MEDIA RELEASE

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LABOR PLEDGE TO SUPPORT TAFE S WITH DIRECT FUNDING

LATEST LABOR TAFE & APPRENTICESHIP PLANS TO BE DISCUSSED AT TDA 2013 NATIONAL CONFERENCE IN BRISBANE

The Rudd Labor Government today pledged a radical new approach with Australia’s 61 TAFE Institute network, and announced that if re-elected, it would seek a special National Partnership Agreement with the states and territories to guarantee TAFE against further funding cuts.

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd made the pledge at today’s Labor Party Election 2013 campaign launch in Brisbane. He stated that if funding guarantees by the States were not provided, direct funding to TAFE would proceed.

The policy announcement will be a key element at TAFE Directors Australia’s (TDA’s) National Conference in Brisbane starting today. The Minister for Employment, Skills and Training, Hon. Brendan O’Connor, will address the conference tomorrow (Monday 2nd Sept). The Shadow Minister for Employment Participation, Hon. Sussan Ley, will address the conference on Tuesday.

The Chief Executive of TDA, Martin Riordan, said Labor’s announcement follows industry concerns about TAFE, especially how its quality may be sustained ahead of a ‘voucher’ National Entitlement to Training proposed originally by former Prime Minister Julia Gillard, and agreed with state and territory COAG leaders in April 2012.
TDA launched a National Charter for TAFE last year which outlined principles for governments on future funding.

Today’s Labor proposal seeking guarantees of funding to the national provider network would target the National Partnership Agreements impacting TAFE Institutes.

The national network of TAFE in Australia covers 61 public institutes, including six dual sector universities which have traditionally remained under the jurisdiction of states and territories. TAFEs cover a wide geography, with almost 1,300 campus locations in metropolitan, suburban, and regional locations, as well as remote and online learning. TAFE delivers 72% of public technical and vocational education training, and enrolls some 1.45 million students per year.

Among Labor’s other Election 2013 pledges, announced by the Prime Minister were:

- An increase in the completion payment under the existing tools for your trade initiative, from $1,500 to $2,000 at a cost of $34.1 million.
- A requirement for apprentices and trainees to comprise at least 10% of total labour hours on construction projects valued at $5 million or more, which are majority funded by the Commonwealth.
- A training and apprentice guarantee under a new employment services body, Jobs Training Australia, ensuring unemployed people gain skills demanded by industry.

“TDA welcomes the emphasis on TAFE, and the need for funding of the public provider network to be secure,” Mr Riordan said.

“Labor and Coalition leaders will be attending TDA’s National Conference in Brisbane over the coming two days ahead of the federal election on Saturday, and the Prime Minister’s announcements on TAFE provide a real chance for the Minister and Shadow Minister to engage directly with TAFE leaders from all 61 Institutes and dual sector universities.”

For further information

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