



Media Release

28 February 2011

Urgent consultations needed on national VET regulation

Peak education bodies, the Australian Education Union (AEU) and TAFE Directors Australia (TDA), have voiced strong concerns about the proposed *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Bill 2010*, and are calling for an opportunity to appear before a Senate Committee to broaden consultations on the important new regulations.

Both the AEU and TDA are deeply concerned about the lack of alignment between the proposed National VET Regulator (NVR) and its tertiary equivalent, the Tertiary Education and Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA).

The call for urgent consultations was made by the Federal TAFE secretary of the AEU, Pat Forward, and the Chief Executive of TDA, Martin Riordan.

Ms Forward said, "It's vital that the consultations undertaken for the VET regulator are open and rigorous, in a manner similar to those carried out for the tertiary regulator. Only with a level playing field can we ensure a consistent national safety net for the whole tertiary education sector."

Mr Riordan added, "The AEU and TDA believe the functions and operations of the two regulators should, at the outset, be aligned to prepare for their future amalgamation, as promised by the Federal Government. The new regulators will also need to work closely to restore the damaged reputation of the international education sector."

The Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee is currently undertaking an inquiry into the Bill. In a letter to the Committee, the peak bodies called for the NVR standards to require:

- registered training organisations (RTOs) to have as a primary or significant purpose, the education and training of students
- RTOs to act in the best interests of their students, not just in the interests of shareholders, the company or the purchaser of the training
- students to be guaranteed continuation of their study/training programs irrespective of the financial position of the RTO
- RTOs to demonstrate the adequacy of their physical and human resource infrastructure, and their educational viability including educational governance structures

- the NVR to fully assess the teaching and training standards, practices and procedures of a RTO, rather than simply approving outcomes against an accreditation standard.

The peak bodies are also concerned that, currently, not all states are supportive of the legislation, and believe the legislation should be revisited to ensure a truly national system.

“The refusal of two states to accept the new regulator will undermine its influence and authority, and create unnecessary confusion and duplication,” said Ms Forward.

To be consistent with the TEQSA legislation, the peak bodies believe the NVR should separate the more than 5,000 training providers into categories associated with their capabilities, to make it easier for students to make better informed decisions and to provide a clear risk framework.

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