

WELCOME ADDRESS BY MARY FARAONE

I begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today and pay my respects to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are present today.

On behalf of the Board of TAFE Directors Australia a warm welcome to you, our national and international colleagues to the 2017 TDA Convention, **Networked TAFE**.

Leigh Sales has thanked and acknowledged the convention sponsors and exhibitors. On behalf of the Board, I too would like to make a special mention of the TDA - Corporate Affiliates for their ongoing support of TDA, thank you TechnologyOne and ProLearn.

Welcome to Adelaide!

The Board is delighted that the convention is in Adelaide at a time when South Australia and Adelaide in particular, is becoming a hub of economic activity in Defence, Energy and Digital, all of which rely on skilled and adaptable workers.

Many of the convention sessions will showcase the partnerships of TAFE SA with technology-driven industries supporting the SA economy.

Our Convention is the largest annual gathering of the network of TAFE institutes and dual sector universities and we welcome members of their governing Boards, CEOs and senior staff from institutes across all states and territories. We are also joined by industry and government partners and international delegates.

I am pleased to announce that this year we have over 400 delegates attending the convention which over the years has become a networking hub for technical, vocational and tertiary education leaders from around the world. We welcome delegates from the UK, USA, India, Singapore, Hong Kong, Fiji, Indonesia and China. We particularly welcome Chinese delegates who will be participating in the China Australia VET Forum, arranged with the assistance of the South Australia Government. These delegates will also be participating in a range of convention sessions.

This year the overarching theme of the TDA Convention is **“Networked TAFE”**.

It is a theme that resonates on a number of levels.

TAFE Institutes work within a *network* of individuals, students, communities, enterprises, industries and government both in Australia and overseas. TAFE institutes contribute not only to the skills development of individuals, but also to the economic and social well being of their communities and to the overall prosperity of the nation.

Globally we are part of the world's ecosystem and we are increasingly *networked* through the internet of everything, social media, travel, access to big data and global supply chains.

TDA has facilitated networking through its membership activities and the state and territory representatives on the board. TDA is recognised as the peak body for the network of TAFEs around the country and whilst the states are different in their funding and TAFE structures we share a mission for technical, vocational and tertiary education. We also share a collective despair regarding the lack of a clear vision for the technical, vocational and tertiary sectors nor a roadmap for what a 21st century tertiary sector should look like. There are increasingly more and more commentators on the sector, about what it should be like, what it should do, and what it doesn't do well. Enough! It is time to take back the narrative about technical, vocational and tertiary education and lead

the discussion with clear thought leadership about how the sector can assist, not just with apprenticeships and traineeships but across the gamut of qualifications from certificate 1 to masters programs. We are in danger of being swallowed up by universities at the diploma level and at the policy level the understanding of the sector only extends to apprenticeships and traineeships. The Board of TDA is keen to lift the discussion about TAFE and strongly advocate for our future role in skilling the workforce and our community role in supporting social cohesion and social inclusion. We need to all be strong advocates for our role in technical, vocational and tertiary education, because TAFE should be a core feature of what the sector looks like in the future.

In 2016 TAFEs delivered training in 1644 training locations across the country and TAFE remains the dominant provider across most of Australia's core skilled occupations, and with major Australian industry.

However all is not rosy, there are significant implications for our institutions in responding to the challenges of the digital age learner and the industry 4.0 workplace.

The Convention is designed to provide you with some insight into these big issues that will impact on the future sustainability and growth of TAFE Institutes.

To assist us with understanding the impact of these big issues we have a stellar line up of keynote speakers, including

- Dame Asha Khemka DBE DL, Principal and CEO, West Nottinghamshire College Group, UK
- Andy Keough CSC, Chief Executive, Defence SA
- Bernard Salt AM, Social commentator and demographer
- Bronwyn Lee, Deputy Chair, Foundation for Young Australians

The convention is designed to allow interaction and exchange between delegates and speakers in concurrent sessions and through the market place.

TDA as the peak advocacy group for TAFE welcomes your contribution to these discussions as an important way of shaping the policy positions of the association.

There is no doubt that the reputation of vocational education and training has suffered over recent years because of poor public policy and the unconscionable and fraudulent actions of a number of providers. Demand-driven higher education funding has drawn students who would normally choose TAFE institutes into universities. And the current Higher Education reforms, if passed, will expand demand-driven

funding to sub-bachelor places and risk diploma delivery at TAFEs.

Real funding for vocational education has declined over the years and is one indicator of how governments over the years have viewed the sector and its value to the economy. TAFE needs to show the way of how a quality driven socially responsible technical, vocational and tertiary provider operates. We need to lead the charge of excellence, industry collaboration and learner outcomes. Let's get back to where we belong, as the number one technical, vocational and tertiary provider in Australia.

While TAFE Institutes are continuing to face strong headwinds TDA remains a unrelenting advocate for:

- the TAFE system being seen and supported as a valued and important national asset;
- the TAFE system being noted for the provision of quality and ethical technical, vocational and tertiary education where students get value for money and industry can have confidence in the outcomes;
- Australia having a strong regulatory approach that recognises and rewards well governed, well-staffed and resourced low risk technical, vocational and tertiary education providers;

- Australia having a national funding regime that is carefully and well designed and managed to ensure the best outcomes for students and the Australian economy and the best benefits for the Australian taxpayer;
- Australia's technical, vocational and tertiary education sector plays an important part in supporting the skills development of students from other countries at home or abroad.

On a more local level:

There have been big changes in the TDA Secretariat.

Martin Riordan resigned after eleven years as CEO. We will celebrate Martin's years of service tonight at the convention dinner.

Craig Robertson was appointed as the new CEO of TAFE Directors Australia. Craig is a passionate advocate for the network of TAFE institutes and we look forward to working with him on our agenda for the next 3 years.

So we forge ahead with purpose, as we work with governments to better support and appropriately fund the TAFE network, however still confident that the TAFE network

will continue to meet important economic and social needs across the Australia.

I am hopeful that you will enjoy the convention Networked TAFE 2017. Thank you