BILL OFFERS GREATER PROTECTION FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The State Government today released a draft bill for public consultation aimed at developing a stronger compliance system for VET providers in South Australia offering training to international students, supported by tougher civil and criminal sanctions.

Employment, Training and Further Education Minister, Jack Snelling said the draft Bill was based on 31 recommendations in a recent review conducted by the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment, Warren McCann.

“The legislation - the Training and Skills Development (Miscellaneous Amendement Bill 2010) - creates a tougher regulatory system providing ‘best practice’ standards and greater protection for international students coming to South Australia to study,” Mr Snelling said.

“The legislation, which will apply to the entire VET sector in South Australia, proposes harsher penalties for compliance breaches, including a 20-fold increase in the maximum fine from $5,000 to $100,000 for registered organisations and $20,000 for individual operators.

“The draft Bill also creates a new offence for a person providing false or misleading information to students about training courses and a proposed offence if registered providers do not report certain matters to the Regulator.

“It also gives the Regulator stronger powers to act in certain circumstances in 24 hours, rather than the current 28 days, as well as the power to suspend a provider’s registration if satisfied the provider is no longer fit and proper.

“The proposed amendments also require registered providers to maintain better records and give authority to the Regulator and Training Advocate to make public statements about training providers,” Mr Snelling said.

“Other main features of the draft Bill include improving risk management through better market intelligence, lifting entry barriers to prevent sub-standard providers ever being registered and improving the audit process and capability to enforce compliance.

“The Bill also requires registered providers to maintain better records and provides powers to cancel qualification or statement of attainment if the Regulator believes qualifications were issued fraudulently or if the training has not been delivered in accordance with the standards required under the Australian Quality Training Framework,” Mr Snelling said.

The draft Bill will be available for public comment for the next three weeks on the www.training.sa.gov.au website together with an explanation of clauses in the Bill, the Minister’s statement to Parliament tabling the McCann report and a copy of the full report.