



# MEDIA RELEASE

7 December 2020

## **TAFEs responding to COVID-19 – a story of transformation**

Australian TAFEs have shown their responsiveness, resilience and innovation during the global COVID-19 pandemic, a new survey shows.

*The Power of TAFE: The COVID Story* is the latest report from TAFE Directors Australia and describes the rapid and structured transformation that TAFEs underwent during 2020 in response to COVID-19. It documents the approaches adopted by TAFEs – how students coped and how staff adapted.

The scale of the digital transformation was unprecedented. TAFEs across Australia deliver over 1200 courses to more than 780,000 students. All courses moved a proportion of their delivery online with many exceeding 70%. Even parts of trade courses, the most difficult to convert to digital delivery, went online. All this happened within a month – learning and skills development was maintained.

Student feedback shows that students appreciated the new forms of engagement in their learning experience, although for some there were challenges with technology, anxiety and isolation.

TAFE staff excelled in providing new and innovative ways to ensure students remained engaged in learning.

Mary Faraone, Chief Executive Officer of the Holmesglen Institute and Chair of TAFE Directors Australia commended TAFEs for their rapid and professional responses during the pandemic.

“TAFEs, committed to their public mission, have responded to the new world with technology-based learning and new courses to support businesses that need new skills,” Ms Faraone said.

“TAFEs’ long held plans and aspirations for online connected learning literally geared-up overnight. This pandemic has shown the power of TAFE. TAFEs have shifted their efforts behind government responses.”

Over 250 fee free courses were offered by many TAFEs to allow people to quickly gain new skills to be ready to get back into work. Courses included COVID-safe infection control, business and financial skills, cybersecurity, community services and career planning.

Over 200,000 people enrolled by July 2020. Many had not previously studied at TAFE.

Craig Robertson, Chief Executive Officer of TAFE Directors Australia said “The survey results validate TAFE’s responsiveness and strong position in the community.

“We need to learn from this experience and take forward the lessons from the innovation forced upon teaching and learning. TAFEs will not be the same again,” he said.

“The transition was a success, especially with the power of the teaching force behind it.

“The power of the network of TAFEs has also been proven. Ideas, resources and professional development have been readily shared among TAFEs.

“Lessons learned during 2020 point to a new future for TAFEs,” Mr Robertson said.

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TAFE Directors Australia is the peak national body representing 28 TAFE institutes, including six dual sector universities with TAFE divisions and nine TAFEs that are also non-university higher education providers.