

**Submission
No 273**

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

Organisation: International Child Care College

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Inquiry into vocational education and training NSW

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2014 **WINNER** HRATA Diploma of Children's Services Hunter Trainee of the Year

2014 **WINNER** HRATA Cert III in Children's Services Hunter Trainee of the Year

2013 **WINNER** Children's Services Hunter Trainee of the Year

2013 **WINNER** APA Education Awards TAFE and Vocational Education Teaching and Learning Resources

2010 **WINNER** APA Education Awards TAFE and Vocational Education Teaching and Learning Resources

2010 **WINNER** Children's Services Hunter Trainee of the Year

2009 **WINNER** ATSI Hunter Student of the Year

2009 **FINALIST** HTAN Trainer of the Year: Vicki Fraser

2009 **WINNER** Children's Services Hunter Trainee of the Year

2008 **WINNER** APA Education Awards: Textbooks in a Series

2008 **WINNER** Children's Services Hunter Trainee of the Year

2007 **WINNER** ATSI Hunter Trainee of the Year

2007 **RUNNER-UP** ATSI State Trainee of the Year

Terms of Reference

I believe that the terms of reference for this hearing do not accurately reflect the most pressing issues facing vocational training in NSW.

1 (b i) Private RTO's are systematically shut out of the secondary education system if a public provider is able to deliver the desired training. This is anti-competitive.

1 (b iv) There is sufficient demand for both public and private providers, particularly in rural, regional and remote areas. Smaller, niche, RTO's who focus on a single vocational area are able to deliver highly specialised quality training which complements programs offered by TAFE. The 'them' and 'us' mentality is not in the best interests of learner, the community or the NSW economy.

1 (e) Industry participation is a complex challenge – my RTO delivers training in children's services. We have excellent relationships with our local industry. However, children's services is an extremely busy and demanding field of work and services have little or no spare time to consult with RTOs. The feedback we universally receive is that they are not in the business of vocational training and are happy to leave training decision to the RTOs. The Industry Skills Council are charged with consulting with industry when they develop training packages – asking RTO's to consult all over again seems to be an unnecessary duplication.

1 (f) The roll out of the NSW Smart and Skilled was a disaster and a display of gross incompetence. The result has been the decimation of excellent niche providers mainly serving regional and rural areas. Not only were the total number of RTOs able to deliver funded training reduced by over 50% thus reducing options for user choice but RTOs closed – this in turn had an impact on the State economy due to job losses (and significant loss of specialist skills and knowledge).

The Minister has announced yet more changes to student fees for 2016 (Smart and Skilled) – fees are to be capped at \$1000 (for approx 135 qualifications) after a threefold increase at the being of 2015! No information has been made available to RTO – our college is current enrolling trainees for 2016 but can't provide the trainee or employer with any information! This is typical of State training Services – RTO's are left out of the information loop and treated with suspicion. My concern is that if a state government department wishes to enter into a commercial contract with a private company they should do so in good faith and apply normal business ethics along with the appropriate checks and balances.

The Smart & Skilled roll out did not include due diligence (until after the allocations); there was no checks in relation to student completion rate or quality of training. Allocations appear to have been based on the size of the RTO – the bigger the RTO & the more qualifications it had on its scope the better! This resulted in allocations of public funds to RTOs that are under investigation by ASQA.

I believe that to introduce yet another funding model so soon after the introduction of S & S would be disadvantageous to the training industry, the employers and the students.

1 (g) Trainees from my RTO have won traineeship awards for the last 8 years – consistently winning over all other providers, including TAFE. We are not the bad guys!

Training packages (TP) – TP appear to be constantly under review and forever changing. This has a huge flow-on coat to the RTO and causes confusion to students and employers. I would like to suggest that TP be reviewed every 3 years or more – this would allow students to complete a course without the need to update part-way through. It would also give RTO's a chance to offer training without the burden (and cost) of changing content/assessments t very short notice.