

Media Release —

AQF Reform A Step Towards A Coherent Tertiary Education System

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The expert review of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) recommends a landmark reform pathway that will greatly assist in the workforce acquiring the education and skills required to be effective in the jobs of today and tomorrow. That's the view of the Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia (ITECA), the peak body representing independent providers in the higher education, vocational education, training and skills sectors.

The AQF review, undertaken by Professor Peter Noonan, recommends a shake-up of Australia's qualification system. The reform agenda will enable students to mix-and-match their subjects across universities and vocational education, to earn the qualifications they need for the jobs they want.

"ITECA has been a long-standing proponent of reforms to Australia's tertiary education system that allow students to transition between the higher education sector and the vocational education and training sector. The pathway set by Professor Noonan is a significant step to achieving this goal," said Mr Troy Williams, ITECA Chief Executive.

The review has recommended significant reform to the AQF, designed primarily to make connections and the transition between vocational education and training and higher education easier for students and education providers. Recommendations in the review also recognise 'micro-credentials' as valid education tools to fill a skills gap. ITECA welcomes the recognition of the important role of micro-credentials, but notes that funding models will need to change in order to allow students to access these.

"Micro-credentials are an emerging facet of tertiary education and one that's important as they allow the workforce to continuously update their skills to deal with the changing future of work. The challenge before government will be to revise funding models to ensure micro-credentials are available across the workforce, particularly in areas where there are technological advances," Mr Williams said.

The AQF review is highly relevant to the independent tertiary education system that supports 70% of the 4.1 million students in vocational education and training plus around 10% of the more than 1.5 million students in higher education. As the peak body representing the independent tertiary education system, ITECA was extensively involved in the AQF review process.

"Professor Noonan's engagement with the independent tertiary education system was first-rate and we thank him for the ability to have input into what has been a very thorough and considered review. ITECA is confident that the recommendations of the review will support students. We look forward to engaging with government as it implements not only the reforms set out in the review, but also the supporting funding models," Mr Williams concluded.

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