



INDUSTRY ENDORSES THE BEST OF TAFE

The Institute for Trade Skills Excellence already improving the standards of vocational training

Sunday, 20 April 2008 - Australian training providers recognise the need to work with industry to ensure that the country's skills needs are met, and many of them are actively pursuing opportunities for improvement.

This was the message from the CEO of the Institute for Trade Skills Excellence, Mr Brian Wexham, in response to the recent announcement of the National Skills Policy Collaboration's Ten Point Plan.

Commenting on Sharan Burrow's statement that Australia's skills shortages need to be addressed urgently through greater industry involvement in the provision of vocational education and training, he emphasised that Australia's best TAFEs are world-beaters in terms of how well they serve industry's needs. "I know that it's fashionable to call for greater responsiveness from the training system to meet industry's skill needs, and indeed I know that there are many areas in which major improvements could be made, but the best training providers are judged by industry to be very good indeed" he said.

Mr Wexham was referring the Institute's Star Rating Scheme, under which specific industry areas in a TAFE or a private training provider are rated by industry experts. "This initiative of The Institute cuts exactly to the Government's focus on productivity. It gives me great pleasure to see the announcement of the Ten-Point Plan, and The Institute looks forward to extending its contribution to a skilled Australian workforce by continuing to recognise the very best of training providers, and raising the bar on quality", he said. One of the reasons for the success of the Star Rating Scheme has been its link with *SkillsOne*, an integrated communications platform devoted to skills and training, whose website has just been nominated for the web equivalent of the Oscars.

As The Institute gears up to award its 100th star rating, Mr Wexham acknowledges that he might be seeing just the best: "I know that training providers are not likely to apply to be rated unless they're very focused on quality, but I've been quite surprised at the extent to which even those that receive three gold stars—the highest rating—really want to know how they can improve even further. Indeed, the Star Rating Scheme has proven that industry and training providers can work very well together, and they welcome the opportunity to work with each other."

"The reason the Star Rating Scheme is so effective is that it was developed by industry for industry, and the assessments are carried out by people working in the respective skills area" said Mr Wexham.

Grame Stuchbery from Riverina Institute of TAFE, which has received Gold Star Ratings for several of its trade faculties, has used the Star Rating Scheme to help improve the courses the TAFE offers.

"The Star Rating Scheme is a great way to help improve our courses through shared knowledge, for example we are now visiting other Gold Star winners nationally to learn from their success to further strengthen our reputation as a smart, dynamic and highly professional educational leader."

“The Star Rating Scheme has also been invaluable to us in terms of marketing our capability to employers and apprentices in the region and has certainly enhanced our industry recognition” said Mr Stuchbery.

Excellence in trade training is also recognised by the Institute’s Australian Trade Teacher of the Year award, with industry identifying the most innovative and industry-focused teacher in each industry area. Last year’s national winner was invited to be one of the participants at the Prime Minister’s 2020 Summit.

Further Information:

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