

## Media Release —

### **200,000 Vocational Education & Training Workers – They’re at risk!**

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For Immediate Release

The latest data from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) is a timely reminder about the 200,000 jobs that are rapidly disappearing in Australia’s vocational education and training sector due to the Covid-19 crisis. It’s time for government to step-up and back the sector that will play a critical role in the economic recovery according to the Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia (ITECA), the peak body representing independent providers in the higher education, vocational education, training and skills sectors.

“Australia’s independent vocational education and training sector is struggling to assist students, support its 200,000 employees and keep the doors open. This is the sector that will do the heavy-lifting in supporting jobseekers get training and new skills, but this can only be done if the sector survives the next two months,” said Mr Troy Williams, ITECA Chief Executive.

ITECA members are facing real challenges as social distancing makes face-to-face delivery difficult, and the sector ramps-up its online learning options.

“The sector needs tangible support and it needs it today. An immediate investment in training and skills by government provides a significant double benefit. It supports jobseekers and helps protect the 200,000 jobs with independent vocational education and training providers,” Mr Williams said.

The NCVER Report entitled *Understanding the Australian vocational education and training workforce* noted that in February 2019, there were 246,167 people employed in the vocational education and training workforce. The independent sector employed 200,539 people, while the taxpayer subsidised public TAFE colleges employed only 45,628 people.

“Not only do independent vocational education and training providers support more students than public providers, they employ more people. It’s time for government to step-up and back the sector that’s so vital to equipping the workforce for the jobs that will come when the economic recovery gets underway,” Mr Williams said.

ITECA has presented to government the *Covid19 Response – Backing Independent Tertiary Education Providers* action plan and the Australian Government has accepted key recommendations such as suspending fees and charges levied by regulators. ITECA says more needs to be done to support the sector.

“If we’re serious about reskilling jobseekers and if we’re serious about getting them into productive jobs as the economic recovery gets underway, now is the time for government to step-up and back the independent vocational education and training sector,” Mr Williams concluded.

Independent vocational education and training providers support around 80% of the 4.1 million students in vocational education and training.

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