



TAFE DIRECTORS AUSTRALIA CALLS FOR URGENT STEPS TO FREEZE FEDERAL PAYMENTS TO RISKY PRIVATE TRAINING COLLEGES

2 November 2015

TAFE Directors Australia (TDA) today called for a halt to funding of high risk vocational education training providers, with an immediate ban on VET FEE-HELP payments to training colleges at the centre of the escalating student loan scandal.

TDA Chief Executive Martin Riordan said the Commonwealth should use its policy levers over federal student loans, and state and territory vocational education funding, to stop the rip-offs to students, taxpayers and the growing damage to the reputation of Australia's vocational education and training (VET) system.

"Each day brings new revelations of the calculated efforts by a number of private training colleges whose business model seems built on fleecing taxpayers and leaving students with unconscionable levels of debt," he said.

TDA applauds the intervention by Prime Minister Turnbull last Friday, pointing to the shambolic situation in VET and the need for further measures to curb the abuse.

TDA has today written to the Minister for Vocational Education and Skills, Luke Hartsuyker, outlining its concerns with the current policy position.

TDA believes there needs to be greater focus by the regulator, the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), with the adoption of quality risk categories for registered training organisations (RTOs), to establish a benchmark for provision of VET FEE-HELP funding.

"TDA has been urging action on this front in submissions going back as far as 2011. We have made a number of suggestions and submissions to ASQA, and remain surprised by the response to date.

"The current situation is unacceptable for the Australian tertiary education system, and TDA is especially concerned about the effectiveness of the regulator.

"Mr Hartsuyker as the newly appointed minister is ideally placed to clamp down on funding to high and even medium risk providers, and this needs to be urgently addressed.

"We need action to stop the haemorrhaging of taxpayer and student money on unscrupulous training providers," Mr Riordan said.

Media contact, Bob Bowden, Foresight Communications 0412 753 298