

CM2020/3046

**Portfolio:** Tertiary Education**ISSUE: IMPACT OF, AND RESPONSE TO, COVID-19 – CANBERRA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (CIT)****Talking points:**

- Term 2 commenced at CIT as scheduled on 28 April with the online courses where possible. CIT commenced a gradual return to campus from 2 June where access to CIT's campus-based resources is critical to achieving a student's course outcomes. The high priority areas included Australian Apprentices who are nearing completion and Year 12 students in alignment with ACT schools.
- In line with Canberra's Recovery Plan roadmap, CIT established a framework for the second phase of the transition which commenced from 15 June in consultation with staff, industry, unions and ACT Health.
- CIT's planning continues to prioritise learning outcomes for students, but also puts the health and wellbeing of students, staff and the wider ACT community at the forefront of decision making.
- The practical nature of Vocational Education and Training (VET) uniquely relies on hands-on, practical skills instruction and learning and therefore not all courses can be moved to online or remote delivery. However, some practical components for Australian Apprenticeships were moved online or continued through remote delivery.
- The gradual transition back to campus activity since 2 June 2020 has enabled colleges to ensure some students will now complete their Semester 1 studies on time.

Cleared as complete and accurate:	24/06/2020	
Cleared by:	Chief Executive Officer	Ext: 73103
Contact Officer name:	Andrew Whale	Ext: 78960
Cleared for release	Yes	
Information Officer name:	Andrew Whale	

- The changes to completion dates has been due to a combination of factors, including:
  - the inability to deliver some practical face-to-face training, particularly where campus-based tools and facilities are required
  - difficulty in accessing work-based placements for students
  - employers with limited ability or willingness to release employees for training over the past few months
  - issues with some students' digital access, and
  - the difficulty some students have had coping with remote learning.
- CIT is continuously assessing the impacts on course timelines and student completion.
- The electrical trades have continued delivery online with limited capacity. Capstone students (stage 3 students) are priority, with –
  - 21 Electrical Capstone students completing by the end of Semester 1
  - 28 Electrical Capstone students with revised completion dates between 1 September 2020 to 1 October 2020. This is due to the limited access to the practical examination environment under COVID-19 restrictions.
- By prioritising stage 3 Capstone students, the flow-on impact could mean that first and second year electrical trade students may complete one semester later than the normal timeline.
- The National Infection Control Training Fund is a joint initiative by the Commonwealth and states/territories to support the accelerated uptake of infection control training in response to the COVID-19 health and economic crisis.

- CIT is offering four new fee-free online courses on infection control aimed at upskilling local retail, tourism, transport and logistics, hospitality and health care workers. ACT Health including the health protection area for food handling have endorsed the skills sets at CIT.

## Key Information

- While CIT is part of the education sector, CIT is different to the school system – students study in different patterns and the demographic of the student population is more varied. CIT is also different to the university sector, with VET focusing on the practical application of skills and skill-based assessments.

## CIT'S WORKFORCE

- CIT is focused on operating remotely where possible. Staff and students that can work and learn from home will continue to do so consistent with health advice and guidelines.
- Most of CIT's workforce is still working from home with limited staff attending campuses to teach and support our students, manage the response to COVID-19 and some normal business. These staff adhere to strict physical distancing and hygiene protocols.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

- CIT's capacity and capability to operate in a remote environment is varied across the organisation. In some subject areas online learning is not a viable long term solution given the applied application and practical nature of VET.
- Training Package curriculum, led by industry, has stringent requirements regarding demonstration of competence particularly in areas where services are provided to vulnerable groups or to protect the safety of workers.
- Many Training Packages also require students to have access to simulated work environments to demonstrate competence prior to being able to enter the workplace.
- CIT has provided various support to students in the last months including:
  - Online counselling through CIT Student Support Counsellors.
  - Provision of low cost computers through the CIT Student Association for those who do not have access to IT equipment at home.
  - Supporting CIT students with their application for ACT Government's international students support package through the [REDACTED].
  - Many student services, traditionally delivered face-to-face, have been converted to online including system changes to accommodate online enrolment.

- CIT's existing range of fee assistance mechanisms will continue to be made available to any students requiring them. These include fee deferral options, course credits, concessions, payment plans and refunds where appropriate.
- CIT is providing ongoing and up-to-date advice and support for all students including its international students. The International Services Unit has an emergency number that can be used for out-of-hours support.

### Background Information

- CIT activated its Business Continuity Plan on 17 March and has used it to provide a framework of management and responses to the ever evolving challenges.
- With the immediate risk of COVID-19 in the ACT currently contained, and economies moving into recovery it is clear that unemployment rates are higher, a portion of businesses closed and, in some part, a new economy is emerging. CIT is needed to respond across the breadth of these changes. This will be a period of increased demand for skills as workers transition to new jobs and upskill or reskill to be competitive in the workforce as job seeker numbers increase.
- In the short term there is a potential economic impact on CIT's revenue base. Approximately 30 per cent of CIT's revenue base (\$32M in 2019) is from student fees, international student fees and contestable revenue sources. At biggest risk is CIT's annual international student revenue of approximately \$9M. If the ban on international flights continues for an extended period, 2020 semester 2 and 2021, this revenue would be dramatically reduced. Additionally, if the current physical distancing rules remained in place beyond term 2, CIT's contestable revenue may also continue to decline.
- CIT Solutions is a wholly owned subsidiary of CIT, however, its unique corporate governance and structure makes it ineligible for accessing any of the Australian Government COVID-19 stimulus support, and given the dramatic impact of the pandemic on the company's revenue, a mechanism has been established through ACT Government to help ensure the job security of the CIT Solutions workforce as well as to maintain its viability.
- CIT's cash balance is being closely monitored and remains at a sufficient level to ensure the timely meeting of payments. CIT and the CIT Board will continue to closely monitor the impacts of the COVID-19 situation on revenue and CIT's overall financial position.
- CIT has been consulting regularly with the relevant unions. CIT has also established a CIT Campus Implementation Committee including representatives from unions.

Cleared as complete and accurate:	24/06/2020	
Cleared by:	Chief Executive Officer	Ext: 73103
Contact Officer name:	Andrew Whale	Ext: 78960
Cleared for release	Yes	
Information Officer name:	Andrew Whale	

- There is a range of stakeholder views in relation to CIT's approach to returning to campus. CIT endeavours to engage and consult with all stakeholders and keep them informed of plans as they evolve. However, not all requests can be accommodated as it is not possible to apply a consistent approach or quick fix to the current environment resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.