

## VET Reform Stakeholder Engagement Workshops

### **South Australia – Adelaide**

Date: 12 March 2014

#### ***Key Issues Raised***

- There is a lack of streamlined funding and regulation between states and territories, and a problem with some jurisdictions displaying funding prejudice against other jurisdiction's providers. This makes it difficult for students and employers to access funding, and the paperwork to apply for funding is a 'minefield'.
- There has been expansion in some industries that require a highly specialised workforce. Training for these industries requires expensive, highly technical equipment and a skilled person to operate it, however funding levels don't support this.
- Regulation is focused on compliance rather than nurturing quality in the sector. In addition, the cost of complying with the regulations and audits are so high they are detracting from quality student outcomes and pushing small training providers out of the system thereby removing niche training options and quelling innovation in the VET sector.
- Training Packages are not put together in a transparent fashion; there is duplication across Training Packages; they need to be more flexible so they can be adapted on the ground; and they do not have a sufficient balance between industry wants, what providers can deliver and what students want.
- Training Package changes lack grass roots industry consultation, however there can be danger in too much industry involvement as the market can be ill-informed.
- Students often have existing language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) gaps. Not all training providers will assist with improving LLN skills. Some will just sign off people without sufficient LLN skills.
- It can be difficult to find work placements for students as part of their training.
- Employers want cheap, high quality training and assessment done within two days – this is not realistic and compromises quality education outcomes.
- Industry doesn't understand VET system 'language'.
- There are blockages for students transitioning into higher education which is reducing workforce mobility and lifelong learning.
- National data collection is patchy, which is worse than having no data.
- Not recognising VET in schools increases the time it takes to gain a qualification.
- Nominal hours are an outdated concept and impact the funding. We should be looking at actual hours instead.

#### ***Key Ideas for Reforms***

- Nationalise the training system to remove inconsistencies between jurisdictions, streamline regulation and help ensure quality.
- Fund units of competency rather than qualifications.
- Create a way for providers to be able to track how their funding applications lodged with States, Territories or the Commonwealth are progressing.
- Overhaul regulation so that it takes into account the difference between the training provider sub-sectors, the size of the training provider and risk.
- Auditors and accrediting bodies to conduct audits together for consistency.
- Reduce the number of Training Package qualifications and instead have a smaller number of generic units contextualised by industry (e.g. first aid).
- Batch changes to the Training Packages.
- Have LLN as an elective for all VET students.
- Implement a way for training providers to signal the quality of their training to the market, e.g. a star rating.

- Foster a clear vision for VET that is shared between training providers and industry.
- Students to have a 'taster' in the industry for a few days so that they know whether it's the right direction for them.
- The future VET system needs to address the economy, industry needs (skills shortages, future skill needs), individual's right to lifelong education, disadvantaged students, entitlement to LLN as an adult.
- Rationalise VET and higher education under one system.
- Look at the regulations and laws about the buying and selling of training providers.