWARDING COLLEGE, AND ON AVERAGE JUST 10% COMPLETING THEIR DEGREES.

FURTHER EDUCATION COLLEGES IN ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND ARE NOT REGARDED AS PART OF HIGHER EDUCATION, HOWEVER FE COLLEGES OFFER FOUNDATION DEGREES WHICH ARE DESIGNED TO INCREASE ACCESS TO UNIVERSITIES.

FOUNDATION DEGREES WERE LARGELY AN INITIATIVE OF THE FORMER LABOR GOVERNMENT. THEY BECAME PART OF THE FORMER GOVERNMENT’S STRATEGY FOR WIDENING ACCESS INTO HIGHER EDUCATION, ESPECIALLY FOR STUDENTS FROM LOW SES BACKGROUNDS. FURTHER EDUCATION COLLEGES CURRENTLY SUPPLY 38% OF HIGHER EDUCATION ENTRANTS.

ALL FOUNDATION DEGREES HAVE TO MEET TWO CRUCIAL BENCHMARKS: EMPLOYER INVOLVEMENT IN CURRICULUM AND DELIVERY AND WORKPLACE DELIVERY.

THE RATIONALE FOR EXPANDING ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION IS SIMILAR IN AUSTRALIA, UK AND THE US:

- TO EXPAND ACCESS THROUGH MORE WORK FOCUSED, APPLIED HIGHER EDUCATION STUDIES
- TO EXPAND ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS FROM DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS WHO TRADITIONALLY HAVE NOT BEEN WELL REPRESENTED.

RECOGNITION OF INNOVATIVE AUSTRALIAN DUAL SECTOR UNIVERSITIES

LET ME TURN TO REFLECTING ON HOW HISTORY HAS APPROACHED THIS AREA, BY LOOKING AT THE OUTCOMES POST-DAWKINS REFORMS FROM THE EARLY 1980S.

A SURVEY OF A RANGE OF WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS UNDER THE SHANGHAI INDEX, POINT TO THE INCREASING PENETRATION OF AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES INTO THE LEAGUE TABLES OF COMPETITIVE QUALITY INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION.
THE SO-CALLED INNOVATION OR GENERAL GROUP OF AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES, FORMERLY COLLEGES OF ADVANCED EDUCATION, WITH A STRONG TECHNICAL ORIENTATION HAVE DEVELOPED AND DIVERSIFIED, WITH MANY NOW PLACED IN GLOBAL UNIVERSITY RANKINGS.

CURTIN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY CRACKED THE TOP 500 IN THE WORLD'S MOST CLOSELY WATCHED RANKINGS FOR RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES, SHOWING THE PROGRESS MADE BY NEW INSTITUTIONS PREVIOUSLY LACKING A LONG HISTORY OF RESEARCH FUNDING.

HIGHER EDUCATION COMMENTATOR SIMON MARGINSON HAILED CURTIN'S PERFORMANCE AS "THE STANDOUT CHANGE" IN THE 2009 LEAGUE TABLE DRAWN UP BY SHANGHAI JIAO TONG UNIVERSITY AND RELEASED LAST WEEK.

"THIS IS REALLY IMPORTANT FOR CURTIN AND ALSO SHOWS THAT THE UNIVERSITIES IN THE AUSTRALIAN TECHNOLOGY NETWORK CATEGORY CAN BUILD TO THIS STATUS," PROFESSOR MARGINSON SAID.

"IT HAS TAKEN THE DAWKINS SYSTEM A WHILE TO LIFT UP INSTITUTIONS THAT WERE NOT PRE-1987 UNIVERSITIES BUT IT HAS FINALLY HAPPENED."

CURTIN IS THE FIRST MEMBER OF THE ATN NETWORK TO ENTER THE 402-501 BAND OF THE JIAO TONG RANKING.

IN THE 402-501 BAND CURTIN KEEPS COMPANY WITH UNIVERSITIES SUCH AS LA TROBE, JAMES COOK AND SWINBURNE, WHICH ALSO HAS ENTERED THE TOP 500 FOR THE FIRST TIME.

SIMILARLY THE INNOVATIVE APPROACH OF TAFE PROVIDERS TO HIGHER EDUCATION, PARTICULARLY THEIR FOCUS ON APPLIED LEARNING, BODES WELL FOR FUTURE RECOGNITION OF THEIR LEGITIMATE CONTRIBUTION TO A DIVERSE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR .............
AND YET THERE ARE STILL CHALLENGES........
CHALLENGES FOR TAFE IN HE

THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS SET TARGETS VIA COAG AND IN RESPONSE TO THE BRADLEY REVIEW FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF MORE GRADUATES WITH HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS.

THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INTRODUCED MEASURES TO PROMOTE A ‘TERNARY’ SECTOR, ALTHOUGH TDA BELIEVES THAT THESE MEASURES HAVE NOT GONE FAR ENOUGH:

• THE FORMATION OF A SINGLE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT (MCTEE), NOW CALLED THE STANDING COUNCIL ON TERTIARY EDUCATION, SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT (SCOTSE)

• THE REVISED AUSTRALIAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (AQF) WHICH PRESENTS A CONTINUUM OF QUALIFICATIONS WITHIN SINGLE QUALIFICATIONS ARCHITECTURE. THE INTENTION WAS THAT THE AQF WOULD ‘RESULT IN AN INCREASINGLY INTEGRATED TERTIARY SECTOR, WITH STRONGER PATHWAYS BETWEEN VET AND HIGHER EDUCATION’ (MCYTEETA).

• THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW NATIONAL REGULATORY ARRANGEMENTS (ASQA & TEQSA).

TDA RESPONSE

IN 2010 TDA WORKED WITH UNIVERSITIES AUSTRALIA TO IDENTIFY AGREED POSITIONS ON THE DEFINITION OF TERTIARY QUALIFICATIONS, ON CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROVIDERS THAT SHOULD DELIVER THESE AND ON THE PROPOSED REGULATORY FRAMEWORK.

IN JULY 2010, TDA PUBLISHED A BLUEPRINT FOR AUSTRALIA’S TERTIARY EDUCATION SECTOR, (WWW.TDA.EDU.AU).

TDA ARGUED IN THE BLUEPRINT THAT A VIBRANT AND DIVERSE TERTIARY SECTOR OFFERS THE BEST CHANCE FOR BOOSTING AUSTRALIA’S PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH INCREASED PARTICIPATION IN TERTIARY STUDY.

TDA MAINTAINED THAT TAFE PROVIDERS ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THAT DIVERSITY, AS BOTH STANDALONE INSTITUTES OFFERING HIGHER EDUCATION DEGREES, OR AS PARTNERS OF OTHER HIGHER EDUCATION PROVIDERS AND AS PARTNERS IN DUAL SECTOR UNIVERSITIES.
TAFE PROVIDERS:

• HAVE A STRONG TRACK RECORD IN WORKING WITH STUDENTS FROM LOW SES BACKGROUNDS (IN FACT, TAFE SCORES HIGHER THAN HE ON ALL EQUITY BENCHMARKS)

• SUPPORT INDUSTRIES AND ENTERPRISES TO ACHIEVE THEIR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

• HAVE DEVELOPED SPECIALIST EXPERTISE IN A RANGE OF NICHE INDUSTRY AREAS, FOR EXAMPLE, VITICULTURE, EQUINE STUDIES, DESIGN, AND IN AREAS OF CRITICAL SKILLS SHORTAGE, FOR EXAMPLE, NURSING

• HAVE A VERY LARGE FOOT PRINT NATIONALLY, WITH AN ESPECIALLY STRONG PRESENCE IN A RANGE OF REGIONAL CENTRES.

IN OTHER WORDS TAFE PROVIDERS BOOST THE DIVERSITY OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENT POPULATION AND BRING INTO THEIR HE DELIVERY NOT ONLY SOLID RELATIONSHIPS WITH ENTERPRISES AND INDUSTRY THAT ARE ALREADY THE BEDROCK OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING BUT ALSO INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO TEACHING AND LEARNING.

HOWEVER THERE ARE SIMILAR CHALLENGES FACING TAFE PROVIDERS IN AUSTRALIA AS FACE FE COLLEGES IN THE UK, COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN THE US, NAMELY THE RELATIONSHIPS WITH UNIVERSITIES WHERE THE POWER BALANCE IS UNEVEN; CHALLENGES OF SUPPORTING ‘DISADVANTAGED’ STUDENTS INTO HIGHER EDUCATION STUDY AND PERCEPTIONS THAT THE QUALITY OF THEIR PROGRAMS IS SUSPECT AND NOT TRULY ACADEMIC.

CURRENT POLICY SETTINGS

TDA ARGUES THAT SINCE LATE 2008 WHEN BRADLEY PROPOSED “A MORE COHERENT APPROACH TO TERTIARY EDUCATIONAL PROVISION”, THE POLICY SETTINGS THAT SEPARATE TAFE AND HIGHER EDUCATION HAVE, IN FACT, BEEN WIDENED.

THE EVIDENCE IS THE INTRODUCTION OF

• UNCAPPED FUNDING FOR UNIVERSITIES
• AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT FUNDING INTERVENTIONS (ESPECIALLY STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT) AND
• ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NEW REGULATORY FRAMEWORK
THE END RESULT IS THAT THE CAPACITY OF TAFE PROVIDERS TO FULLY CONTRIBUTE TO AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO HIGHER EDUCATION IS INHIBITED.

PROVIDER CATEGORIES –CASE STUDY

- PROVIDER CATEGORY STANDARDS HAVE EXISTED IN HE SINCE 2000 (NATIONAL PROTOCOLS). THE FINAL VERSION OF THE PROVIDER CATEGORY STANDARDS WAS RELEASED IN 2011 BY THE MINISTER FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION, SKILLS, JOBS AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS

- TDA HAS CONSISTENTLY ARGUED THAT THE REVISION OF THE HE PROVIDER STANDARDS PROVIDED AN IDEAL OPPORTUNITY TO PROMOTE A DIVERSE AND VIBRANT TERTIARY SECTOR, THEREBY OPENING UP OPPORTUNITIES FOR GREATER STUDENT ACCESS TO HE.

- CONSISTENT WITH THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW PROVIDER TYPE, TDA SOUGHT TO HAVE A TEACHING-FOCUSED UNIVERSITY CATEGORY INTRODUCED UNDER THE TITLE ‘UNIVERSITY COLLEGE’, SINCE THIS CATEGORY WAS NOT UTILISED UNDER THE DEFINITION THAT APPLIED UNDER THE FORMER NATIONAL PROTOCOLS

- THE LATEST ITERATION OF THE PROVIDER CATEGORIES FOR HE IS HOWEVER IN ESSENCE A RE-AFFIRMATION OF THE STATUS QUO.

- TDA ARGUES THAT THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE ONLY ROUTE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION PROVIDERS ASPIRING TO GROWTH AND IMPROVED STATUS INVOLVES BECOMING A TRADITIONAL UNIVERSITY IS INDICATIVE OF HISTORICAL THINKING RATHER THAN A CONTEMPORARY INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO THE CONCEPT OF DIVERSITY. UNDER THE STANDARDS, THE CAUSE OF DIVERSITY HAS BEEN STIFLED RATHER THAN ADVANCED. THE PROPOSED PROVIDER CATEGORY STANDARDS ARE NOT IN KEEPING WITH INTERNATIONAL TRENDS NOR DO THEY REFLECT THE DIVERSITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA.

DIFFERENTIAL STUDENT FUNDING

THERE IS INEQUITY IN GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR STUDENTS UNDERTAKING HIGHER EDUCATION COURSES. STUDENTS UNDERTAKING DEGREES IN TAFE PROVIDERS, DESPITE BEING FROM MORE DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS PAY FULL FEES, UNLIKE THEIR
UNIVERSITY PEERS. THEY CANNOT ACCESS COMMONWEALTH SUPPORTED PLACES (THERE ARE TWO EXCEPTIONS).

SEPARATE REGULATORS

THERE ARE NOW TWO SEPARATE REGULATORY ARRANGEMENTS FOR HE AND VET, THE VERY DIFFERENT FOUNDING LEGISLATION CASTS DOUBT ON WHETHER THE TWO REGULATORS CAN COME TOGETHER AS A SINGLE TERTIARY REGULATOR. ASQA AND TEQSA ARE SEPARATE REGULATORS WITH RISK FRAMEWORKS AND AUDIT REGIMES.

CONCLUSION

TDA ARGUES THAT THE GROWTH IN TAFE PROVIDERS OFFERING HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS IS CONSISTENT WITH GOVERNMENT PARTICIPATION TARGETS AND REFLECTS THE REALITY OF THE CONTEMPORARY LABOUR MARKET.

TAFE PROVIDERS IN REACHING OUT TO A ‘NEW’ GROUP OF HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS AND IN WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ENTERPRISES AND INDUSTRY ARE INNOVATIVE, ADD TO THE DIVERSITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION OFFERINGS AND CONTRIBUTE TO A MORE PRODUCTIVE AUSTRALIA.

THANK YOU