



National Secretariat
Sydney Institute of TAFE NSW
Turner Hall , Ultimo College
Crn Mary Ann and Harris Streets
Ultimo NSW 2007

Ph: 02 6205 4600
Fax: 02 6205 1288
Website: www.tda.edu.au

ABN: 39 070 265 734

Media Release

29th November 2010

Further re-structuring of Student Visas

New classifications introduced during last days of Parliament to favour Universities over TAFE and VET

Further changes to study visa regulations will escalate collateral damage for TAFE

The new Federal Minister for Immigration, Hon. Chris Bowen MP, has used the final days of Federal Parliament to gazette new Student Visa regulations, nominating new and separate classifications for diplomas and advanced diplomas.

The Federal gazettal (Regulation 1.40A, Migration Regulations 1994) creates separate classifications to distinguish between VET and Higher Education diplomas and advanced diplomas.

The changes in course descriptors for international student study visas sends a clear signal the Federal Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) intend to crack down even harder on vocational education and training (VET) providers, leading to further decreases in enrolments across the sector.

TDA is seeking urgent clarification on the changes with the Federal Minister, Hon. Chris Bowen MP.

DIAC's actions will reach immediately to more than 40,000 inbound students. The regulations will impose on international students intending to study a vocational course at TAFE much more stringent assessment processes than students planning on studying at a university.

Martin Riordan, Chief Executive Office of TAFE Directors Australia, said the nation's 58 TAFE institutes are now suffering significant collateral damage from the past actions of a small number of private colleges and the failure of the state and federal regulators to ensure they met the terms of their registration.

"These latest Immigration student visa regulations indicate the incoming Government has gone far and beyond its crackdown on dodgy vocational colleges and this is now seriously impacting Australia's TAFE Institutes," Martin Riordan said.

"The ability of TAFE to attract international students is now being severely hampered. Worse, despite Ministerial assurances, this is a series of regulatory and administrative changes which have been implemented without structured consultation or advice."

Martin Riordan said that while TDA has appreciated the opportunity to respond to various discussion papers and reviews, there has been no opportunity to consider DIAC's final position prior to public announcement. This includes the recently announced points test for independent skilled migration which clearly discriminates against trade occupations by favouring degree level qualifications and English language levels well above the demands of the workplace.

He added: "Existing consultation mechanisms have clearly failed. TDA now calls on Minister Bowen to immediately form a Student Visa Advisory Group, similar to the existing Tourist Visa Advisory Group, so that future policy and administrative changes are discussed and managed in a way which meets the needs of all stakeholders."

For further information –

CEO -- Martin Riordan – 0402 090 035

Director, International Engagement – Peter Holden – 0405 081 780