

STEPHEN CONWAY'S WELCOME SPEECH

My name is Stephen Conway. I am the Chief Executive Officer for TasTAFE and Chair of the Board of TAFE Directors Australia.

I begin by paying my respects to the traditional owners, past and present of the land on which we meet, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation

On behalf of the Board of TAFE Directors Australia a warm welcome to our national and international colleagues to the 2016 TDA Convention, Skills Resurgence.

Our Convention is the major annual event which brings together Board members, CEOs and senior staff of TAFE institutes across all states and territories. The event also attracts industry and government partners and international delegates.

It is a significant opportunity to understand the vocational education landscape and to learn from national and international experts. It is Australia's largest annual gathering of leaders, executives and senior managers from our public providers.

This year's Convention is the most ambitious of all our conventions involving

- Over 100 speakers and facilitators
- A China+ Australia Aged Care roundtable
- Addresses from Federal Government MPs.
- Structured 'laneways' to cater for the broad areas of interests of the delegates
- Joint events with World Skills Australia
- An innovation – lounge, open tomorrow
- Sponsor presentations and exhibitions and a
- Convention dinner showcasing the diversity of Melbourne

With over 440 delegates we have also broken the TDA record for attendance at our conventions.

Give yourselves a round of applause.

You are to be applauded for believing that the time is right for a frank and fearless discussion about the centrality of skills in building a modern Australian workforce.

The 2016 Convention comes at a time when there are seismic changes in the global market place as technology infiltrates all aspects of work. The economy and the nature of jobs are rapidly changing in a post mining boom Australia. Industries and companies and individuals need a greater range of skills, some more specialised, others more general and yet others more flexible.

The vocational education and training sector, more than any other education sector, is the most critical to developing such skills. It is the only education sector that supports life long learning.

The TDA Board welcomes our members from all States and Territories and our delegates from industry and Government.

The annual TDA Convention has developed a fine tradition of becoming a hub for international delegates.

In 2016 we welcome delegates from India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Korea, China, New Zealand, Germany and the Pacific Islands.

In this respect can I particularly acknowledge:

Mr Jayant Krishna, Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer, National Skill Development Corporation, India

Dr Franco Rodie, Permanent Secretary, the Solomon Ministry of Education and Human Resource

Li Haiou, Vice Chairman of the Board, Zhongshen College, China

We have the opportunity to share knowledge about vocational education and training game changers across national borders.

Please join with me in welcoming all our international guests in the traditional manner.

The 2016 Convention has a stellar line up of international and national speakers who will challenge you to explore the contribution that vocational education and training can make to the Australian economy and society and more broadly to the global market place.

All speakers know that TDA is keen to stimulate debate about the big issues facing our sector in the future and that the general tone of the Convention is intended to be bold and provocative, promoting a strong, independent and resurgent voice for the sector.

We are delighted that at this year's TDA Convention delegates will hear from the Leader of the Federal Opposition, The Hon Bill Shorten MP, the Federal, Assistant Minister for Vocational Education and Skills, The Hon Karen Andrews MP and the Shadow Minister for TAFE and Vocational Education, the Hon Kate Ellis MP.

Last night the Victorian Minister for Training and Skills, The Hon Steve Herbert MP and Robert Doyle, Lord Mayor of Melbourne welcomed the TDA Convention to Melbourne.

The four pre-convention workshops held yesterday were designed to encourage delegates to drill down into topics of interest.

The 2016 TDA Convention has been structured into laneways to cater for the broad areas of interests of the delegates:

- future skills;
- digital horizons,
- professional practice,
- international education and
- future diversity in higher education.

You will have the opportunity to engage with plenary and laneway speakers on topics including:

- Australia's future workforce and TAFE's role in its development
- the role of the public provider nationally and internationally
- the future of the apprenticeship system
- and more.....,,

TDA as the peak advocacy group for TAFE welcomes your contribution to these discussions as an important way of shaping the policy positions of our association.

TDA is an unrelenting advocate for

TAFE being seen and supported as a valued and important national asset;

the provision of quality and ethical training where students get value for money and industry can have confidence in the outcomes;

a strong regulatory approach that recognises and rewards well governed, well-staffed and resourced low risk vocational education and training providers;

a national funding regime that is carefully and well designed and managed to ensure the best outcomes for students and the Australian economy and the best benefits for the Australian taxpayer;

Australia's vocational education and training sector being able to play an important part in supporting the skills development of students from other countries at home or abroad.

2016 has been a significant year for TDA:

TDA in partnership with LH Martin Institute organised the Innovation and Applied Research Roundtable in March 2016. The roundtable demonstrated the enormous potential of TAFE to contribute to the national innovation agenda. The outcomes of the roundtable have informed TDA's submissions to Government and will be distilled in a Green Paper for consultation with members advocating for TAFE in meetings with the ministers and shadow ministers and senior public servants developing policy positions prior to the Federal election on a range of issues, including: the role of the public provider; appropriate funding for TAFE; reform of apprenticeships; quality in training and assessment. and fairer funding for TAFE students undertaking higher education. Thank you for your contribution to this work, adopting a new strategic plan, making submissions and appearing before key parliamentary committees, hosting international delegations and participating on international Boards including, the Community College Baccalaureate Association and the World Federation of Colleges and Polytechnics

It is worth pausing at this stage to note that TDA's advocacy has resulted in the Board of the World Federation of Colleges and Polytechnics agreeing last week that the hosting of the 2018 World Congress will be in the City of Melbourne.

For us in Melbourne in 2016, October is a celebration of skills.

Indeed, TDA set the date in October to coincide with the 2016 WorldSkills Australia National Competition. This Competition, to be held in Melbourne will involve approximately 600 competitors across 60 industry areas.

We have planned for joint events involving both the TDA Convention and WorldSkills Australia's 2016 National Competition to be held with opportunities for delegates, skills judges, sponsors, exhibitors and international and local experts and speakers to share and explore ideas. Both events lever off one another creating a dynamic week of skills focused activities in Melbourne.

We acknowledge the recent appointment of a new Chief Executive Officer of WorldSkills Australia, Brett Judd. Welcome Brett.

Our thanks go to the Convention's Official Sponsors, the Victorian Department of Education and the Australian Government Department of Education & Training and our Gold Sponsors CISCO/OPTUS, TechnologyOne and YourTutor.

We also thank our TAFE sector commercial products and service sponsors and exhibitors for supporting the 2016 Convention.

We especially thank our Corporate Affiliates for their ongoing support: Global Learning Support, TechnologyOne and ProLearn

"You never quite know what's in store when you wonder off Melbourne's grid of city streets into the maze of gothic laneways behind them".

We hope that you find the 2016 TDA Convention productive and enjoyable.
