

The Honourable Adrian Piccoli MP
NSW Minister for Education
Parliament House
SYDNEY NSW 2000

CC: *Leslie Loble* – Chief Executive Office of Education, Department of Education and Communities

4th November 2011

Dear Minister

**RE: SUBMISSION FROM TAFE DIRECTORS AUSTRALIA
NSW DISCUSSION PAPER SMART & SKILLED: MAKING NSW No. 1**

I have pleasure in presenting this submission from TAFE Directors Australia to the consultation on the Smart & Skilled Discussion Paper 2011.

Background

TAFE Directors Australia ('TDA') is the peak body for Australia's 59 TAFE Institutes, incorporating the Australian Pacific Technical College (AusAID project). TDA has extensive experience representing member views as applied to Australia's skill shortages, policy committees under DEEWR and COAG, and publishes widely its policy submissions (refer www.tda.edu.au), and regular Occasional Papers on vocational education and training, with contributors from Australia and internationally.

The National Secretariat of TDA is based in Sydney, reporting to an elected National Board chaired by Stephen Conway (MD, TAFE SA South Institute), and deputy chairs Dianne Murray (Institute Director, TAFE NSW – Illawarra Institute), and Sue Slavin (MD, West Coast Institute of Training, WA). Kevin Harris (Institute Director, TAFE NSW – Northern Sydney Institute) is chair of the finance and audit committee.

Submission

TDA has advanced a copy for this submission of ***The Case for a National Charter for TAFE*** -- a policy discussion paper soon to be launched ahead of MCTEE meeting on 25th November 2011. The paper has two purposes:

- I. ***The Case for a National Charter for TAFE*** articulates essential elements of the 'public provider' network which NSW and state and territories have invested in as shareholders of the training system, which distinguishes Australian VET and positions TAFE as a model internationally.

The paper defines how the public provider network has been established over the decades to deliver not just basic training courses but beyond, establishing a platform of educational

quality, student services, to sustain credibility in course delivery, with industry engagement involving communities, local government and NGO stakeholder bodies.

- II. *Skills Australia* and various state and territory governments have requested that quality criterion be considered as a criterion for future VET funding. This has followed documented experience of fraudulent private sector qualifications, college collapses, and in general a fragility of VET training that is in stark contrast to the confidence delivered by a public provider TAFE network. The sheer inner city, suburban, regional and remote campus location coverage of the 10 TAFE NSW Institutes showcases the coverage and course offerings delivered by TAFE.

TDA notes the NSW Discussion Paper details as a criterion that skills reform would be leveraged within existing financial resources of the State Government, and seeks to achieve a lift in NSW participation and productivity, while supporting the COAG targets of attainment.

TDA welcomes your statements to the TDA 2011 National Conference (Sydney, 5 Sept) that TAFE was front and centre to the contribution of training in NSW, and especially relevant across skills requiring extensive resource infrastructure, and the depth of TAFE contribution to further education and pathways in key industry sections, affecting the regions.

Accordingly, these key attributes of TAFE providers are documented in the Case for a National Charter for TAFE, and we submit are relevant to create differential base funding and allied course delivery costs, ahead of a contestable framework considered for NSW, from 1st July 2012.

SCOTESE consideration

TDA has sought to initiate an independent expert review of the Victorian model of VET contestability. However, after senior discussions with Skills Victoria, it was advised that such a review to inform this inquiry may best be referred to the SCOTESE agenda. Given DEEWR had invested in a Baseline Funding Review of Higher Education (2010-11), TDA further recommends that MCTEE commission a transparent analysis of the Victorian VET model, outcomes against projected aims, to inform the wider reviews on COAG reform on skills and the requirements under the next Commonwealth State VET Agreement.

I look forward to your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

MARTIN RIORDAN

Chief Executive Officer
TAFE Directors Australia