MEDIA RELEASE

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RESPONSE TO QUEENSLAND TRAINING AND SKILLS TASKFORCE

The Queensland Skills and Training Taskforce blueprint for technical and vocational education promises long-awaited reform to TAFE Institute governance and its capacity to increase industry training.

TAFE Directors Australia (TDA) welcomes the major recommendation by the Taskforce, which will now be considered by the Queensland Minister, that while a tight two-year implementation timetable is proposed, between July 1, 2013- to July 1, 2014, the caveat of a base funding review of the public provider (TAFE) network would be required before changes proceed.

This base funding review of TAFE would include agreement on a return of funds to TAFE (as opposed to Treasury consolidated revenue) flowing from campus closures as part of an asset sales program.

TDA will seek further detail on the Queensland Taskforce proposals for the record 38 campus closures – mainly across regional Queensland – and investment to sustain an increase in skills delivery to industry.

TDA Chief Executive, Martin Riordan, said the Taskforce Report was openly critical of Queensland’s dwindling financial commitment to skills, and urged for greater and more effective investment.

“The Taskforce recommended, in particular, that Queensland required increased apprenticeship numbers, and proposed streamlined arrangements for employers and apprentices, and transfer of services from Commonwealth to state. These represent major changes.

“A key issue will be clarity on how any reforms would impact industry and students across metropolitan, rural and regional Queensland, especially resources areas experiencing huge demand for new skills.”

Martin Riordan added: “The governance changes, and those for apprentices, are equally important, and close transition planning will be essential for their success.”
TDA will seek a meeting at the earliest opportunity with the Minister for Education, Training and Employment, Mr John-Paul Langbroek, on details of the Taskforce Final Report.

TDA commended Taskforce Chair, Michael Roche, for the transparency of the industry-led inquiry, and open access to meetings, the consultation paper, Interim Report and Final Report to Government.

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SUBMISSION FROM TAFE DIRECTORS AUSTRALIA

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Formally articulating the role of TAFE in the Queensland training system

In light of the foregoing and the Taskforce’s interim report, TDA suggests that the role of TAFE can be articulated as:

1. Providing quality assured, vocationally oriented training and education to meet the skills needs of business and industry, thereby contributing to improved productivity and community welfare.

2. Insulating the Queensland economy from skills market failures, by ensuring the availability of skills training across all industry sectors and throughout Queensland, and by developing training programs to meet emerging needs.

3. Contributing to local, state and national innovation and economic efficiency through developing practical approaches to improving industrial and business processes and practices.

4. Ensuring reasonable access for all Queenslanders to relatively comprehensive training and education opportunities, for the benefit of both economic development and personal development.

5. Providing strong, credible and seamless pathways from one level of training and education to another.

Refer: www.tda.edu.au  (Submission – Oct 2012)