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MEDIA RELEASE

Balancing Tertiary Education

An Election Manifesto from TAFE Institutes detailing a Response Framework to the Skills Crisis for the incoming Australian Government

A bold package of measures was released today by Australia's peak body of TAFE Institutes, TAFE Directors Australia, detailing a series of proposals for the incoming Australian Government to more effectively address Australia's worsening skill shortages.

The package aims to bring far-reaching reform to TAFE to continue its expansion and create historic parity with universities to balance career choice for school leavers and mature aged workers.

TAFE Directions 2007: Balancing Tertiary Education is a guide for new investment to deliver skills for schools and strengthen links with industry to lift enterprise training.

One highlight of the package is TAFE Directors' call for an incoming government to establish a TAFE Endowment Fund, modelled on the \$6 billion Higher Education Endowment Fund announced in the 2007 Budget. The special fund would spearhead a dynamic increase in the use of new technologies for workplace training as Australian industry seeks to grow offshore and with tighter workforce skills access.

The recommendations result from a two-year review of skills shortages by TAFE Directors and CEOs, a White Paper to COAG (*Investing in Productivity*), and a National Survey of Members.

The Election Manifesto was also released with the publication of the *TAFE Australia Capability Report 2007*, showcasing innovation by TAFE Institutes. The Capability Report was also released this week by the Chair of TDA, Deb Daly, in New Delhi, as part of an Australian VET Investment Mission to India.

The Election Manifesto will be a centrepiece of the 2007 TDA National Convention being held this week in Melbourne.

Martin Riordan, CEO of TAFE Directors Australia, said, "This package of proposals is far-sighted, yet achievable. We know that there is justification to balance tertiary education, and this strategy will boost productivity by matching each measure to a strong business case for reform."

"It is workable because it maximizes the huge potential of the current TAFE campus network and exploits established links with industry, schools and universities both domestically and offshore."

TAFE Directions 2007: Balancing Tertiary Education
Election Manifesto for TAFE Institutes

PRIORITY RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION 1 – Increasing TAFE capability

TAFE Institutes have responded to industry and community demands and significantly expanded their operations over recent years to now enrol more than 1.68 million students a year. However, continued growth and improved capability will depend on increased and sustained funding for new technologies and delivery processes.

TAFE Directors Australia calls on the incoming Australian Government to commit to establishing a TAFE Endowment Fund in light of the \$6 billion Higher Education Endowment Fund.

RESOLUTION 2 – Enhancing TAFE autonomy

TAFE Directors Australia initiated detailed proposals on the reform of TAFE in its White Paper to COAG (March 2007). This reform measure was informed by the Smart State Skills Review in Queensland (March 2006), the IPART NSW Report (December 2006) and consultations across the TAFE Institute network.

TAFE Directors Australia calls on the incoming Australian Government to commit to working with the states and territories to bring about increased autonomy for TAFE institutes, ensuring the maximum flexibility to respond to changing workforce skill needs.

RESOLUTION 3 – Litmus Test for Success in upper level secondary skills training

The existing upper secondary education models are not meeting today's challenges in sufficiently motivating young people to view TAFE skills training as an equal career choice. International research indicates a number of key success factors for better engaging upper secondary level students in skills training.

TAFE Directors Australia calls for constructive, well-designed and innovative approaches to increasing opportunities for young people to enter into traditional trade and higher order skills training, with a greater commitment to involving TAFE institutes.

RESOLUTION 4 – Unlocking pathways to higher level skills

Current TAFE delivery of higher level skills training has been hampered by funding levels and restrictions on TAFE Institutes in various states. This is despite demand by TAFE students, and at a time when the nation is short of higher level skills.

TAFE Directors Australia calls for a stronger focus on the delivery of higher level skills training in TAFE institutes, including freeing up the transition from VET to university, and enabling TAFE Institutes across all states and territories to deliver degrees.

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