

Media Release —

Time To Base Tertiary Education Funding On Performance

— 11 September 2019

The peak body representing independent providers in the higher education, tertiary education, training and skills sectors, the Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia (ITECA), is calling for a single funding model for tertiary education that's based on performance. That is the message to be delivered today as ITECA convenes its annual parliamentary roundtable in Canberra.

"The workforce of today and tomorrow will lean on the higher education sector, and also the vocational education and training sector, to equip them as their career develops and takes different paths. In that context it's no longer sustainable to have different funding models for the higher education, vocational education and training sectors," ITECA Chief Executive, Troy Williams, will tell those present.

Mr Williams will outline the case for reform at a reception convened by ITECA today (11 September 2019) in Parliament House to be attended by around fifty Ministers, Shadow Ministers and other parliamentarians.

"As the workforce transitions between higher education and vocational education and training to ensure they can adapt to the changing future of work, students will be confronted with two different funding models and two different student loans schemes. Why are we making it more difficult than it needs to be – and dare I say it, creating red tape – for those simply wanting to prepare themselves for workforce change? It's time for reform," according to Mr Williams.

ITECA is a strong advocate for a level-playing field in which government funding for tertiary education providers – whether they be quality independent providers, public TAFE colleges and public universities – compete equally for government funding. ITECA believes that an education and training provider's record of achieving quality outcomes for student should be a key determining factor in funding decisions.

"It's in the taxpayer's interest, and it's most certainly in the student's interest, to ensure that public funding is directed towards those providers that consistently achieve the best outcomes. This isn't about preferencing funding to independent providers or public providers, it's simply about ensuring that students get the quality outcomes they are looking for," according to Mr Williams.

ITECA's call at Parliament House comes as the latest data from the National Centre for Vocational Education and Research (NCVER) shows that in the vocational education and training sector, completion rates for the independent sector (private providers 50.7% and enterprise providers 60.0%) clearly lead the field compared to public TAFE colleges (43.6%). The data also show that independent providers support over 71% of the 4.1 million students in vocational education and training – approximately 2.9 million students.

ITECA also notes that in the higher education sector independent education providers enjoy levels of student satisfaction commensurate with or higher than public universities.

"Long-term structural reform is required to put students at the centre of their learning and development needs and choices in a way that delivers value for money for taxpayers, while also achieving maximum economic productivity benefit. It will make funding equally available for quality independent providers and public providers who demonstrate they can achieve quality student outcomes," Mr Williams will tell those present.

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