



MEDIA RELEASE

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Preparing for the Skills Future, Now - The world's experts in vocational education gather in Melbourne

Experts in vocational education and training from across the world will gather in Melbourne next week to examine how the world is preparing for the rapidly changing nature of work.

TAFE Directors Australia CEO and Chair of the World Federation Craig Robertson said that Australia is extremely fortunate to have such a large number of high-quality experts in the field assembling on our shores.

They will be attending the World Federation of Colleges and Polytechnics biennial congress from 8 to 10 October. The theme of the congress is *Preparing for the Skills Future, Now*. It will explore the impact of advances in technologies and automation on vocational and professional education across the world.

The Congress has attracted more than 750 delegates.

"Delegates can expect to hear some thought-provoking presentations about the threats to jobs, skills and training as we know them and how our education and training systems must be redesigned to prepare students for the jobs of the future," Mr Robertson said.

Mr Robertson said the global impact of new technology and automation is already profound.

"Australia is not immune to this and urgent action is needed by government and industry to ensure we are better prepared," he said.

The congress will also examine the impact on work, societies and peoples who may be displaced due to changing economic and global circumstances.

The 2018 World Congress will focus on action-based solutions to these challenges and will make a difference to the outcomes of millions of vocational and professional students world-wide, he said.

It will also provide an opportunity for Australia to look at its vocational education and training system from the outside in and compare its readiness for future challenges with other countries' systems.

Mr Robertson said that the international keynote speakers will include:

- Professor Dirk Van Damme, the Head of Innovation and Measuring Progress in the OECD Directorate for Education and Skills, based in Paris
- Dr David L Finegold, President of Chatham University in Pittsburgh, USA
- Mr Charles Fadel, Chairman of the Center for Curriculum Redesign in the USA
- Prof Stephanie Matseleng Allais, Research Chair of Skills Development at the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa
- Dr Shyamal Majumder, Head of the UNESCO-UNEVOC Centre in Bonn, Germany
- Dr Stephen Murgatroyd from Canada
- Prof Qiuming Chen, Vice President of Shenzhen Polytechnic, China
- Mr David Hughes, CEO of the Association of Colleges in the UK
- Dr Lee D Lambert, Chancellor at Pima County Community College, Tuscon USA

Australian speakers at the congress will include:

- Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash, Minister for Small and Family Business, Skills and Vocational Education
- Senator the Hon Doug Cameron, Shadow Minister for Skills, TAFE and Apprenticeships
- The Hon Gayle Tierney MP, Minister for Training and Skills, Victoria
- Professor Stephen Parker AO, Lead Education Partner at KPMG Australia
- Professor John Pollaers OAM, Chair of the Australian Industry and Skills Committee
- Ms Jan Owen AM, CEO of the Foundation for Young Australians.

International congress speakers are available for interview while in Australia.

See the [World Congress website](#).

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