Training and skills legislation paves the way for NT VET sector

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The Northern Territory Government is modernising the vocational education and training system in the Territory after successfully passing new legislation and reforming the way it obtains industry training and skills advice.

Minister for Employment and Training Peter Styles said the Training and Skills Development Act passed in Parliament today would modernise the NT’s legislation, provide a platform to achieve maximum return on public investment in VET and reduce unnecessary red tape.

“Ultimately this legislation will ensure the Territory’s future training needs are met and our employers, students, trainees and apprentices are best placed to benefit,” Mr Styles said.

“It provides a greater emphasis on training and skills development and significantly updates the current Act to ensure nationally recognised VET which meets the present and future needs of government, industry and the community.

“This Act recognises industry as a key client of the NT VET system and establishes the Northern Territory Training Commission to be comprised of nine members from industry, business and employers.

“The Bill has been put together through extensive consultation conducted with key VET Stakeholders since the review of the NT Employment and Training Act began in 2014.

“Consultation sessions included clients of the VET sector, private businesses, industry associations, training providers, and relevant Australian, State, Territory and Local government representatives.

“The new Act reflects national training arrangements and high-level principles such as transparency, access and equity.

“It will encourage development of a strong training provider market, facilitate growth and development in the VET sector and lead to a sustainable training market capable of delivering quality training across the NT.”

Key elements of the Act include:

- The establishment of the Northern Territory Training Commission.
- Strengthening of the regulatory framework to better protect apprentices and trainees including prohibiting employers that contravene the legislation.

- A new provision to clarify the difference between apprenticeships (generally trades) and traineeships (non-trade).

- Removing the need for a separate Appeals and Review Tribunal as the NT Civil and Administrative Tribunal is able to fulfil this role.

- The basic system of apprenticeships and traineeships will not change, ensuring continuity and stability. The relevant provisions will be carried over and updated to bring them in line with agreed national principles and practices.

The legislative reforms are part of the Country Liberals Government’s commitment to modernise and streamline the VET system in the Territory with a particular focus on increasing industry involvement and advice.

“Following extensive industry consultation the NT Government has also introduced a new organisation called the Industry Skills Advisory Council Northern Territory (ISAC-NT) which will be operational by 1 July, 2016,” Mr Styles said.

“ISAC-NT will undertake the functions currently being carried out by the six Industry Training Advisory Councils (ITACs).

“Existing Department of Business funding will be redirected to increase the capability and capacity of the new organisation including an increase in staff numbers.

“It’s part of the Country Liberals Government’s plan to work together with industry and training providers to ensure a prosperous economy and jobs for Territorians now and into the future.”

All existing staff of the ITACs have accepted positions with ISAC-NT. The governing ISAC-NT board is comprised of the Chairs or Deputy Chairs of the current ITACs. The Chair and General Manager of ISAC-NT are independent of existing ITACs.

A list of the ISAC-NT board members is attached.

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[ISAC-NT Board Members]