



WIDER REPRESENTATION BEST SOLUTION TO \$22 MILLION AUSTRALIAN SKILLS INSTITUTE

21 December 2005

TAFE Directors Australia today called for wider participation in the new taxpayer-funded \$22.6 million Institute for Trade Skills Excellence.

Today's announcement by Minister Hardgrave revealed the Institute would be limited to just three peak employer bodies as the sole stakeholders – some of whom are also registered training providers.

Barry Peddle, Chair of TAFE Directors Australia, said the decision to launch an exclusive employer-stakeholder Skills Institute may place real limits on the new body's usefulness.

Mr. Peddle said: "Australia's national skills shortage is an issue requiring solutions – beginning with a tripartite and open dialogue between government, industry and the training sector.

"We welcome the \$22 million investment in the new Institute, but remain surprised at its structure and limited scope."

Mr. Peddle pointed to the contrast of the announcement to last year's \$22 million commitment to The Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education, launched by the Hon. Dr. Brendan Nelson, Minister for Education, Science and Training.

The Carrick Institute undertook to be an independent body to promote and advance learning and teaching in Australian higher education.

For Australian schools, taxpayers also fund promotion for excellence with the peer-reviewed, independent and highly-prized National Awards for Quality Schooling, managed by DEST in conjunction with The Australian College of Educators.

Barry Peddle said: "TAFE Directors Australia will seek to work closely with the new Institute. We support measures to advance quality and industry relevance of vocational education and training.

"In fact, the strength of our national TAFE system is its unique linkages with industry - especially SMEs - who are key industry partners to so many of our TAFE Institutes.

“Yet the announcement by Minister Hardgrave to limit the stakeholder membership to just three employers – with taxpayers’ funds – places restraints and special challenges on the Institute for Trade Skills Excellence.”

TAFE Institutes provide direct training to the vast majority of Australian students who undertake registered trade courses.

Mr. Peddle added: “With the majority of trade students at TAFE Institutes, it is appropriate to widen representation to include those who manage these relationships. Outsourcing the Institute stakeholders to just three employers may merely create challenges to the existing bureaucracy.”

TAFE Directors Australia is the peak body representing TAFE Institutes and the TAFE Divisions of multi-sector institutions in Australia.



For further information:

Barry Peddle (02) 4222 2904 (M) 0419 578 536
Chair, TAFE Directors Australia

Martin Riordan
Executive Director, TDA National Office (02) 6281 0180