Invitation to Participate in the Australian Vocational Education and Training Symposium in Guangzhou in June 2007

Guangdong is one of the most outward looking and developed provinces in China. With a gross domestic product (GDP) of US$321 billion in 2006, an increase of 14.1 percent over 2005, accounting for one-eighth of China’s total GDP Guangdong is one of the major manufacturing centres for the world. The Province is undergoing major shifts in its labour market with shortages of senior and medium level technicians. Local education authorities are looking at foreign vocational education and training (VET) system to influence reform in this important sector. Australia’s VET system is one of the preferred models for local government authorities.

Australian Education International (AEI) Guangzhou is working with the Guangdong Provincial Department of Education (GDDE) to promote the Australian VET sector as a whole to Guangdong Province and to facilitating the entry of Australian VET providers into the Guangdong education market. As one initiative AEI Guangzhou and GDDE will organise an Australian Vocational Education and Training Symposium on 19 June 2007 to coincide with the third Sino-Australian Vocational Education and Training Forum in Chongqing City 21 to 23 June 2007. All Australian CRICOS-registered VET education providers are welcome to register their interest on the attached form (word doc 301kb) and eMail back to us by Tuesday, 15 May 2007. The event is free of charge including lunch. However, Australian participants need to cover their own expenses for travel and accommodation.

The Symposium will invite three Australian speakers from VET peak bodies to introduce the following four key areas:

1. Australian VET Qualification Framework;
2. VET Quality Assurance Framework;
3. Training Packages and Australian Apprenticeships; and
4. Australian national standard required for the Australian VET teachers and approaches of trainings to raise their teaching capabilities.

The draft programme of the Symposium will include key note presentations and networking opportunities.

It is estimated by GDDE that about 200 people from all 68 tertiary vocational institutions, some vocational education secondary schools and technical schools in Guangdong Province will attend this Symposium. Interested Australian participants can take advantage of this platform during lunch, networking session or after the Symposium to establish co-operation opportunities with their counterparts in Guangdong Province.

Background information about vocational education and training in Guangdong Province:

1. Tertiary Vocational Education:
   - In 2005, there were 447,000 enrolled students in 65 tertiary vocational institutions, accounting for 52 percent of all students enrolled in the undergraduate or specialised courses in tertiary education sector in Guangdong Province;
   - In January 2006, Guangdong Provincial Department of Education (GDDE) issued Opinions on Further Enhancing the Teaching Quality of Tertiary Vocational Education in Guangdong (hereinafter referred to as the Opinions). According to the Opinions, Guangdong would undertake
the project of tertiary vocational and specialised education reform and practice, aiming to build the state and provincial exemplary operated vocational and technical colleges, construct the provincial teacher training bases. The Opinions encouraged the institutions to develop the urgently needed specialists in digital control application, computer application and software technology, paper-making techniques, automobile operation and maintenance, textiles and garment, food and drugs technology application, and nursing; and

- Two tertiary vocational institutions in Guangdong Province were selected to be in the first cohort of 28 state pilot institutions in China in 2006 as advocated by the Opinion of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance on the Implementation of the State Pilot Tertiary Vocational Institutions Capacity Building Plan and Accelerating Reform and Development in Tertiary Vocational (please refer to AEI Beijing report: China’s New Strategy to Improve the Vocational Education Sector), one of the best provinces to achieve such performance outcome.

2. Secondary Vocational Education:

- In 2005, there were 1 million enrolled students in 833 vocational education secondary schools and technical schools in Guangdong Province. Among those schools, 232 were provincial or above level key schools, 87 were state key schools.

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