

MEDIA RELEASE

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TRAINING REFORMS LAUCHED

NEW NATIONAL SKILLS STRATEGY

Australia's TAFE Directors today released a far-reaching reform plan on the future of vocational education to showcase new ways to ease skills shortages.

Ideas ~ Inspiration ~ Innovation is a 10-point Reform Agenda for TAFE.

The Green Paper was released today as a basis for discussion and debate prior to submission as a formal position White Paper to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) reference on skilling and training.

The Reform Plan provides practical solutions – including new governance and funding models for TAFE Institutes -- a training system model reflecting innovative European structures for skill institutes.

TAFE Institutes enroll more than three-quarters of the skills trainees and apprentices in Australia, with more than 1.6 million Australians attending or associated with TAFE each year.

The highlights of the 10-point Reform Agenda are:

- New trade diplomas and skill qualification – an alternate to apprenticeships to open up TAFE beyond current license standards pathways
- Aligning skilled migration strategies to Australia training;
- Introducing higher level areas of skilling by reform to higher education protocols – similar to European systems to promote further qualifications for skilled trades;
- Practical solutions for city campuses to support rural and regional skilling;
- Delivering opportunities for adult Australians into skilling;
- Attracting youth engagement with better wages from increased employer tax incentives for hiring apprentices and trainees;
- Creating new public private partnerships between Industry and TAFE Institutes
- Introducing research and development for TAFE Institutes; and
- New governance for TAFE Institutes.

Martin Riordan said: "The Reform Agenda is one of the most far-reaching plans put forward, to overhaul blockages impacting TAFE Institutes meeting needs of modern day skilling.

"The COAG review is government's best chance – federal, state and territory – to address these blockages, and implement the many innovative solutions which would 'make a difference.'

"Bringing new flexibility and more dynamic linkages between city and country TAFE institutes would also bring marked change to opportunities for younger and older Australians."

TAFE Directors Australia is the peak incorporated body representing Australia's 55 TAFE Institutes.

NATIONAL CONSULTATION

- A national consultation will be held across state and territories, and key TAFE and VTE communities through September, October and early November 2006
 - TAFE Directors Australia Board Members will brief state and territory governments
 - TDA will host a special National Consultation Workshop at Parliament House, Canberra, wk 16 Oct 2006, for MPs and Senators
 - The outcome will be a White Paper on TAFE Reform to be presented at the TAFE Directors Australia National Conference (Adelaide, 13-15 Nov 2006).
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For further information

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THE TAFE 10 POINT REFORM AGENDA

1. **Trade Diploma Qualification** – The Australian Trade Diploma would involve intensive front-end full time TAFE training to successfully engage and equip younger and older Australians Workforce Engagement with Trade Qualifications.
2. **Youth Engagement & FEE HELP** – A significant salary boost for apprentices is essential, with employers provided with substantive taxation incentives to deliver benefits to apprentices commensurate with a career choice in modern traditional trades. Fee Help is also an important foundation support for equity across higher education and vocational education.
3. **Youth Transition from School** – The Australian Government should commit to alternate Year 12 programs, and support technical colleges directly linked with TAFE institutes.
4. **Youth Guarantee** – A national technical college network should be established. The Colleges should be accompanied by the national adoption of the **Youth Guarantee**, currently a Victorian Government plan effective 2007.
5. **Indigenous Charter & Extending Youth Guarantee in rural and regional communities** – The TAFE Indigenous Charter, initiated by TAFE Directors Australia and the Australian Government in 2005-06, promoted wider community training. TDA advocates extension of the Youth Guarantee to indigenous Australians to 30 years-of-age in remote rural and regional areas.
6. **Skilling Migrants** -- Australia should motivate migrants to enrol in selected trades where there are skill shortages, and for this to be rewarded by recognition under the Migration Points System.
7. **Innovation Platform** – Widening access and engagement for TAFE with industry and community, Non Government Organisations and government research and development and innovation, and provide for application of Cooperative Research Centres (CRCs) and the Australian Research Council (ARC) research to TAFE and allied innovative industry. The Innovation Platform is a key essential to also deliver higher-level workforce capability through the TAFE sector.
8. **Quality Foundation to TAFE** -- TAFE Directors Australia supports the move to outcomes based, quality standards and audit arrangements across the sector. This should help develop a new international brand for marketing TAFE internationally.
9. **Governance in TAFE** – Following recommendations by the Review of VTE by the Queensland Government (May, 2006) and audited requirements for industry-led training quality processes, TDA proposes more flexibility to institute governance, and specifically a National Review under COAG to review TAFE governance, and seek consultation from educators, industry and key stakeholders to assist the review.
10. **People Development** – The Australian Government should support increased business investment in training, and support the public sector TAFE skilling institutes with wider funding mechanisms to flexibly meet new higher-skilling and R&DI market demands -- domestically and internationally.