

ITECA News Media Introduction

Independent Higher Education, Vocational Education,
Training & Skills In Australia



Independent **vocational education and training** providers support around 80% of the 4.1 million students undertaking training in the sector.

Independent **higher education** providers support around 10% of the 1.5 million students in higher education.

ITECA Commentary Areas —

- Higher education
- Vocational education and training
- Apprenticeships and traineeships
- Federal skills funding
- State and territory skills funding
- International education



An Introduction Independent Tertiary Education In Australia

If you thought that tertiary education – that is post-secondary education – in Australia was delivered by universities and public TAFE colleges, you'd be wrong. The simple fact is of the 5.6 million students in tertiary education across the nation, more than 60% study with independent providers.

The Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia (ITECA) is the peak body representing independent higher education, vocational education, training and skills sectors. It is a key reference point for media on matters associated with tertiary education in Australia.

Understanding Tertiary Education —

There are three major components of Australia's education sector. The first is the primary school sector and the second is the high school sector, augmented by the important foundational work of the preschool sector.

The tertiary education sector is sometimes, and erroneously, taken to exclusively refer to the higher education sector; however, the tertiary education sector's reach is far greater. It also includes the vocational education, training and skills sectors.

Independent tertiary education providers are recognised domestically and internationally for their ability to provide students and their employers with the quality outcomes they are looking for. Data compiled by several government agencies clearly demonstrate that independent providers achieve higher student satisfaction, higher completion rates and higher post-study employment rates than public sector providers.

Any media commentary on tertiary education in Australia would be incomplete without the views of Australia's independent tertiary education sector. ITECA provides journalists with that reference point.

Troy R Williams FIML MAICD
ITECA Chief Executive



ITECA's Expertise & Commentary Areas —

- Higher education
- Vocational education and training
- Apprenticeships and traineeships
- Federal skills funding
- State and territory skills funding
- International education

ITECA's Key Government Stakeholders —

- Tertiary Education Quality & Standards Agency (TEQSA)
- Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)
- National Skills Commissioner
- National Careers Institute

ITECA Is A Voice For Independent Higher Education In Australia

Of the 170+ higher education providers in Australia, more than two-thirds are independent providers, with the remainder being either universities or public TAFE colleges.

It is usual for independent higher education providers to operate within a discrete discipline such as theological studies, the arts or business. This focus ensures that students are supported by, and study alongside, others who share their passion for their scholarship interest.

The Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia (ITECA) is the peak body representing the independent higher education, vocational education, training and skills sectors.

ITECA's Expertise: Commentary on higher education issues —

- Sector Position: The role of independent tertiary education providers within the overall higher education sector and the relationships between secondary schools plus the vocational education and training sector.
- Regulation: Oversight by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) including a reduction in red tape through the elimination of excessive and duplicative regulation.
- Funding: Equitable access for students so that they can access FEE-HELP loans and Commonwealth Supported Places (CSP) on the same basis as students at public universities.
- Qualifications Diversity: Ensuring that Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) supports the capacity of independent providers to offer high-quality qualification in bespoke disciplines.

There is currently a whole segment of the higher education sector— private universities and non-university higher education providers (NUHEPs) – which are almost entirely excluded from receiving Government subsidies for student places. Students who wish to enrol at these institutions are unable to receive the benefits that would accrue to them if they enrolled at a public university. ITECA is a strong advocate for student equity, allowing students with independent higher education providers to access the same funding opportunities as students at public universities.

ITECA represents more than one-half of the independent higher education providers across the nation.



Independent Higher Education Providers —

- Of the nation's 172 higher education providers, 118 are independent providers [1]
- Of the 118 independent higher education providers, 68 are for-profit organisations and 50 are not-for-profit organisations. [2]

Students With Higher Education Providers —

- 131,867 students studied with an independent higher education provider, that's 8.6% of all students in higher education. [3]
- 25,497 students were undertaking post-graduate study with independent higher education providers. [4]
- 52% of independent higher education providers had an effective full-time student load of less than 500 students. [5]

ITECA Is A Voice For Independent Vocational Education & Training In Australia

More than 85% of the 4.1 million students are enrolled with an independent vocational education and training providers, Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) that's around four times more than the public TAFE colleges.

Independent providers are the backbone of the nation's vocational education and training sector. With strong linkages to industry, they have a reputation for providing students and their employers with the quality outcomes they are looking for. Students with independent RTOs either pay their own way, are supported by their employer and also can be funded by state / territory governments.

ITECA's Expertise: Commentary on vocational education and training issues —

- Apprentices & Trainees: Matters associated with the uptake and completion of apprenticeships and traineeships, extending to training of the same.
- Training Delivery: Issues associated with the challenges of delivering high-quality vocational education and training that's valued by students and their employers.
- Regulation: Oversight by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) at a national level and by state regulators in Victoria and Western Australia.
- Funding: Ensuring that the investment by government in vocational education and training is allocated to both independent providers and public TAFE colleges on a competitive basis.

The capacity of independent RTOs to support students allows government to meet its policy objectives with respect to workforce development without requiring a major taxpayer investment in capital and administrative infrastructure. Indeed, the genesis of independent RTOs can be found in the landmark Deveson Report from 1990 which found that over 100,000 Australians were unable to enrol in a TAFE course of their choice due to capacity constraints. It's in this context that government have fostered the growth of independent RTOs and their pivotal roll in skills delivery.

Surveys undertaken by the National Centre for Vocational Education and Research (NCVER) and other government agencies clearly show that independent RTOs enjoy superior levels of student satisfaction, completion rates and post-study employment rates compared to public TAFE colleges.

Vocational Education & Training



Independent Vocational Education & Training Providers —

- There are ≈3,580 active independent RTOs across Australia, including community providers, enterprise providers and private providers ^[6]
- Independent RTOs across the nation employ 200,539 people including some 28,247 trainers and assessors. ^[7]

Students With Vocational Education & Training Providers —

- 86% (3.495 million) of the 4.062 million students in vocational education and training are with independent providers. ^[8]
- When it comes to relevance of training independent providers received a 96% score for the relevance of skills taught. ^[9]
- More than 80% of students with independent RTOs were employed after training, a rate higher than public TAFE colleges. ^[10]

ITECA Is A Voice For International Students With Tertiary Education Providers

Australia's world-class reputation for offering quality tertiary education outcomes has seen independent higher education providers deliver to an increasing number of overseas students.

International students are attracted to ITECA members and study with them locally thanks to the strong linkages that international providers have with employers. This allows international students to work alongside experienced professionals and tradespeople, strengthening the student experience.

ITECA's Expertise: Commentary on international tertiary education issues —

- Market Demand: The drivers of demand that see overseas students undertake study with independent tertiary education providers.
- Regulation: The regulation of independent providers offering programs to students in both the higher education sector and the vocational education and training sector.
- The Student Experience: Close engagement with higher education providers and employer groups provides unique insights into the experience that international students have with independent providers.
- Visa Issues: Working with the Australian Government and independent higher education providers on matters associated with student visas, work rights and student welfare.

ITECA is called upon by the Australian Government and state / territory governments to provide advice and guidance to them on matters associated with international education in Australia. From visa issues and student welfare to maintaining Australia's international reputation for quality, ITECA is viewed as an authoritative source of advice. This positions ITECA uniquely to provide commentary to the media on international student issues.

Australia's international education sector has been hit hard by the Covid-19 crisis and ITECA is well positioned to provide commentary on how the independent vocational education and training sector is both coping with the challenge and responding.



International Independent Higher Education —

- 60,172 students from overseas study with an independent higher education provider. ^[11]
- China was the largest home country for students at independent higher education providers, followed by India, Nepal then Vietnam. ^[12]

International Independent Vocational Education & Training Students —

- 126,054 students from overseas study with an independent vocational education and training provider. ^[13]
- International students with independent higher education providers contributed \$3.54 billion to the Australian economy. ^[14]
- 85% of students with international VET providers were satisfied with the overall quality of their training. ^[15]

An Introduction Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia

The Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia (ITECA) is recognised by government, the business community and the education sector itself and the leading voice for independent providers in the higher education, vocational education, training and skills sectors. ITECA is the largest organisation representing non-government stakeholders in the post-secondary education sector.

What makes ITECA a great source for media is the size of ITECA's membership, its extensive engagement with the business community augmenting the work of its experience and highly respected policy advocacy team in Canberra.

ITECA Spokesperson: Troy Williams, Chief Executive —

Appointed Chief Executive in 2018, Troy Williams has held a number of senior appointments with industry associations in the construction, property and healthcare sectors, augmented by time as state manager of an ASX listed company in property management and finance.

His expertise is in policy development, education and training policy and the skills needs of business.

He holds appointments to a number of Australian Government committees associated with tertiary education policy design and delivery, in addition to key stakeholder forums convened by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) and the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA).

ITECA is a strong proponent for an integrated tertiary education sector in which the higher education sector and the vocational education sector operate as one but retain their separate identities. ITECA's members are clear, it's neither in the interest of providers nor students to have overlapping regulators, funding arrangements and student loan programs. ITECA is at the forefront for leading reform in these areas.

Formed in 1992 as the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET), the transition to ITECA occurred in 2019 as a direct result of ITECA's growing membership in the higher education sector.

In the first instance media should contact the ITECA Communications Director via email at media@iteca.edu.au or by telephone on 1300 421 017.



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