

5 December 2011

NICK McKIM
Minister for Education and Skills

Review of Tasmania's public VET providers

The role and function of Tasmania's public vocational education and training providers will be reviewed.

The Minister for Education and Skills, Nick McKim, said it was important to ensure that the way VET is delivered in Tasmania would achieve the best results as part of the national VET reform agenda.

"The focus will be on providing opportunities for all Tasmanians to access the education and skills training that will make a difference to their lives," Mr McKim said.

"The review's main focus will be on the two major public VET providers – the Tasmanian Skills Institute and the Tasmanian Polytechnic," Mr McKim said.

"I have been impressed with the commitment and energy shown by staff from both institutions during a period of significant change over the last few years.

"They have continued to work hard to provide quality training to individuals and businesses throughout the state.

"This announcement also delivers on a commitment to a review made last year to the AEU during negotiations on the evolved post-year 10 model.

"The review will investigate the current governance, funding and operational arrangements of the public providers of VET in Tasmania and their capacity to improve student participation and retention rates, respond to identified skills needs and contribute to Tasmania's productivity.

“It will ensure that the increased availability and accessibility of vocational education and training options and pathways to younger Tasmanians achieved over the last four years is sustained.”

Mr McKim said the review will be conducted by Virsis Consulting director, Virginia Simmons AO, a former director and CEO of the Chisholm Institute of TAFE and a Deputy Vice Chancellor (TAFE) and Deputy Vice Chancellor (Industry Relationships) at Swinburne University of Technology.

Ms Simmons will provide a report by April 2012.

“I am committed to an independent review and a consultation paper will be released shortly that will canvas the key issues to be investigated,” Mr McKim said.

“There will be extensive consultations and Tasmanians will have the opportunity to take part in the three month review process.

“As part of the review, I will be inviting key stakeholders to join a reference group to support Ms Simmons’ work and provide feedback.

“This review will be forward-looking, independent and inclusive and I have full confidence in it delivering a positive outcome for public provided VET in Tasmania.”

The Terms of reference for the review have been developed in consultation with the Tasmanian Skills Institute, Tasmanian Polytechnic, Tasmanian Academy, University of Tasmania, Australian Education Union, Community and Public Sector Union, Tasmanian Principals Association, Tasmanian State School Parents & Friends Inc, Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Skills Tasmania.

TERMS OF REFERENCE:

Specifically the scope of the review will be to:

1. Review the current governance, funding and operational arrangements of the public providers of VET in Tasmania and their capacity to improve student participation/retention, qualification and attainment rates of Tasmanians as well as their ability to respond to identified skills needs and contribute to the productivity of the state including the ability of the providers to:
 - a) Provide a broad range of VET options and pathways for all Tasmanians.

b) Provide foundation and pre-employment, literacy and numeracy and work preparation courses for those seeking pathways to higher level qualifications and work.

c) Provide training and skills development for employees in enterprises in line with the enterprises' current and future skill needs.

d) Connect with higher education through diplomas and advanced diplomas.

2. Recommend and comment on options for future governance, funding and operational arrangements for public providers of VET in Tasmania which clearly define the roles and responsibilities of provider(s) and minimise the potential for competition between public providers.

3. Take into account the COAG reform agenda as well as national agreements and strategic directions to ensure recommended outcomes enable Tasmania to participate in and benefit from them.

4. Investigate and advise on opportunities that exist with respect to higher education qualifications and linkages between the public providers of VET and the university sector.

5. Take into account the impact of any further change on the provision of VET for younger Tasmanians, and ensure that the increased availability and accessibility of VET opportunities now available are not lost.

6. Take into account issues of efficiency and effectiveness, being mindful of the current economic climate including the capacity of the state budget to support the public VET providers.

7. Take into account the ability of the system to implement further change both financially and in terms of the impact on staff and students.

8. Be informed by an analysis of national and international practise and experience.

Contact:

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