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TAFE sector welcomes plan for a National Skills Summit

Labor's commitment to position TAFE as pivotal to Australian economic productivity, and stage a National Skills Summit, is welcomed by TAFE Directors Australia (TDA).

Opposition Leader Bill Shorten's proposal at the National Press Club in Canberra today for equal ranking in federal funding between universities and TAFEs makes sense given the lack of balance in Commonwealth higher education funding.

Martin Riordan, Chief Executive of TDA said the vacuum in federal policy on vocational education needed to be recognised.

"The National Skills Summit may be an appropriate way to better support apprenticeships and vocational education – issues missing from last year's National Innovation and Science Agenda.

"TDA endorses any moves by the Commonwealth to boost apprenticeships and the role of vocational education and training, and for this reason, the planned National Skills Summit should be welcomed.

"TAFE students studying a degree are currently deprived of any federal funding contribution, unlike students who study a degree at an Australian university.

"This imbalance is one of a number of issues that need to be corrected," Mr Riordan said.

Mr Riordan said TAFE would contribute to the National Skills Summit, and involve as far as possible, training clients from industry sectors, many of which are facing continuing skill shortages.

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