

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

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TAFE is integral to skilling the youth (and older people) of Australia. I think that I can best illustrate this by giving you examples from my own family.

My eldest was accepted to do computer engineering at university in 2007 but on further examining the syllabus he decided that he wanted something more practical so enrolled himself in TAFE to do I.T. We paid the yearly fees which at the time only was only in the hundreds of dollars. Part was through the first year he was asked by TAFE to take part in a new program they were trialling that would allow students to continue at TAFE and also complete a university degree in I.T. by correspondence (for which he took out a HELP debt). The cost of the degree was lower because many of the TAFE units he was studying overlapped with the degree course.

So my son ended up after 3 years with a degree that he needed for work but which he said was basically useless as the subject matter studied was very out of date. What was most valuable to him he said was the TAFE units studied plus the opportunities that TAFE gave him to complete other outside commercial units of study in the I.T area which he would not have known were available if he had not been studying at TAFE.

He now works in I.T managing a huge computer system.

My second son completed 2 different TAFE certificates the second being in Outdoor Sport and Recreation at Blue Mountains TAFE which he found absolutely wonderful. I am not sure if the course still exists up there as it was threatened with closure because of all the cuts to TAFE a few years ago. My son loves the industry he works in and I do not believe he would have developed this passion if not for the wonderful staff at the TAFE.

My daughter has just started this year studying a Library technician's Diploma at Mt Druitt TAFE.

Unlike my other children she has had to take out a HELP debt as her 1.5 year, one and a half days a week course is costing \$9000.

When you hear figures like that it is no wonder that TAFE enrollment has dropped that and cuts to courses are doing irreparable damage to a wonderful Australian institution.

I have a university degree and I will be honest with you; what is taught at TAFE is far more useful to most people than a huge amount of teaching at universities.

If we continue to strip TAFE of staff and funding we will be stripping our youth of the opportunity to skill themselves for the future.