

Media Release

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TAFE in box seat to revitalise skills in regional Australia

A group of regional TAFE Directors today urged the Gillard Government to fast-track key spending earmarked for critical skills in regional and remote areas.

A meeting of regional directors of Australia's 59 TAFE Institutes urged the Government's to carefully examine the geographic spread of TAFE Institutes in helping to promote skills and workforce development in regional Australia.

The Government recently announced plans to open up a new round of the Education Investment Fund, worth up to \$500 million, and allocated \$66 million to regional businesses and workers through the Critical Skills Investment Fund.

The priority spending on regional training infrastructure was announced by the Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, as part of the special package for regional Independent MPs.

The group said that regional TAFEs are in an ideal position to advance skills development through their established links with local communities and enterprises.

"With the refocus of the national broadband network to regional Australia, there is potential for regional campuses to grow the education and skills of regional communities," TDA Chief Executive Martin Riordan said.

The Regional Sub-Committee of TAFE Directors Australia, chaired by Denise Janek (Managing Director, TAFE SA Regional) agreed at today's meeting in Melbourne to put forward their detailed recommendations to the newly appointed Minister for Jobs, Skills and Workplace Relations, Senator Chris Evans.

Mr Riordan said TAFE Institutes had the ability to respond quickly with skill sets and other programs to meet the changing workforce needs of rural and regional economies.

"TAFE staff at these institutes are closely connected to local communities and businesses, and are committed to making a difference through their contribution to the revitalisation and prosperity of regional Australia.

"There may be opportunities to work more closely with universities in regional areas in delivering the type of skills that will be in increasing demand in high-skill areas including the resources sector.