**MEDIA RELEASE - November 17, 2014**

**NON-UNIVERSITY HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS CALL FOR A FAIR GO**

A small, but diverse group of students from non-university higher education providers across Australia travelled to Parliament House in Canberra today to provide the student side of the higher education debate. The meeting, jointly organised by the Council of Private Higher Education (COPHE) and TAFE Directors Australia (TDA), was a reminder for Senators that the reforms are about bringing more opportunities, greater choice and equitable funding for all higher education students, not just those at universities.

Nearly 10 per cent of Australian students now undertake their higher education at institutions that are not public universities, but are accredited by, and meet the standards of the national higher education regulator (TEQSA).

COPHE CEO Adrian McComb said that this was an excellent opportunity for all Senators to explore the impact of the Higher Education reform legislation with a group of students whose voice has been limited in the debate so far. “These students, and their stories, demonstrate how equity in support and expanding diversity in our higher education system will help students succeed,” Mr McComb said.

Their experiences highlight that the specialised courses and personalised environment available through private and TAFE providers helps students achieve their educational goals.

“These reforms are essential to ensuring a fair go and better outcomes for all future higher education students – not just those in universities,” said Martin Riordan, CEO of TAFE Directors Australia.

The students who met with the Senators were:

- Asha Davidson, Bachelor of Forensic Science (Crime Scene Examination), Canberra Institute of Technology, ACT.
- Teale Blessington; Bachelor of Sports Business, Australian College of Physical Education (ACPE) Sydney, NSW.
- Hugh Cox, Farmer, Victoria; recent Bachelor Agribusiness graduate from Marcus Oldham College, Geelong, VIC.
- Kathryn Phillips, of Mildura, Counselling student, Australian College of Applied Psychology, VIC.
- Angus Mauger and Navin Sundara, completed Engineering stream - Special Tertiary Entrance Program (STEP) at University of Wollongong (UOW) College; entering a Bachelor of Engineering, University of Wollongong, NSW.
- Dean Warwick, of Canberra, mature-age student Bachelor Applied Social Science (youth worker), Tabor College, Adelaide. SA
- Georgie Deal, Bachelor of Drama student recently graduated and former SRC President, Wesley Institute. Sydney. NSW.
- Rylin Richardson, Project Officer Engineering at Brisbane City Council, recent graduate of Associate Degree of Civil Engineering at Southbank Institute of Technology, Brisbane. Qld.

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