

## Media Release

10 May 2011

### Cautious welcome for skills reform

#### Reaction to Budget 2011/2012

TAFE Directors Australia has cautiously welcomed the skills reform in the 2011/2012 Budget, seeking an overhaul of apprenticeships, and outreach to groups at risk.

Endorsement of advocacy by TAFE Directors Australia for a \$101 million mentoring scheme for apprentices is long overdue, along with fast tracking measures costing \$100 million for those already in apprenticeships.

The \$1.75 billion boost to skills funding lacks detail, especially the 'carrot and stick' vision of Education Minister Chris Evans to negotiate better value for public VET (TAFE) training with states and territories.

TAFE Directors Australia welcomed:

- an additional \$182.8 million for foundation skills to focus on literacy, and numeracy programs;
- intensified emphasis on training pathways across the 10 "Placed Based" geographic areas identified as disadvantaged;
- support for the new National Workforce and Productivity Agency to be established from 1 July 2012;
- extra support for early childhood teaching in regional and remote areas of Australia; and
- the go ahead of \$500 million under the Education Investment Fund for regional infrastructure for universities and TAFEs.

TDA questions the following measures announced in Budget 2011:

1. No widening of Commonwealth Supported Places to non universities, including TAFE.
2. Structural adjustment funding of \$200 million remains quarantined for Australia's 39 Universities despite the structural adjustment anticipated for TAFE in the 'value' partnerships agreement to be negotiated.
3. Capacity of Industry Skills Councils to become a selection agency for training providers, especially with Skills Australia being 'incorporated' into the new "National Workforce and Productivity Agency" administering the Workforce Development Fund.
4. Discontinuing the Quality Skills Incentive, announced in Budget 2010 as a saving.

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