



# MEDIA ALERT

## ***TAFE DIRECTORS AUSTRALIA 2007 NATIONAL CONVENTION***

24 September 2007

### **FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CALLS FOR STATES TO REFORM TAFE**

Federal Minister for Vocational and Further Education, Andrew Robb, today called for greater autonomy for TAFE Institutes to allow for closer working relationships between local business and industry.

He called for TAFEs to have the same level of autonomy as universities in deciding their future.

Mr Robb told the TAFE Directors Australia National Convention in Melbourne that funding for TAFE in next year's Commonwealth-State VET funding agreement would be tied to the States undertaking far-reaching reform of TAFE.

The Federal Government currently provides approximately one third of total TAFE funding with \$1.2 billion a year, and Minister Robb indicated those funds would be subject to a review of the States undertaking such reform.

"Our continued involvement with the States will be contingent on the States delivering autonomy to TAFEs - autonomy at least equal with universities," Mr Robb said.

"There is a moment to be seized if TAFE can play its rightful role. TAFE has to play its role."

Mr Robb's address to the TDA Convention follows calls from TDA and the TAFE sector for TAFE Institutes to be allowed greater self-governance.

Minister Robb said he was going to be "hard nosed" in linking funding to TAFE Institutes with greater autonomy.

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He was determined to “remove the handcuffs” that prevented TAFE Institutes from responding flexibly, to allow them to work with and meet the needs of local business and industry.

It was currently inappropriate that TAFEs required the approval of State ministers and bureaucrats for a wide range of day-to-day operational decisions.

Self-governance of individual TAFE institutes is a major issue under discussion at the Convention, which is being held at the Melbourne Convention Centre today (Mon 24/9) and tomorrow.

TAFE Directors Australia, in its White Paper to COAG (*Investing in Productivity*), argued for a review of TAFE governance. This was also included in a manifesto released during the Convention.

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