

## Media Release

12 December 2011

### **COMMENT ON MINISTERIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### TAFE CONGRATULATES SENATOR EVANS CONTINUING TO LEAD AUSTRALIA'S SKILLS & HIGHER EDUCATION PORTFOLIO

TAFE Directors Australia congratulates Senator Chris Evans who will continue in one of Australia's largest portfolios - Skills and Higher Education.

Martin Riordan, Chief Executive Officer of TDA, said Senator Evans had demonstrated enormous commitment to promoting skills as an equal career choice, and has articulated the central role of TAFE for the vocational education and training system.

Senator Evans will be the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Science and Research. However, the realignment of portfolios suggests major implications for the current structure of education within Canberra.

"Skills remains one of the largest of challenges for Australia especially with 'two-speed' economy and amid the booming resources industry, so participation in the workplace remains the greatest issue still to achieve in policy," Martin Riordan said.

"Senator Evans has consistently been vocal that rewarding quality in VET reform will be critical, as TAFE remains central to the training system.

"We welcome continuing to work with Senator Evans in settling future funding."

Martin Riordan also welcomed the Honourable Brendan O'Connor as Minister Assisting for School Education.

Minister O'Connor's new portfolio is not only responsible for schools, but for the many thousands of young Australians enrolling for a VET subject during the final years of school.

He added: "Almost 50 per cent of students in Years 11 and 12 enrol in 'VET in Schools', and we welcome Minister O'Connor's capability to now tackle this increasing policy challenge."