

Commissioner Mr Jonathan Coppel/Commissioner Mr Malcolm Roberts
Productivity Commission
GPO Box 1428
Canberra ACT 2601

19 December 2019

Dear Commissioner Roberts/Commissioner Coppel

RE: Skills and Workforce Development Agreement: Issues Paper

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Productivity Commission's review of the National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development (NASWD) and for taking the time to meet with me and my colleagues on 17 December 2019. The review is timely and important and presents an opportunity to reshape how Australia's future workforce training needs could be adequately met.

The scope of the study is broad and the information requests are comprehensive; at this time CDU is not in a position provide a thorough response but looks forward to receiving the interim report and providing considered feedback on that report. However, it is worth pointing out that CDU, as a dual-sector institution, is particularly interested in how the Northern Territory's unique contextual circumstances for funding, supporting and delivering training will be addressed by the review and these will be areas that CDU will be particularly keen to respond to following the release of the interim report. These include:

- **National approaches to funding, pricing, contestability and measurement of performance** where the potential impact on a small, geographically dispersed jurisdiction with a higher proportion of low SES, Indigenous, Regional, Remote and very Remote students with a strong tendency to be debt adverse would be significant;
- Broader access to **Language, Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy (LLND)** support for all Australians. Of note is the significant improvement required to lift the LLND capabilities of VET trainers to support student demand. Note that *"Indigenous Adult English LLN has been identified as a significant constraint to access, progression and attainment not only in higher education but along the educational pathway and in work and life"*¹; and
- Impact of **industry 4.0** to training delivery

The NT is a complex jurisdiction in which to deliver training and CDU hopes that adequate consideration will be given to our unique operating context as the Productivity Commission crafts its interim report. As we discussed, CDU is available to discuss the review and respond to queries/points of clarification and information. Please contact Ms Janet Russell, in my Office,

¹ Whole of Community Engagement Final Report: <https://www.cdu1prdweb1.cdu.edu.au/files/2019-09/WCE%20final%20report.pdf>, p51

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I enclose a copy of the CDU submission to the Australian Government Department of Education and Training in February 2019 on Performance Based Funding which highlights some of the difficulties with a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to measuring student success. Also attached is the CDU submission to the National VET Review in January 2019, which you may also find useful.

I look forward to receiving the interim report.

Yours sincerely

Professor Simon Maddocks
Vice-Chancellor and President

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