

## **VET Reform Stakeholder Engagement Workshops**

### **New South Wales - Sydney**

Date: 7 March 2014

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

- Funding is difficult to access, it is constantly changing and there is a lack of transparency in how the funding is allocated. There is concern that funding is going to larger providers rather than targeting those providers that deliver high quality training.
- Funding targets qualifications instead of skills sets, which impacts workforce development. In particular rural employers are looking for skill sets rather than full qualifications.
- Regulation at the State/Territory and Commonwealth level is not transparent, places a high cost of doing business on training providers and has conflicting information and duplication.
- Qualifications are inconsistent and are sometimes not portable between States and Territories.
- Tightening regulation is not necessarily the answer. The regulatory system needs to support a unified minimum standard with guidance and support on improving quality and interpreting the standards.
- Audits by the national regulator are too subjective, inconsistent and focus on compliance rather than quality student outcomes.
- Training Packages appear to take only a few enterprises into account rather than the whole industry, the impact of this is that the Training Packages are too rigid to adaptation to employers at the local level.
- High frequency of changes to Training Packages and lack of consultation with training providers is creating undue burden and costs.
- The quality of the VET system is suffering from not having enough industry engagement; inconsistencies in quality between training providers; students who undertake very short courses and are not able to do the job they studied for; and complicated Training Packages that are difficult to understand, making them difficult to implement.
- There is a growing market of educational brokers – people who assist people to gain a qualification. They are not qualified and are undermining the quality of training providers.
- Smart and Skilled capped pricing encourages training providers to price undercut in which the return is a cut in quality.
- There are a high number of students entering the VET system with very poor language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) skills. There is mixed views on whether LLN deficits could be addressed within a qualification pathway or if it would be better addressed separately first.

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

- Ensure there is national consistency of funding, regulation, trade classifications and qualifications.
- Ensure funding is easy for small and niche training providers to access.
- Have a single, national regulator.
- Focus audits on quality instead of compliance. This can be supported with the auditor having an educational and supportive role where training providers can seek advice, information and support.
- More prescriptive, objective standards with explanatory notes so they are easily understood; and run workshops with training providers on the new standards.
- A way for people to self-test their LLN skills so they can take the first steps in addressing them, taking some strain off training providers to identify LLN difficulties.
- Overhaul the teacher Training and Assessment qualification.
- Improve the quality by 'raising the bar' of teachers and trainers. A basic level should be required of teachers and trainers who are then pushed to have a higher qualification, improve their research skills and improve their ability to work with a range of students. This will help prevent education becoming a commodity and help prevent 'tick and flick' trainers.
- Small training providers should be at the centre of the reforms.