

Media Release —

Independent Tertiary Education Body Gets An Independent Chair

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For Immediate Release

Following a considered selection process, Mr Wilhelm Harnisch has been appointed as the independent Chair of the Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia (ITECA), the peak body representing the higher education, vocational education, training and skills sectors.

The appointment of Mr Harnisch as the independent Chair is an important step in ITECA's corporate governance evolution that began in mid-2019 when the organisation was restructured, evolving from the former Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET). The changes have been profound and include a restructure of not only the Board, but also ITECA's membership structure and underpinning administrative infrastructure.

"It's an honour to take up this appointment at such an important time, not only for ITECA, but also the broader independent tertiary education sector. As the nation grapples with how the higher education, vocational education, training and skills sectors will support a growing economy, ITECA's members have demonstrated commitment to supporting government and industry meet this challenge," Mr Harnisch said.

Mr Harnisch currently holds a number of non-executive directorships including Chair of Focus ACT Limited, Chair of Your Home Canberra Limited, the Federal Government's National Disability and Carers Advisory Council and the Employment Reform Working Group. He is an invited member on the Federal Department of Veterans Affairs Judging Panel for the Prime Minister's post ADF employment awards. He also held non-executive directorships on the \$50 billion Cbus Industry Superannuation Fund and the Cbus Property company. He is a former deputy chair of Livable Housing Australia Limited and Australian Construction Industry Forum Limited.

The ITECA membership elected Mr Alexis Watt to the role of Deputy Chair – Vocational Education and Training which is a significant leadership position given that independent providers support more than 70% of the 4.1 million students in vocational education and training. Mr Watt is the Chief Executive Officer of Open Colleges School of Health that, since its establishment in 2001, has trained thousands of nurses and other health sector workers across Australia.

Also elected was Ms Kathleen Newcombe to the role of Deputy Chair – Higher Education. Ms Newcombe is Chief Executive Officer of the Sarina Russo Group that has an innovative partnership to manage the James Cook University campus in Brisbane.

The coming year will see ITECA strengthen its member engagement with a view to providing them with the information to make informed business decisions and also influence the environment in which they operate.

"ITECA provides leadership, strategy, advocacy and support. Our members set our agenda, fund our activities and directly benefit from the results," Mr Harnish concluded.

Ends.

N.B. Photo available on request

Media Contact:

Michellé Mabile – ITECA Communications Director
e: media@iteca.edu.au m: 0436 522 189

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