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MEDIA RELEASE

**NEW INDUSTRY ALIGNMENT BETWEEN
AUSTRALIAN TAFE AND CHINESE INSTITUTES**

Australia's TAFE Institutes and China's major vocational and technical Institutes have agreed to move to a new level of cooperation with industry linkages and senior staff exchanges to support growing challenges in meeting China's increasing human skill needs.

The agreement is in the backdrop to China emerging as one of Australia's leading trading partners, and as both countries work toward a Free Trade Agreement.

TAFE Directors Australia (TDA), representing Australia's 57 TAFE Institutes and the China Education Association for International Exchange (CEAIE) - China's nationwide education exchange organisation covering schools, skills and universities – made the joint announcement in Sydney today.

To celebrate the Agreement, TDA will host a Chinese New Year reception at State Parliament House in conjunction with the board of the Australia China Business Council and the education representative from the Chinese Consulate in Sydney. The Hon. John Della Bosca MP, NSW Minister for Education and Training will be the guest speaker.

TAFE Institutes and CEAIE have recently completed the 2nd leadership exchange between Australian and Chinese Institute heads under an existing three-year MoU, funded by the Strategic National Initiatives funding – supported by the Australian, state and territory governments.

TDA and CEAIE have negotiated for a new and extended five-year MoU, to launch business input and alignment with the scheme, and widen education collaboration opportunities for both Australian and Chinese Institutes – and their industry partners.

The Chair of TDA, Ms. Deb Daly, Institute Director of Gold Coast Institute of TAFE (Qld), heralded the announcement as a strategic step toward greater activity for Australian TAFE Institutes across business – domestic and internationally.

Dr. Jiang Bo, the Secretary-General of China Education Association for International Exchange, applauded the Agreement for providing opportunities for wider and deeper cooperation between the technical and skill education sectors of the two countries.

Leadership of TDA and CEAIE will look to signing the new 5-year MoU in Beijing, in the coming months of 2008, prior to the Beijing Olympics.

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