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8 August 2019

MEDIA RELEASE

VET agreement essential to renew focus on trade training, says HIA

Tomorrow's COAG meeting of state and territory leaders with the Prime Minister presents a golden opportunity to bring the VET sector back into the frame of Australia's education system. Vocational education and trade training must receive the same recognition as other education pathways.

"The VET sector has always underpinned the delivery of a skilled trade workforce in Australia," said HIA Chief Executive – Industry Policy, Kristin Brookfield.

"It is vital for Australia's residential building industry that governments come together and heed the warnings of industry and business regarding the challenges facing the VET sector, to reach a cooperative agreement on reforming and improving the VET sector.

"For too long our VET sector has been regarded by both governments and communities as being inferior to the university sector. Nothing could be further from the truth.

"Australia needs both sectors to be strong and efficient. Building a career in a skilled trade is just as important an opportunity as building a career as a doctor or a lawyer.

"The building industry offers a range of jobs, onsite and offsite, which rely on training being available through both VET and university education.

"As pointed out today by NSW Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, there needs to be a holistic approach to tertiary education. Committing to a policy framework where the VET sector is afforded rightful equal status with the university sector is a crucial early step to achieving success.

"Vocational Education and Training is on the COAG agenda tomorrow. The Federal Government brings to the table a starting commitment in the form of its \$525bn Skills Package announced in the April budget, while the Joyce Review into the VET sector provides a comprehensive foundation for discussion.

"In discussing the challenges facing the VET sector a cooperative strategy and way forward needs to emerge from the COAG meeting. From there government consultation with industry can create a platform for success in co-designing a refreshed VET sector that provides the residential building industry and the broader economy with the skilled workforce required to match the jobs that need to be filled," concluded Kristin Brookfield.

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