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## Adult Community Education SECTOR STATEMENT

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**The Victorian State Government has made significant progress in addressing some of the major issues that have concerned ACE providers in recent years. However, a number of recent policy initiatives have accelerated the number of closures and de-registrations of ACE RTOs. The number of Learn Locals delivering pre-accredited training is in decline.**

There are fewer Learn Locals delivering pre-accredited and significantly fewer delivering accredited training for disadvantaged and vulnerable learners than four years ago.

Unpredictable changes in State Government VET policy expose ACE organisations to additional risks and costs and impact significantly on their business planning and modelling. ACE pre-accredited student contact hour pricing has failed to keep pace with increased costs. The regional loading has ameliorated this to a certain extent for eligible providers.

The ACE sector and VET in ACE in particular, is at a crossroads in Victoria. If nothing changes, the decline in ACE provision in both pre-accredited and accredited training will continue, ensuring further education and training inaccessible for many Victorians, particularly those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged.

The ACE sector and Learn Locals in particular, have been positively acknowledged by the current government for the important role they play in the Victorian education and training landscape. However, the consequences of recent policy changes further highlight the need for interventions by the Minister.

It is vital that the government protects the “unique and valuable pathway for vulnerable learners” ACE provides (see Skills First: Community Training Providers, Education State Fact Sheet).

In order to secure and protect the position of ACE providers in the Victorian education and training sector the following actions are essential:

## RECOGNISE

- The development of a Ministerial Statement on ACE which articulates its purpose and value to Victoria; local, community owned education providers as the basis of Learn Local eligibility and the role of ACE in the Education State for both accredited and pre-accredited ACE provision.
- The use of the Ministerial Statement on ACE to promote ACE across government and in the community and in assessing the impact of policy change by government on ACE providers.
- Strengthen the Learn Local brand to increase recognition of the sector, its strengths and value to the community and government.

## PROTECT

- Address the inherently unique challenges associated with the provision of Foundation Skills, including the inflexibility of eligibility and funding mechanisms that penalise providers for the challenges many Foundations Skills learners face, through:
  - ⇒ Removing Foundation Skills from the VET system
  - ⇒ Developing more appropriate eligibility and compliance structures
  - ⇒ Develop a funding model that adequately recognises additional supports required by Foundations Skills learners at all stages of the training process
  - ⇒ Better matched administrative audit requirements and the associated costs to the level of risk a provider presents.
  - ⇒ Address the cost of regulatory processes such as RTO re-registration which effectively discriminates against low volume not for profit providers.
  - ⇒ Increased support for Learn Local RTO’s with the costs of administration and compliance.

## IMPROVE

- The improvement of departmental processes which include:
  - ⇒ Timelines for notification of contract approvals,
  - ⇒ Accurate communications,
  - ⇒ Real consultation with stakeholders before changes happen with longer timeframes for transition to new arrangements when introduced.
- Implement improved systems and funding within ACFE to:
  - ⇒ Provide more opportunities to adjust and apply for pre-accredited hours through different rounds throughout the year.
  - ⇒ Apply annual indexation to the Student Contact Hour (SCH) price in recognition of increased annual costs of employment and
  - ⇒ Ensure greater consistency in the evaluation of pre-accredited courses for SCH funding eligibility.
  - ⇒ Ensure that ACFE Policies including eligibility keep pace with changing social norms including the demands of an ageing community working until later in life.
  - ⇒ Continue and broaden CAIF funding to also include infrastructure and governance training.

### Endorsed by:



**October 2018**