

**Submission
No 100**

**INQUIRY INTO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND
TRAINING IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

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By way of introduction, I have been an educator in the university sector in Australia and abroad for 35 years. Last year, I returned to reside in Wollongbar, NSW and, as part of my retirement plan, I enrolled in a TAFE course to be trained as a volunteer adult literacy tutor. It was this involvement with TAFE that has opened my eyes to the gradual and unrelenting decimation in recent years of NSW TAFE as a provider of high quality and properly accountable vocational education and training.

Based on my own inquiries and numerous conversations with concerned people in the community, it is my firm opinion that the primary source of NSW TAFE's decimation is the government's opening up of vocational education and training to new corporate private and profit-driven training providers. I don't propose here to challenge the ideology driving this governmental policy. However, I wish to assert that the model of "permitting market forces to decide" is premised on providers in the competitive market being able to deliver a reasonable standard of product. There are several recent studies which show that this is not the case with respect to vocational education and training. Several educational providers in competition with NSW TAFE have shown scant regard for educational standards in pursuit of profits, and with the consequences of the vocational qualifications being greatly undermined. The ABC 7.30 Report on the highly questionable sales techniques of Careers Australia, aired earlier this year, says as much.

As an educator of long standing and who has been a recent student of TAFE, the Government's approach and policy to vocational education and training makes little sense. Education and vocational training is too valuable and important to our community to be left to market forces, where the market includes for-profit providers offering sub-standard education and training.

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