

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

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The VET Parliamentary Inquiry Submission

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>>> TAFE is like a beautiful quite high achieving middle child, over shone by both its siblings. The older well connected professional sibling and it's noisy needy school aged sibling. TAFE like the middle child has been the glue that has grounded and connected our society. In times of adequate funding TAFE offered educational opportunities and encouragement to all who studied within its open door access policies. The support was not only given by the dedicated teachers, the foundation to the support was the well structured publicly funded system.

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>>> TAFE has grown and been successful because it did what it was suppose to do. It has produced skilled tradespeople, supplied second chance study options and a career/ study path to those that wanted it or were ambitious. TAFE should have guaranteed funding to the 1997 level.

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>>> I am recently retired trade teacher, I learnt my trade at TAFE during 4yrs of a practical and study course to reach a highly valued certificate 4, during the 1970s. A trade cert4 in those days included learning and supervised practise of practical skills along with the knowledge and underpinning rational and reasons about how, where what and why, about the equipment and materials necessary to complete the job. My cert 4 was an education, graduates were able to make decisions about the whole job and future changes in technology.

>> My trade qualification and experience gave me the confidence to continue with study and gain a degree in Education and other tertiary qualifications. I believe everyone should have the same wonderful opportunities as I have had, when people reach their potential they contribute to the capitalist economy and society that is Australia.

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> During the early 2000s, while teaching at Ultimo, I saw delegations from other countries touring the college investigating the TAFE system , facilities and viewing active class rooms in awe of the success and planning how to develop a similar system in their own country.

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>>> In the past TAFE offered the opportunity for everyone to learn and reach their potential and returned \$6.40 for every one dollar invested by the state. As a consequence we all benefit when everyone was educated or has an educated skill. TAFE needs to be for everyone not just the wealthy.

>>> It seems that TAFE's very success has made it a target to be dismantled by the state government's Smart and Skilled funding model and by companies or individuals who want to make a profit rather than educate and support or contribute to society. The smart & skilled model has the money follow a student which is not suited to an established system. It has increased the cost and transferred a lot of the extra cost to students and it is difficult for students to know how much a course will cost until the enrolment procedure is completed. Because of the increased cost of learning to individual students, the government has introduced a system of student loans. People from poorer socio economic back grounds are less inclined to accept debt, as a consequence few non wealthy people will study. VET FEE loans can be a large as Uni loans as there is not a cap on how much a course will cost. The free market sets higher and higher prices which are barriers to people studying.

Private for profit (PfP) RTOs lower their costs by not having qualified teachers and offer shorter length courses. This makes it more difficult for TAFE compete and to continue offering high quality education and training. PfPs also have give aways, iPads, to encourage un aware students to enrol with them.

The quality of an education, is only clear and measurable at the end of a qualification. The quality of education can not be measured at the beginning. The reduction in the length of study time is

seriously damaging to the value of qualification for all especially for safety reasons for ticketed licences trades. And for the loss of opportunity for all others.

Another way PfP RTOs reduce cost is to have fewer teaching hours and lots of online work. To study Online is not suited to most learners it is isolating and can only be undertaken by those with high literacy levels. It breaks down the sense of community or a class together.

TAFE has offered school students a transitional program, TVET. This is a solution or a suitable way to continue learning without being at a school. Offering another way to reach the HSC.

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>> Skilled qualified trades people are safe workers as they know how to do the job safely and efficiently. WHS issues are important and need to be included in every course not only for ticketed trade areas.

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>> Why is the state government giving our tax payers money to private for profit providers (RTOs) to make a profit? Has the community been asked?

>> When our tax money is given to TAFE all of that money stays within the system and goes to the classroom. If the system was not performing to the government's requirements, it needed to fix the management they employed, rather than dismantle the TAFE system.

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>> How to Improve today's TAFE:

>> Increase Public funding to 1997 standards Employ only qualified

>> teachers, not cert4 trainers or assessors Have one state wide system

>> or one institute with one HR department Establish curriculum centres

>> so that all colleges across the state offer the same course of study

>> for the same qualification Set nominal hours to complete a qualification, with time to Teach underpinning knowledge and skills with teacher supervised practise.

>> Establish graded qualifications not competences Remove the flawed EBS

>> computer program (complete a trial of any new program before it is

>> introduced) Stop selling or giving away TAFE campuses to universities, other state departments such as mining in country areas.

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>> Thank you for having the inquiry

Kind regards

Jennifer Jenkins-Flint