

**Submission  
No 278**

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

**Name:** Mr Patrick Regnault

**Date received:** 12/09/2015

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I would like to express my disappointment at not having been notified of the Hearings that occurred in the Lismore Region.

As I mentioned when I met you in the afternoon at Lismore TAFE I believe that professional organisation should have been notified directly of the Inquiry on Vocational Education and Training in NSW and subsequent Hearings in Regional areas. Professional bodies such as Australian Institute of Horticulture, Nursery association, Growers associations should have been contacted directly. Press releases slip through the net very easily as for Twitter ....

I was surprised to see that the 'Employer' was the Meat work. They are a part of the work fabric of the region and have relationship with RTOs but are hardly the main users.

As an employer who has used TAFE and other private RTOs in the region for myself and employees I believe that asking one of the largest industry in the region, Horticulture, would have been more appropriate.

As a small employer I have a few points to make which I hope you will pass on to the Hearing Committee.

- Education is very important and cannot be a political or partisan game
- Face to face training is essential to students. Some units can be taught in part online but to see if a student has fully understood the unit regular and thorough assessments have to take place
- The watering down of horticultural training is leading to a lack of properly qualified people in the industry. Cert III in Structural Landscaping gives the holder the possibility to work as a qualified landscaper and set up a landscaping business, yet few are capable to undertake that role. The Horticulture side of landscaping has nearly disappeared from the curriculum leading to a paucity of plant knowledge. This is starting to have an impact to the nursery industry via dissatisfied clients who are using less plant materials.
- The importance of Literacy and numeracy is too often underplayed or willfully ignored. At Cert III level a year 10 or equivalent should be compulsory. The impact of poor L & N is not to be underestimated. Chemical use require careful measuring, Construction of structures the same, Poor literacy leads to shoddy paperwork and misunderstanding, the list goes on.
- The Hearing Committee should be aware of how VET is done in other countries outside the English speaking world. In France, Germany, Switzerland or Belgium for instance when training the emphasis is on producing professionals, here it is tradespeople. There is a difference which shows in the self-esteem and work practice of individuals.
- The poor completion rate of apprentices in NSW can be linked but not limited to a few factors:

- Employers need to be checked when employing an apprentices or trainees that they are in effect training them to become qualified in their profession. I do know for a fact that some are using apprentices as 'Barrow Boys and Girls'.

- RTOs have to employ teachers that are current in their field, this is not always the case.

- Increasing a school to trade scheme that is effective would be a great way to filter students to a career in what is often referred to as trades.

- Valuing the VET sector as a valid and essential part of the work fabric instead of a path for drop out would go a long way in improving completion rate.

I hope these few points will be considered objectively by the Committee

Best Regards,

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