

MEDIA RELEASE

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HEADLINE: Skills Summit creates uneven playing field in WA training sector

Although the ambitions of the recent Skills Summit were well intentioned, the announcement of 180 000 free TAFE places has the possibility of creating more problems than it solves, according to one of WA's largest private trade training providers.

Little detail exists around the \$1bn in funding from the federal government, which has said it will fund the places in a 50-50 arrangement with the states and territories.

MPA Skills CEO Ben Dahlstrom said this move will have an immediate detrimental impact on private training providers in Western Australia as it will push students towards the public over the private sector and goes against the important principle of choice for consumers.

"We know that private RTOs and industry training organisations in WA account for more than 66% of all apprentices in training last year and that is set to increase," said Mr Dahlstrom. "Data shows that students will vote with their feet when given the chance."

According to the National Centre for Vocational Education Research, in 2021, there was a 40% increase in the number of students undergoing apprenticeships with private training providers compared to just over 20% growth in the TAFE sector – nearly double the increase.

"Whilst we recognise that TAFE naturally plays an important role in the sector, I know from talking to other private training providers that we are both frustrated and concerned by the lack of support from the Federal Government as an outcome of the Skills Summit," added Mr Dahlstrom. "All we are after is an even playing field and more detail on the funding. Government shouldn't be working counter to the private sector."

Reports from the Summit are that the 180 000 TAFE places comprise 60 000 new positions, a reduction in fees for 120 000 paid TAFE places and are on top of the 465 000 free TAFE places announced by the Albanese government prior to the election.

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Note to editors:

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