Background

The Australian Government will invest $18.1 million over four years to establish three Australian Skills Centres of Excellence in partnership with industry and training organisations.

The new centres will provide added depth and establish benchmarks of teaching practice and performance in selected fields of vocational education. Commonwealth funding will be supplemented by co-investment from industry or state and territory governments.

This initiative will deliver high quality training for jobs of the future and directly supports the Government’s vision to build a new economy based on high skills, high technology, fast broadband and clean energy.

It is anticipated that Australian Skills Centres of Excellence will have some of the following features:

- Be strongly aligned with an industry area, characterised by shared governance and funding from industry and leading innovator enterprises;
- Be innovative places or hubs for high quality teaching and learning in vocational qualifications that stimulate improvements in teaching and learning in these fields across Australia;
- Will support skills development and encourage research designed to enable innovation and the deployment of new technologies and production processes through businesses.

About the forum

Over the past two months the Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIISRTE) has been talking to a range of VET stakeholders including some registered training organisations about this initiative, and has decided to hold a forum to progress the work.

The Australian Government is looking for innovative ideas for an Australian Skills Centre of Excellence which will draw on strong established industry partnerships and support. Selection will be competitive and we anticipate that successful applicants will have strong existing industry partnerships that enable them to identify and respond quickly to industry skills demands.

We anticipate that the strong partnerships will be able to respond to industry skills demands and contribute towards modernising and improving the quality of teaching and learning across the vocational education and training sector.

The forum will bring together stakeholders to:
• provide an update on the initiative;
• outline the criteria and guidelines;
• an explanation of what a successful application for an Australian Skills Centre of Excellence would be expected to contain.

If you already have, as part of your strategic approach, longer term plans or activities which partner with industry and employers, and are seeking to produce high quality skills and learning outcomes then this forum may be for you. While it is not expected that every TAFE will be able to attend, you are welcome to discuss the initiative with staff from DIISRTE to assess its usefulness to your work (see below for details).

The Forum will commence at 9.30 am at the Automotive Centre of Excellence in Melbourne on Friday 26 October 2012 and expected to close around 3.30 pm. To register for the forum, by no later than Friday 12 October 2012 please email your expression of interest, including a brief outline of the industry partners you would potentially be working with to Skills.Excellence@Innovation.gov.au.

As mentioned selection will be competitive - only organisations who can articulate that they are well placed to move quickly together with their existing industry partners will be invited to participate in this process.

If at any time you would like to discuss any aspect of this initiative please contact Ray Dingli on 02 6240 8325 or Astrida Upitis on 02 6240 8661 at the Department of Industry Innovation Science Research and Tertiary Education.