

Dear stakeholder

Many of you will be aware that Australia's vocational education and training system is undergoing major structural change with overall responsibility for national coordination and management of the system now in the hands of the Federal Department of Education, Science and Training following the decision of the Federal Government to cease the operations of the Australian National Training Authority from the beginning of July 2005.

This decision has had major implications across all aspects of the vocational education and training system, not least of which relating to the overall management and guidance of the reforms being put in place for students with disabilities through *Bridging Pathways*, our national strategy to increase the participation and success of people with disabilities in the VET system.

Since July last year a great deal of work has been done to manage this major transition. The needs of disadvantaged students in the system has not been overlooked and since late last year the Client and Student Voice Action Group, under the chairmanship of the South Australian Education CEO, Brian Cunningham, has been working to determine the structures and processes that are required to ensure the significant work already being done in these areas continues under the new system.

The Action Group has formed three sub-groups focusing on students with a disability, students from indigenous backgrounds and a third focused on general equity. With a deadline of the end of June, 2006 for us to make our recommendations for an effective advisory/leadership structure to be delivered to the ministers for education we are working hard to ensure our recommendations are robust and that they reflect the broad needs of the VET sector overall.

To this end we are undertaking a process of national consultations. The first step in that process is to seek responses to the attached consultation paper (closing date for submissions is COB Friday 17th February). After analysing your responses we are planning a series of targeted face-to-face forums around the country in early March. I strongly encourage you to take part in this process to ensure that the interests you represent are appropriately reflected in the recommendations we make to the Ministers.

This is a very important time in the history of the reform process for students with a disability in the VET system. A great deal of progress has been made over the past 10 years and we have built up significant momentum for change. We can't take our eye off the ball now. I look forward to hearing your views over the next few months.



Mark Bagshaw
Convener
Disability Sub-group
Client and Student Voice Action Group