MEDIA RELEASE

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CONGRATULATIONS TO INCOMING TERTIARY EDUCATION MINISTER HON. CHRIS BOWEN MP

TDA COMMENT ON MINISTERIAL RESHUFFLE WITH RETIREMENT OF SENATOR CHRIS EVANS

TAFE Directors Australia (TDA) extends its congratulations to Senator Chris Evans on his retirement announcement today, for his commitment to Australia’s public provider (TAFE) Institute network and for his support of its critical contribution in lifting national productivity.

Senator Evans demonstrated an open door to consultation, with a key legacy of identifying the role of TAFE as the public provider network, critical to Australia’s productivity, as articulated under Federal and COAG agreements.

Under Senator Evans, the recently signed National Partnership Agreement on Skills included a special provision for “transition support for TAFE” under the COAG Agreement for a National Entitlement to Training. This was also spelled out under the SCOTESE Ministerial Council, under Senator Evans’ advice.

TDA welcomes the Hon Chris Bowen, the senior Gillard Cabinet Minister selected as Minister for Tertiary Education and Skills.

Mr Bowen’s experience representing the western Sydney’s electorate of McMahon, and as Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, will bring high credentials for tackling critical issues still facing skills development within the tertiary education portfolio. These include:

- FEDERAL POLICY - Three states, NSW, Queensland and Victoria, remain in negotiations with the Commonwealth under transition arrangements for TAFE under the National Partnership Agreement

- MYSKILLS - The launch of MySkills, a new national website pledged to improve transparency after private training college rorts exposed in recent years, has yet to be fully launched, and is now due in early February 2013

- STANDARDS - Lifting standards of technical and vocational education was referred to former Hawke Government Minister John Dawkins, Chair of the National Skills Standards Council. The NSSC review of standards is ongoing, and remains a key issue. It is designed to rebuild the reputation of the Australian skills sector, especially in the context of the Henry ‘Asian Century’ Report, and coordinating skills in the region
- REGIONAL - Suspension of promised funding to regional TAFE Institutes, both under the Education Investment Fund (‘EIF’), and the Structural Adjustment Fund (‘SAF’)

- INTERNATIONAL - International education remains weakened following policy amendments in recent years, and delays to streamlined visas to students, as currently applied to universities, and this remains a critical issue for incoming Minister Bowen.

TDA will be seeking an early meeting with Minister Bowen to discuss priorities after the reshuffle.

TAFE Directors Australia is the peak incorporated body for the 61 Australian public provider (‘TAFE’) Institutes, including the five dual sector universities with TAFE divisions.

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