MEDIA RELEASE

Partnership boosts Queensland’s skills funding
7 June 2013

Queenslanders will receive better quality training, easier access to courses and more help to complete their qualifications under a new joint plan announced in Canberra today.

The Australian and Queensland Governments will work together to improve access to training and more rewarding job opportunities as part of the Gillard Government’s $1.75 billion reform of the national training system.

Under the plan, the Federal Government will invest more than $356 million in the Queensland TAFEs and private training providers over the next five years.

In return, Queensland has given assurances that TAFE will continue to offer services that cannot be provided by the market, including for rural and remote and disadvantaged students, confirming TAFE’s role as the foundation of a stable and high-quality training sector.

It has also undertaken to deliver on policy priorities of providing pathways to higher education and reskilling and being responsive to industry and students.

The new plan’s aim is to lift course completion rates for all students, including Indigenous Australians, through the introduction of a national training entitlement.

This will give working age Australians for the first time access to government-subsidised training places.

Queensland will also sign on to the Commonwealth’s Income Contingent Loan scheme, which reduces the upfront costs of higher-level vocational education and training.

Tertiary Education and Skills Minister Craig Emerson said Labor’s national training entitlement would be first offered through TAFEs and quality providers from July 2013.

“Australia’s future is tied to meeting the skills and education challenges thrown up by the tremendous growth of the Asian region,” Dr Emerson said.

“This plan secures the role of TAFEs in Queensland’s training system so they can continue to help people improve their job prospects,” he said.

Queensland Minister for Education, Training and Employment John-Paul Langbroek said he was pleased to finalise this landmark reform agreement.

“If the Queensland economy is to grow we need to ensure that we have a well-trained, productive workforce,” Mr Langbroek said.

“We will now get on with the job of training Queenslanders for meaningful employment in our vibrant and diverse economy.
“This is about reforms that will increase the quality of training delivered by providers and increase access to training for every Queenslander.”

The approval of the Queensland skills reform plan adds to the five plans already agreed with other states and territories, to support the introduction of nationally important reforms at a time of economic adjustment.

Media Contacts:   Mark Mulligan (Emerson) 0413 250 632  
                  Danita Goodwin (Langbroek) 0439 886 652