

# CCA Policy on TAFE and Community Education

## Preamble

This policy describes the position of Community Colleges Australia in relation to supporting the operations of and working collaboratively with TAFE.

## Policy Statement

Community Colleges Australia (CCA) recognises the shared values and important contributions that public technical and further education (TAFE) and community education providers undertake to promote access and equity in education and training across all segments of Australian society.

CCA believes that to meet Australia's skills needs and to promote sustainable economic development, it is essential that governments directly fund and operate vocational education and training (VET) providers and systems. CCA recognises that TAFE is both the largest provider and an anchor institution for equitable VET, playing a particularly important role in training apprentices; skilling regional, rural and remote Australian communities; and meeting the needs of special groups such as Indigenous Australians.

State and territory government TAFE systems hold a significant and long-term successful history in Australian education. However, recent reforms to the Australian VET sector that have resulted in an open training market have combined with a decline in TAFE funding to raise questions about the role of TAFE.

CCA believes that the Commonwealth, state and territory governments must present clear policies about the role and purpose of TAFE as the public VET providers, and how TAFE works with not-for-profit community providers. The community VET sector complements TAFE in that it excels in delivering pathway programs that help vulnerable and disadvantaged students to get jobs, advance their careers and access further training – frequently at TAFE.

Community education providers and TAFE have many characteristics in common, given that both operate on a “social benefit” model. Both sectors:

- Aim to increase educational participation, frequently serving as a “second chance” providers;
- Work to develop skills as well as to build social capital and resilience within the communities where they operate; and
- Are not motivated by providing a financial return to private investors by way of dividends and market share listings, in the manner that private for-profit VET providers do.

Community education providers and TAFE have numerous areas of potential cooperation that utilise the capabilities of each sector for the “common good”, which include:

- Sharing infrastructure, particularly where TAFE has unused capacity – including specialised facilities;
- Collaborating on support for learners who face barriers to participation – promoting access, equity and pathways to qualifications;
- Improving local and regional participation, especially outside of the large metropolitan areas;
- Assisting new and existing businesses to expand their skill and knowledge base to improve employment opportunities; and
- Promoting greater community engagement, ensuring that local governments, other educational institutions, community service deliverers, other community organisations, businesses and industries have opportunities to participate in planning to meet local and regional skills needs.

CCA and its members seek to work collaboratively with TAFE to achieve these goals, and undertake to do so through TAFE Directors Australia, state and territory TAFE systems and local TAFE institutes and campuses.

## **Date**

This policy was adopted by the Board of Directors of Community Colleges Australia on 11 April 2017, and will be reviewed within three years.

## **Published by**

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