

CM2020/2089

Portfolio/s: Tertiary Education

ISSUE: IMPACT OF AND RESPONSE TO COVID-19 – CANBERRA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (CIT)

Talking points:

TRANSITIONING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Term 2 commenced at CIT as scheduled on 28 April. Throughout the first two weeks of the term, teachers are reaching out and connecting with all existing students to discuss their capacity to engage with learning at CIT, and then offering any appropriate reconfigured teaching and learning activities to meet student needs in these challenging times. Checklists for teachers and FAQs have been prepared to assist with this process.
- Students have been advised not to attend CIT campuses, as the current COVID-19 restrictions prevent normal face-to-face activities.
- CIT is confident that the various measures put in place ensure all students who wish to remain engaged in some type of learning are able to do so. However, this may not be in the format they are used to or in the course they originally enrolled in. It is unknown at this time but it is likely that some students may choose to defer their learning to focus on their work and family commitments.
- 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.
- Courses that were scheduled to have a Term 2 intake and can be delivered fully online throughout the term, will be open for new enrolments. The Diploma of Project Management is an example of one of these courses.

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Cleared for release	Yes	
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- With the support of the [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], CIT is scheduling a series of ACT industry forums over the next 4-6 weeks. These online forums will enable CIT to hear directly from industry and employers about the emerging skills and training they require as a result of COVID-19 to assist with their industry and business recovery. CIT will then seek to incorporate this advice into new training options for industry.
- 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 international students have been provided with that can be used for out-of-hours support.
- Planning is also underway at CIT to transition back to some face-to-face teaching and learning activities when COVID-19 restrictions are eased. This involves complex analysis of all course offerings regarding delivery practices that align with possible future COVID-19 social distancing and public gathering requirements.

POSITIVE CASE OF COVID-19

- On Saturday 21 March, CIT was notified of an employee who tested positive to COVID-19. CIT actively engaged with ACT Health and adhered to their advice.
- As expected there was some anxiety expressed by students and staff. These concerns have been managed by CIT's executive ensuring the balance between alleviating the concerns of both students and staff, while maintaining the privacy of the staff member involved. No further cases have been identified.

PHYSICAL FACILITIES CLOSED

- On 26 March, CIT Tuggeranong and Gungahlin Learning centres were physically closed and on 27 March, the Fyshwick Campus was also physically closed. On 27 March, 24/7 hour access to student learning areas at various campuses also ceased.
- CIT remains open, by phone, online and in limited physical capacity for staff at both Bruce and Reid campuses. These closures will be in place until COVID-19 restrictions are eased.

CIT'S WORKFORCE

- All of CIT's workforce are now working from home with limited staff attending the Reid and Bruce Campuses sporadically to manage response to COVID-19. These staff adhere to strict social distancing and hygiene protocols
- These changes are in line with the ACT Government's direction to work from home where possible, reduce unnecessary travel and reduce potential spread of infection.

Key Information

TRANSITIONING TEACHING AND LEARNING

- CIT's capacity and capability to transition to an increased online presence 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.

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- Each training program offered by CIT (240+) has been assessed as to the degree to which it can be transitioned to flexible delivery arrangements and, where attendance is required (to provide supervision or access to specialised equipment), manage this in accordance with social distancing protocols. CIT is communicating these arrangements to CIT students over the next two weeks.
- Support services are available for all students, either via phone or online.
 - Students have been encouraged to stay engaged with learning and their teachers.
 - CIT Student Services is available to answer general queries and provide fee assistance and advice.
 - CIT Student Support is providing guidance and referrals including counselling and support services which are free for all students.
 - And the CIT Student Association is available to provide support to all students.

Background Information

- CIT activated its Business Continuity Plan on 17 March and have used it to provide a framework of management and responses to the ever evolving challenges.
- When the immediate risk of COVID-19 is contained, and economies move into recovery it is clear that unemployment rates will be higher, a portion of businesses closed and in some part a new economy will emerge. CIT will be 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% 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 the 2020 semester 2 and the 2021 revenue would be dramatically reduced. Additionally, if the current social 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 given the dramatic impact of the pandemic on the company's revenue it's short to medium financial viability is at risk.

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- CIT is working with the CIT Solutions Board and the ACT Government on solutions to help ensure the job security of the CIT Solutions workforce.
- Early indications suggest that more students are accessing CIT's fee assistance measures and requesting refunds in 2020. 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.

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