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TAFE DIRECTORS WELCOME PM'S NEW DEAL FOR VET

The Prime Minister's commitment to making skills an equal career choice, through a program of student loans for diplomas and advanced diploma in vocational education, is welcome news according to TAFE Directors Australia.

Today's speech by the Prime Minister the Hon Julia Gillard in Melbourne is the first clear sign that students studying higher VET qualifications will be given the same opportunities and student loans as those studying at university. This has been strongly advocated by TDA for some time.

Martin Riordan, Chief Executive Officer of TDA said that if the Victorian example noted by the PM is rolled out nationally, it could mean some tens of thousands of extra students will likely switch to courses in skilled occupations, much in demand in the current climate of skills shortages.

The negotiations between the Commonwealth and the states will be critical to ensuring that quality prevails in the new scheme. This was sadly lacking in Victoria, where so much of the extra expenditure on skills appeared to be spent on courses that had little to do with jobs in skills shortage areas.

We congratulate the government on making this commitment to equal career choice and will be assisting the government with details, particularly in relation to the quality criteria that was part of the Prime Minister's pledge today.

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