For immediate release

14th April 2014

Federal review breakthrough for thousands of TAFE higher education students

Recommendations to overhaul current higher education funding barriers to “...further enhance innovation, quality and efficiency.”

TAFE Directors Australia (TDA) welcomes findings of the Kemp-Norton Review to overhaul Australia’s demand-driven university funding system and create more choice for students.

The federal Kemp-Norton Review has recommended the full extension of Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP) funding to all non-university higher education providers including private registered training organisations and TAFEs, currently offering higher education qualifications, comprising approximately 75,725 of total undergraduate enrolments of 1.13 million (2013).

Higher education courses are now offered across 23 TAFEs, with 103 courses including three Masters programs.

The Kemp-Norton Review while noting concerns expressed by TDA, also recommended extension of Federal funding to include sub-degree higher education qualifications – currently an expanding market for many universities.

TAFEs presented worrying evidence showing a ‘migration’ from VET diplomas by some universities, to more profitable higher education diplomas and similar qualifications including associate degrees.

Martin Riordan, Chief Executive of TDA, said the Kemp-Norton recommendations were overwhelmingly positive, and sought an early consideration of the report in terms of the upcoming Budget in May 2014.

However TDA will seek undertakings from the federal government that in meeting the recommendations for higher education reform, it will resist pressure to ‘raid’ already pressured VET funding, which in part has caused dramatic falls in apprenticeship numbers and skills training in metropolitan and regional areas.

Mr Riordan said: “The Review recommendations comprehensively answer complaints by TAFE and private education students and colleges, and represent a final rejection of the discriminatory funding which currently is quarantined almost exclusively in favour of students enrolled at universities.”

“The Review findings cite the critical role played by TAFEs in creating pathways – especially across rural and regional campuses and linkages with universities – which supports movement from school to skills, and skills to university.

“However, the Review finding on high attritions flowing from low ATAR university admissions is a key issue. Review data released has confirmed low ATAR students have no better than a 50-50 chance of completing their university enrolled course.
“Conversely, TDA data to the Review demonstrated the much-improved success rates of low SES students who completed a TAFE qualification with successful entry and progress into university study.

“I also welcome the Review’s recommendation for a review of Provider Category Standards, which had been submitted by TDA on behalf of several TAFE members.”

Mr Riordan said it was important that during Minister Pyne’s review of the Federal Kemp-Norton Review recommendations, detailed modelling be released to assess not only possible costs of the tertiary funding overhaul, but the cost if the overhaul was further delayed.

TAFE Directors Australia (TDA) is the peak incorporated body for the 61 public provider (TAFE) institutes, including six dual sector universities with TAFE divisions.

For further information please contact:

Bob Bowden – Foresight Communications
Office 02 9241 2811, or Mobile 0412 753 298