

MEDIA RELEASE

***For immediate release
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-- COAG COMMENT --

WIDENING LITERACY AND NUMERACY BEYOND SCHOOLS

TAFE SECTOR KEY TO WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION

Australia's TAFE sector today welcomed COAG's initiative on literacy and numeracy and its links with Workforce Participation.

But TAFE warned governments that seeking to again experiment using 'voucher' systems might seriously jeopardize engagement in further literacy and numeracy courses.

TAFE Directors Australia had featured literacy and numeracy in its recently launched White Paper to COAG, as one of 12 essential steps towards a new national drive towards Human Capital and Workforce participation.

Martin Riordan, executive director, said the COAG decision was the latest step to re-engaging with many thousands of adult Australians who struggled to cope with modern workforce needs.

Expert data submitted to COAG showed up to 20% of young school leavers who did not undertake further study, were at risk with low literacy and numeracy -- holding back Workforce Participation.

Martin Riordan said: "The recently announced 'voucher' system was an experiment from the Australian Government, and already low take-up rates show that the scheme was flawed.

"Literacy and numeracy is too vital to Australia to leave with such experimental schemes.

"To implement this COAG initiative, direct engagement with TAFE Institutes would be vital to successfully outreach to those needing help."

TAFE Directors Australia represents Australia's 55 TAFE Institutes, and recently launched '*Investing in Productivity*' – *Engaging TAFE to accelerate Workforce Development and Job Participation*. See website www.tda.edu.au

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