

Opening statement - Robert Long

Nowra College - Upper House enquiry 12 October 2015

The introduction of Smart and Skilled has had detrimental impacts on TAFE students through increased fees and debt, and reduced course offerings and delivery hours.

The risk of funding cuts to TAFE students has not been adequately assessed and the negative impacts are now being realised.

From discussions with students and teachers I can provide a summary of some of negative impacts on Nowra TAFE.

In my informed opinion the 15% funding loading for students with a disability is not adequate to meet the needs of students with a disability on the south coast and across NSW. The use of this 15% average does not understand the individual needs of students with a disability.

Under Smart and Skilled Nowra TAFE mechanical trade apprentices have experienced a course cut from 36 days per year to 30 days. Teachers and employers have informed me that with increased technology in cars, apprentices need more time to learn not cuts to delivery hours.

Under Smart and Skilled the pre-employment course for mechanical trades at [Nowra TAFE](#) was cut in 2015.

For students wanting to study Arts and Media at Nowra TAFE the course options have been dramatically reduced.

At Nowra TAFE certificate II and III fine art courses have been cut. Nowra now offers a Diploma course that has been cut to 8 hrs per week delivery over 2 years. The student fee has increased to \$19000 and resulted in dramatic reduction in student numbers.

Teachers in [information technology](#), [business studies](#) and retail studies have reported increased pressure to cut delivery hours of teaching, and increased class sizes.

Teachers and students in [community services](#) have reported cuts to teaching delivery hours due to smart and skilled funding cuts. It has been reported to me that new training packages require much more specific practical skills that students need to demonstrate. Students need more practical delivery not less. It has been reported to me that the Certificate III community services course at Nowra has been cut from 12 months delivery to 6 months. It has also been reported to me that some local competitors are delivering certificate IV course 6 months.

It has been reported to me that the Carpentry section traditionally offers a non-apprentice certificate III course for mature aged non apprentices with workplace experience. This course was not offered due to the cost for students exceeding \$10000 under the Smart and Skilled funding program for 2015.

The Carpentry section has received funding for a pre apprenticeship course in 2015 and experienced [strong](#) job outcomes for these pre apprenticeship students.

In conclusion the Smart and Skilled program has had detrimental impacts on Nowra TAFE students and teachers.