

National Charter for TAFE

OPERATING UNDER A NATIONAL VET ENTITLEMENT SYSTEM

In April 2012, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to a *national training entitlement* as part of the National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development, and a new National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform.

The COAG Communiqué provided for “*Implementation Plans*” agreed by States and Territories that would “... enable TAFEs to operate in an environment of greater competition.”

The pivotal role of Australia’s public provider (TAFE) in vocational education and training (VET) is a key component of the agreements under negotiation between the Commonwealth, States and Territories, with effect from 1 July 2012.

At the 2012 annual general meeting of TDA, members endorsed four principles of a National Charter as the basis for communication with the Prime Minister, the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Science and Research, and State and Territory Ministers for VET.

The National Charter proposes four core principles as the strategic framework for implementation of the national training entitlement.

PRINCIPLE 1

FUNDING MAINTAINS THE VIABILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS OF PUBLIC PROVIDERS

PRINCIPLE 2

QUALITY CRITERIA ARE SUBSTANTIALLY ENHANCED

PRINCIPLE 3

GOVERNANCE ENABLES FLEXIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS

PRINCIPLE 4

RECOGNITION OF THE INNOVATION AND LEADERSHIP ROLES OF TAFE, INCLUDING ITS PIVOTAL POSITION IN RURAL AND REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

PRINCIPLE 1

Funding of public VET provides value-for-money and is sufficient for the comprehensive educational and training services necessary to achieve COAG goals.¹

- The continued viability of public TAFE institutions as ‘full service providers’ is an integral component of the ‘Implementation Plans’ of all jurisdictions in a national training entitlement system. This requires fair and adequate funding of TAFE services, to meet community service obligations, and ensure accessible and equitable programs, with support services available to individuals, industries and communities.

PRINCIPLE 2

Quality criteria are substantially enhanced as the basis of value-for-money in public funding for a competitive VET system.

Government funding decisions require the application of coherent and nationally consistent quality criteria that assure:

- Enhanced standards for national registered training organisations, beyond minimum registration requirements;
- Contractual obligations for all Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) receiving public funding for VET programs including the requirement for full and continuing compliance with the quality standards required by the SNVR², the AQF and agreed validation measures.

PRINCIPLE 3

Governance enables flexibility and responsiveness.

Healthy competition depends on transparency, accountability and devolution of governance.

An equal and transparent regulatory framework for all providers is a fundamental cornerstone of national competition policy.

- Sufficient authority must be devolved to TAFE Institutes to enable them to respond flexibly in competitive training markets.
- Equivalent standards of transparent reporting and accountability should be required of all VET providers in receipt of public funds.
- Additional and specific functions, including statutory functions of TAFE Institutes, to receive supplementary funding.

PRINCIPLE 4

Recognition of the innovation and leadership roles of TAFE, including its pivotal position in rural and regional Australia.

The public provider network of TAFE institutions underpins employment, productivity, regional communities and future workforce development. To achieve COAG economic goals, governments should engage with TAFE providers as the VET industry leaders.

1. National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform, April, 2012, Clause 28 and 29.

2. Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations incorporating and replacing the AQTF.