

Government Education and Training International

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Senate Economics Legislation Committee
SG64
Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Secretary

National Vocational Education Training Regulator (Charges) Bill 2012 **Submission on behalf of Government education providers in Tasmania**

The Government Education and Training International (GETI) Tasmania office is responsible for the marketing, enrolment, admissions and ongoing welfare of international students at all Government Schools, Colleges and vocational providers in Tasmania.

The proposed charges relating to offshore compliance audits are of concern. The international education sector is currently facing a severe downturn in onshore student arrivals due to the high Australian dollar, changes to visa regulations and increased competition from other nations. Hence any additional impost on the sector at the present time is unwelcome as we attempt to counter the reduction in onshore students by developing offshore partnerships around the globe. These additional costs make Australia less competitive as compared to other countries.

Whilst quality is of the utmost importance in running offshore programs, cost effectiveness is also a key measure of sustainability for many projects. Australian providers will now have to build in these additional audit costs when submitting proposals to potential partners overseas.

We also note that the Knight Review of the student visa program recommendation number 36 is that the Australian Government “support high quality Australian vocational education and training providers in expanding their offshore training services”. In this context we wish to comment on the following:

- “reasonable expenses” must be clearly defined to ensure that training providers are not penalised by auditors making excessive demands for expenses
- For example, my office coordinates two offshore programs in Shanghai, China and Kuwait City. All my staff and I who are required to travel to these cities fly Economy class on discounted fares, stay in local accommodation on

campus wherever possible and make use of reasonably priced meals and transportation at all times

- The “formula determined by the Minister” must ensure that the cost of the audit is kept to an absolute minimum
- In cities where there are many providers operating (such as Shanghai), several audits should be carried out at once so the overall costs can be shared across several training providers

A likely consequence of these charges on offshore audits is an increase in non-accredited training activities in other countries. These are not overseen by the National VET Regulator.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Ripper
Executive Manager
Government Education and Training International