

Media Release —

## **AQF & Higher Education Reforms Welcomed By Independent Providers**

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For Immediate Release

The Australian Government's response to the Review of Australia's Higher Education Provider Category Standards and the review of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) has been applauded by the Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia (ITECA), the peak body representing independent providers in the higher education, vocational education, training and skills sectors.

Both reviews represent the most significant examinations of the Australian tertiary education system undertaken over the last decade and embrace a more cohesive architecture for Australia's higher education, vocational education, training and skills sectors.

"It is a credit to those involved in the reviews, particularly Professors Noonan and Coaldrake, that such a range of stakeholder views have been considered and embraced for Australia's future tertiary education system. In particular, the focus on students, the student experience and student outcomes are to be applauded," said Mr Troy Williams, ITECA Chief Executive.

Concerning the review of Australia's Higher Education Provider Category Standards, ITECA has, with input of its members, actively supported the move to simplify the categorisation of non-university providers in Australia. An additional provider category designed to make it easier for independent higher education providers to meet their registration requirements, innovate to grow their business and meet student, employer and industry needs was also welcomed.

The review of the AQF is of critical importance to move towards a more cohesive tertiary education system where connections and transition between vocational education and training (VET) and higher education allow students to transition with ease between the two sectors.

"Allowing workers, throughout their working lives, to transition between VET and higher education is something that will ensure that Australia has a workforce that's equipped for the jobs of today and tomorrow," Mr Williams said.

A focus on providing structure to micro-credentials, a component of the AQF review, will provide a framework that will allow the workforce to access new knowledge and skills with more ease. Furthermore, the approach taken by government will simplify the process of achieving government recognition of micro-credentials.

"ITECA congratulates the government for the approach taken to both reviews and will continue to support and actively promote a more cohesive tertiary education system," Mr Williams said.

ITECA represents independent providers in the higher education, vocational education, training and skills sectors. There are around 130 independent providers in the higher education sector that collectively support some 10% of the more than 1.5 million students in higher education. Independent providers support more than 70% of the 4.1 million students enrolled in VET programs across Australia.

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