

MEDIA RELEASE

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DUPLICATION RISK TO NATIONAL TAFE INSTITUTES

“SIDE-STEP THREAT TO SKILLING AUSTRALIA”

TAFE Directors Australia has questioned the duplication effect of Prime Minister Howard’s \$2.1B pledge to create 100 additional technical colleges over 10 years, especially across existing ageing skills infrastructure and a current shortage of available teachers equipped to teach modern skilled courses.

Martin Riordan, Chief Executive Officer of TAFE Directors Australia, said the \$2.1B pledge followed reported problems with the establishment of 21 Australian Technical Colleges since 2004 -- in more than half the cases these ATCs had sought to by-pass existing State-operated TAFE institute resource and infrastructure.

“TAFE Directors has urged matching Australian Government investment in universities and schools to TAFE, but pledging to split resources across the vocational education system and further duplicate facilities and services, is a radical departure for Australia’s training system, and will surely fracture what is essentially a small training market.”

Martin Riordan said that while the Prime Minister’s pledge may still allow TAFE Institutes to operate the new facilities, Institutes remained wary of the capability of the technical colleges to overcome skill shortages in the short to medium term.

He added: “TAFE Directors had also questioned Labor’s \$2.5B pledge to build new trade centres in all Australia’s 2,650 secondary schools.

“Both sides of politics risk massive investment for little show of return for solving skill shortages.

“The pledges should not be detailed targeting of electorates, but rather parents and students, industry and TAFE clients would benefit more from considered policy positions to resolve a national skills crisis.”

TAFE Directors Australia is the peak incorporated body representing Australia’s 57 TAFE Institutes.

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