



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **Restoring TAFE to the regions recognised as an urgent national priority**

The national TAFE network has welcomed the latest independent review of regional education which has urged the restoration of TAFE in regional communities as a means of better helping people into employment, training and further study.

The [\*Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education\*](#) by Emeritus Professor Dr John Halsey of Flinders University, makes a compelling case for elevating the availability and the status of vocational education and training (VET) outside the city and urban centres.

“The conclusion I have reached is that nationally, TAFE has to be put back into the regions, closer to people, places and the heartland of much of Australia’s productivity,” the report says.

It also says that “the issues of adequate funding for TAFE, access to and the costs of programs for students, designing new flexible offerings and enhanced qualification scaffolding and recognition with universities must all be included in a ‘root and branch’ review.”

TAFE Directors Australia Chief Executive Craig Robertson said the Halsey Review presents overwhelming evidence for a modern, well-funded TAFE system in regional, rural and remote locations.

“The presence of TAFE in these areas is much more than a training provider. It is part of a network that enables people to develop skills, employment and the entrepreneurial ability to support industry and communities.

“When TAFE is starved of funding and resources, it has a disproportionate effect in these regions where TAFE is a key part of community and business infrastructure for people who face the challenge of distance and economic opportunity,” Mr Robertson said.

The Halsey review raises the important role of ‘anchor organisations’ in regional communities, which include schools, regional universities, TAFEs and other training providers, as well as business and community groups, which, together, address needs and build capacity, especially for those who are marginalised.

The review calls for measures to improve affordability and access to quality work experience placements for regional students, as part of a VET or dual VET/university approach, as well as the idea of two-year associate degree programs.

“Questions about TAFE delivering more applied degree offerings as well as rigorous skills training, plus a higher valuing of applied research to facilitate transitioning into emerging new fields of employment, should also be considered,” the report says.

Mr Robertson said the review’s focus on greater integration between VET and the university sector and the priority on applied learning and research was especially significant for those living outside the cities.

“The report clearly recognises TAFEs as more than just sites for training. Professor Halsey rightly sees TAFEs addressing a range of regional development priorities on a comprehensive basis.

“Funding needs to adjust as a result. Current funding to TAFEs which is based simply on training activity does not serve regional Australia well, as the report confirms.

“TDA’s submission to the forthcoming federal Budget makes recommendations for supporting TAFEs serving regional and rural Australia. I look forward to working with the federal government to act upon the recommendations of the review,” Mr Robertson said.

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TAFE Directors Australia is the peak national body representing 28 TAFE institutes, including six dual sector universities with TAFE divisions.