INQUIRY INTO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Name: Mr David Barnett

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To Whom it May concern,

I write to you today deeply concerned about TAFE and it's future in NSW. Clearly there seems to be a plan by the NSW Coalition government to dismantle TAFE by stealth and they are doing it through the rather disingenuous name of "Smart and Skilled". The name is an oxymoron. There's nothing smart about huge fee increases for young students trying to launch their working life. Leaving them a HECS style debt that they will be burdened with for years, possibly decades to come. There's nothing smart and skilled about reducing face to face hours teaching and giving students less education for significantly more money. To be frank, this policy now in motion is just plain stupid.

I am a teacher at TAFE so you might say that I have a vested interest in it keeping alive, well and viable. But I have also been a student at TAFE and have benefitted from the low cost, quality education that it has traditionally provided for literally hundreds of thousands of young (and older) people. I did a business course at Hornsby TAFE 14 years ago and still have fond memories of my teachers and fellow students. Now I run my very own mobile cafe business and I can honestly say TAFE helped give me the skills and confidence to begin such a venture. And it didn't cost me an arm and a leg. I couldn't have afforded much anyway-I was on Barista's wages. I also completed my Certificate 4 in training and assessment at TAFE and it led to me getting work as an ESOL teacher at Newcastle TAFE which I am very grateful for.

My story is one of hundreds of thousands. A lot of my mates did their trades at TAFE, or their HSC because they didn't finish school-TAFE was their second chance because it was affordable.

Please don't let this government destroy TAFE-the social impact will be felt for generations to come, and it may not be recoverable.

quality espresso in unexpected places...

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