

Media Release

Melbourne Declaration's Renewal Should Focus On Life-Long Learning

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For Immediate Release

Australia's goals for education should embrace a commitment to life-long learning to equip people for the changing nature of work. That was the position the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET), the peak organisation representing independent providers in the higher education plus tertiary education and training sector, took to the forum to discuss improvements to the 2008 Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians.

The Melbourne Declaration articulates nationally consistent future directions and aspirations for Australian schooling agreed by all Australian education ministers. The Ministers met with key stakeholders, including ACPET, in Melbourne on 22 February 2019 as the first step in reviewing the declaration.

ACPET highlighted the fact that the tertiary education sector will do the heavy lifting when it comes to equipping workers for the challenges that come with disruption in the economy.

"Many of today's jobs didn't exist thirty years ago. In thirty years' time many of the jobs that will be around then don't exist today. Australians will increasingly rely upon the tertiary education system to renew their skills. As we review the Melbourne Declaration it's important that we embrace life-long learning and the role of the tertiary education sector," said Troy Williams, ACPET Chief Executive Officer speaking at the forum.

ACPET supported the continued emphasis in a next-generation declaration on school education and an emphasis on promoting literacy and numeracy outcomes for all Australians; however, ACPET advocated for the embedding into a next-generation declaration the role of tertiary education as a pathway to life-long learning.

Life-long learning and skills development was a core focus of the 1999 Adelaide Declaration that preceded the Melbourne Declaration.

"The Adelaide Declaration stated that students should have employment related skills and an understanding of the work environment, career options and pathways as a foundation for, and positive attitudes towards, vocational education and training, further education, employment and life-long learning. That's what ACPET would like to see in an update to the Melbourne Declaration," Mr Williams said.

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