

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

**Organisation:** New South Wales Teachers Federation

**Date received:** 14/08/2015

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# **APPENDIX 1**

## **Vocational Education and Training Case Studies**

## **A. TAFE Fee Increase Means Fewer Students Taking TAFE Courses.**

The rise in fees at TAFE has had a twofold effect on students. Many potential students are now choosing not to attend TAFE or continuing but finishing with a large debt.

According to the Sydney Morning Herald the fee increase means that there will be up to 30 000 less students enrolled in TAFE this year. In the most popular government funded courses there were 18 073 less students this year.

Comparing fees from 2014 and 2015, an Advanced Diploma of Electrical Engineering would have cost \$3636.00 for two years study and is estimated to cost \$7550.00 in 2015. A \$3914.00 increase based on the estimate given on the government's Smart and Skilled website. A Diploma of Agribusiness Management at 2014 prices would have cost \$3028.00 for two years study and at 2015 cost will be \$4780.00. A \$1752.00 increase based on the estimate given on the government's Smart and Skilled website. Costs for completing courses vary depending on the circumstances of the student, it's a voucher system – each student gets a unique voucher based on previous study, disability, aboriginal students

Some examples of the fee increase include a 20 year old design student's course cost from \$1200 - \$12 000. She has deemed this too expensive to return. (SMH 24/6/15)

According to the Illawarra Mercury (9/6/15) Students studying a Diploma of Early Education and Care were given an unexpected bill for \$1 200.00 and told if it was not paid they could not graduate.

ABC Rural (18/5/15) reports that the Wool industry says that the TAFE fees are too high. Two common courses, the Wool Clip Presentation Certificate III and Wool Classing Certificate IV had in the past cost \$419.00 and \$570.00 respectively. Now the Certificate III could cost \$2 600.00 and the Certificate IV could cost \$3 210.00 the two courses together now costing over \$5 000.00 when before they cost less than \$1 000.00

ABC News (10/3/15) reports that the second year of a painting and decorating course has gone from \$500.00 to \$1 300.00

Finally the Newcastle herald (9/3/15) compares the cost of two people doing the same course one starting semester 2 2014 and one starting in 2015. This article found that the student starting in 2014 will pay \$2 100.00 whereas the student starting in 2015 will pay \$16 000.00

## **B. Introduction of New Computer System**

Many news sources have pointed out the difficulties surrounding the enrolment computing system, called Educational Business System (EBS) leaving both students and teachers in an over worked and stressful situation.

According to ABC News (10/3/15) the head of TAFE NSW apologised for the delays caused by the new software and the changes to the fee structure under Smart and Skilled.

The Sydney Morning Herald (15/3/15) reported that after 5 weeks thousands of TAFE students were not enrolled and could not access fee notices and many did not know what their course fees would be.

In order to deal with the huge backlog of student enrolments ABC News (20/3/15) reports that Hunter TAFE issued a "desperate plea" for people to work overtime, both nights and weekends. It was said that those working would need to have accurate data entry and keyboard skills. The students were in classes but many of them had not been enrolled. Staff called the system a disaster. TAFE Teachers have labelled the system as a ludicrous situation which should have been working properly before implementation.

Teachers have also been left to fix the problems left with EBS. With there being problems with entering marks into EBS teachers were asked to put assessment results into spreadsheets, and then send these marks to their head teachers. They were then to enter assessment results into EBS, meaning that the whole assessment system took twice as long as usual. Individual teachers were also made to do the chasing up of students in their classes to make sure they were enrolled and had paid. Requiring teachers to check rolls for any students that had not been enrolled on EBS then send them to customer services to enrol and pay, then telling the students that if they had not paid in five days that they could no longer attend courses. Further to this Head teachers were required to do roll book audits, checking the students were in fact valid enrolments, and trades teachers and trades head teachers also had to follow up to make sure that students in apprentice courses were correctly enrolled. It was implied that teachers may suffer disciplinary action or loss of professional standing if these tasks were not carried out. While it is part of the teacher's job to make sure that students are properly enrolled, it was the failure of EBS that made completing enrolments so difficult, adding hugely to the workload and stress of both teachers and other staff. To threaten them with disciplinary action is at best unreasonable.

## **C. Teacher Experiences**

### **1. From a Teacher in the Goulburn Area**

I teach students courses at TAFE in Adult Basic Education and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. Most of my students have begun various courses not only with very little skills in literacy, language and/or computers but also very little confidence and self-esteem. They have very limited personal experiences and social interactions and need a second chance in education to prepare them for future training and employment.

Of course TAFE provided this opportunity with fully qualified teachers (i.e. post graduate qualifications in Adult Education), small class sizes, curriculum designed to meet the particular needs of the student cohort and the opportunity to learn at their own pace without being labelled failures.

The stories from students who have completed these courses demonstrate an 80% or over success rate with students moving onto mainstream classes which led to their future employment and happiness. Many of these students moved away from reliance on welfare as they were able to move into employment.

These courses have always been free. However with the Smart and Skilled implementation at the beginning of this year my students who are not AMEP students have to pay between a concession fee of \$80 to any amount from \$350 to \$1900, depending on their particular circumstances. Of course many of these students do not continue once they finish their free hours as many are women whose families cannot afford to pay. They also have to pay for childcare. For these students who come from the working class of society, this is impossible. Women in particular cannot use money that their family requires. Young people do not have the money.

Finally these courses have always been free as it is a well-known fact that this education benefits our community and economy as a whole. There is a lot of research that demonstrates this, especially one commissioned by the NSW parliament which concluded that for every \$1 invested in TAFE the State receives \$6.40 in return. (Allen's consulting).

#### **Smart and Skilled impacts on TAFE on students from Goulburn TAFE**

- Students have been turned off education because of the fees (e.g. Cert 3 in Landscaping \$12,000, similarly childcare and wool classing).
- Students not able to find out how much a course they are interested in will cost as there are various costs depending on circumstances. So in a class there could be a student paying very little and another student paying thousands because they have previously completed a course in another area when they were young.
- Classes are not run because of lack of enrolments.
- Class sizes need to double to make them viable. (Aged care course has 30 students instead of 15).
- Rural campuses are "hibernating" classes, rooms and build because they are not being used.
- Education has been turned into Business with managers having no educational experiences, more managers and fewer teachers, increased record keeping and less teaching.
- Systems not working so results not issued or issued incorrectly.

## **2. From a Teacher in the Wagga Wagga Area.**

### **Loss of Courses**

The pre-apprentice building and construction is no longer delivered, as we were told it involves two teachers and is too expensive to run.

This course had a proud history, building over 85 Department of Housing homes in Wagga Wagga. The success rate for employment was over 80%. Builders to this day still ring asking for the pre-apprentice students for employment. Our reply is the course no longer runs due to cost.

### **Loss of positions**

General education is no longer available; there are no options for people to do their HSC through TAFE.

My niece fell pregnant in her year 10 studies and left school to raise her child. After settling into her new family life, she was able to complete her HSC at TAFE. She is now a qualified Nurse thanks to TAFE. She was one of the lucky ones.

### **3. From a Teacher on the North Coast**

- Students are getting quotes/bills for Certificate III courses of \$6000.00 as a result of previously completed study. We have had students who can't afford to do the course.
- We have had instances of prospective students for Certificate 1 and II in IT with no concessions that can't afford to pay the full fee. Impacting their ability to study and also affecting class viability. Class numbers are lower than previous intakes.
- Student with auto credits for previous study is having an impact on course delivery hours.
- Costing, there is still confusion over quotes for Smart and Skilled courses. Students are getting told different prices....the fee complexity is onerous on admin staff, teachers and students.
- Unique Student Identifier (USI) Smart and Skilled, Educational Business System (EBS), Customer Relations Manager (CRM). With all the different systems student are receiving multiple phone calls to try and get their enrolment process finalised, some to the point where they are telling us not to call again. No longer interested in the course if this is what it takes to get enrolled.
- What is the cost to the institutes for extra staff to implement this enormous enrolment process? How much of the Smart and Skilled money is going to pay extra staff to implement the Smart and Skilled requirements and not to course delivery.

### **4. From a Teacher in the Illawarra**

I spoke with a young woman last week who was looking at a career change because she had completed a Diploma of Business but could not find work. She had decided that part of the problem was that although she had skills in business management. She was very interested in health and fitness and so wants to complete the training required to become a Personal trainer. She said that already having business knowledge and skills would help her create and run a successful business. To obtain the required qualifications to secure registration with Fitness Australia she requires a CIII in Fitness to enter the industry and a CIV in Fitness to act as a personal trainer for low risk clients and a Diploma of Fitness to work with clients of moderate risk including people with disorders such as morbid obesity.

This young woman seemed to have a very clear employment and career objective.



Unfortunately when she attempted to enrol in CIII Fitness she discovered that because she already had a Diploma, even though it was not in the same field, she did not qualify for Smart and Skilled subsidy. She asked if it was possible for her to enrol directly into the Diploma of Fitness which would allow her to qualify for VET fee help. Unfortunately the pre-requisite for entering the Diploma are significant industry experience. Even if she had been able to enrol directly into the Diploma, not all of the units from CIII & CIV are contained within the Diploma which may have impacts on her ability to register in the various employment categories with the regulating body Fitness Australia.

The result was a potential student with a high potential for achieving success and continuing into an area of targeted priority employment was discouraged and financially prevented from progressing due to Smart & Skilled and the dysfunctional relationship with Industry requirements.

I am also aware of a case where a person registered with Max-Employment Solutions has been told that if he chooses to enter into study at the CIII level (entry level employment qualification) he must still apply for fifteen employment positions per week. I understand that the aim of VET is to move people into employment but this situation increases the pressure on learners, if they find employment before finishing their qualification they must either leave their study and enter employment in work that obviously does not require even a CIII which is typically low paid unsustainable employment or turn down an offer of employment which is likely to put them into conflict with the employment co-ordinator.

This whole situation seems destined to push down the qualification and education level of Australians, further inhibiting social mobility and widening the gap between the haves and have nots and increasing the requirements for the importation of intellectual product from elsewhere in the world.

## **5. From a Teacher on the North Coast**

I had a student whom wanted to enrol in a Certificate III course in the first half of the year. As she had already completed a University Degree the cost of the course was over \$1500.00 and unaffordable. In order to save cost, she was enrolled in the Certificate IV course, so the cost was minimised.

She then had to study the Certificate III units so skills could be learned before going onto the Certificate IV. I was advised that the units studied would go in the Cert III, would go into the Cert IV automatically, (even if they were not part of the course – in the early months of February/March. However when she completed the units in Cert III, we could not credit these to her record, as this was oversupply of units.

We were not informed about this aspect - until many of the units were completed in Cert III. Now she can't get the 13 units now studied in semester 1 2015 as the units are now considered to be 'over serviced'.

Sadly we should have been informed of this in the beginning of the year, but this was not the case

## **6. From a Teacher in the Illawarra**

### **Anecdotes re Smart and Skilled in NSW:**

Case Studies of students requiring development of Foundation and Core skills who are not eligible for Smart and Skilled courses.

These cases are just a few of many students who have been turned away from study as they are not eligible for Smart and Skilled.

### **Impact on Students**

**Student 1:** is 49 years old and has an engineering degree from Macedonia from 1985 (30 years ago). He is on a commonwealth Government payment as he was retrenched a few years ago. He does not speak, read write or understand English well enough to get back into the workforce or for engagement with the community.

He is not eligible to study English Language under Smart and Skilled as he has a higher level qualification. To study he would need to pay the full fee of \$2940. This cost prohibitive.

**Student 2:** is on Commonwealth benefits and has a Certificate 3 in Business Administration from a Private Provider. She wants to study Foundation Skills as she knows she has core skills deficits in Reading, Writing and Maths which will make studying the Certificate 4 in Business Administration, or getting a job, very difficult for her. She is ineligible to study to improve her Foundation Skills under Smart and Skilled as she has already completed a Certificate 3 in Business Administration. To study foundation skills she would have to pay the full fee which is \$2,940 which is prohibitive.

**Student 3:** is 65 and retired. He wants to learn basic computer skills so he can engage more in the community and with his volunteer work. He also wants to be able to use computer skills to complete forms such as the census. He completed a degree in 1975 but has no computer skills. He is not eligible to do a basic computer skills course at TAFE under Smart and Skilled as he has a higher qualification. To study full fee the cost would be \$2340 which is prohibitive.

**Student 4:** is young and unemployed. He has had a very disrupted education and now realises he needs to improve his Foundation Skills in Literacy, Numeracy and basic computers to be able to get a job or progress on to mainstream study. He has student a certificate 1 and 2 in Foundation Skills but still needs more time to work on his core skills gaps. These skills take time to develop and progress depends on the extent of the skills gaps, student learning ability and addressing other barriers to learning. Under Smart and Skilled, this student cannot study more foundation skills as he has already completed certificate 1 and 2. This student needs more time to study at Certificate 2 level to consolidate his skills and add more units which would result in a broader range of foundation skills development and employability skills. There are many additional units which are different from those he has already studied which could be added to his study at Certificate 2 level, which would serve this purpose. However having studied the core and electives in one foundation skills course, he is excluded from adding additional units as he is course complete. To



study more Cert 2 Foundation Skills again with different units, the full fee cost is \$2830 which is prohibitive.

**Student 5:** is 21 years old and is on the Autism Spectrum. She is unemployed but has completed a Diploma in Children's Services. She wants to Study Certificate 3 in Education Support and get some RPL for the units she has covered in her Diploma. Her goal is to work in a school as well as preschools, to expand her range of employment opportunities. She is not eligible to study the Cert 3 Education Support under Smart and Skilled, as she has a higher level qualification. She has a disability and is on Commonwealth benefits but as she has a higher level qualification, this disqualifies her from the Smart and Skilled subsidy for her disability.

**Student 6:** has completed course 10089NAT Skills for Work and Training. This training package is set up with one core unit and many choices of electives which can be tailored to develop skills in particular vocational areas as well as foundation skills such as English language, Literacy, Numeracy and employability Skills. This 10089NAT course this student studied had a hospitality focus. She now would like to enrol in course 10089NAT Skills for Work and training with a Basic Computer focus. She believes this will make her more employable and add to the range of skills required by the Hospitality sector. She is ineligible under Smart and Skilled to do this course again, even though the 10089NAT Basic Computer skills course has completely different elective units which would expand her skills base. She would get credit transfer for the one core unit. The Access the works and training courses (10088NAT) and Skills for work and training courses (10089NAT) were designed to develop skills in a number of areas and should be able to be repeated if the units are different and therefore developing a different range of vocational skills.

The road to study and employment is not always a linear projectory, where a student progresses neatly through Cert 1 2 3 4 Dip and Advanced Dip.

Students need to be assisted under Smart and Skilled to:

- Study Foundation skills English Language, Literacy & Numeracy and Core Skills (including, learning, employability and digital literacy) at any time and not be precluded if they have other qualifications.
- Revisit Foundation Skills, as assessed or as they feel they require, even if they have higher level qualification.
- Stay longer in foundation Skills to address core skills deficits as required by individual learners with multiple barriers to learning.
- Repeat certificates in Foundation Skills which cover different units and which are tailored to different vocational areas and employability skills.

Study in a lower level qualification in (X), even if they hold a qualification higher in (Y), i.e. A Diploma in Children's services should not preclude a student from doing a Certificate 2 in basic computing or a Certificate 3 in Education Support, to prepare for the workforce and position them better for a broader range of employment

## **7. From a Teacher on the North Coast**

- Two ex NSW TAFE apprentices (small motor mechanics) were employed by a very large motor cycle shop in Brisbane. They had one year to go of their apprenticeships. Management looked for a local TAFE to send them but couldn't find one so elected to enrol them in a close by Private Provider. In the one year to go course, they had two units to complete: a) How to pull a motor apart b) How to put a motor back together; two very important units, I think you would agree. The morning of their first day, they wrote out a cheque for their enrolment, and that afternoon they came back to the workshop with their testamurs and their course completed documents. (This story was reiterated to me by the manager of the workshop who was disgusted with the direction of the VET system)
- I know a manager of a large bus workshop (600 buses). He will no longer take on apprentices because of the quality of the training they receive. (As told to me by the sister of the manager)
- Closer to home, I am a fulltime teacher of management and real estate, an SEO. Acting Head Teacher & Teacher in Charge. I have been teaching full time since 1993 & I have had full classes plus since that time. At this point I have no students and no classes and am back to my substantive role after 18 years out of it.
- Our Section (combined Business services & office Admin) was supervising over 400 hours (200+ from each) two years ago. WE have a combined effort of 35 hours this year.
- Car parks are empty at our college and walking around the campus it is a case of "spot the student." And we were one of the bigger campuses on the North Coast

## **8. From a Teacher in Wollongong**

1. The introduction of Smart and Skilled and the computer administration system, SALM/EBS that has been developed to manage it has been an unmitigated disaster. Many students who completed courses in 2014 have still not received results while students who started courses in 2015, who have not even attempted core units of courses, have been issued with qualifications. In addition to this, prospective students have not been able to access information about courses that are on offer at various TAFE campuses across NSW and those who, through the efforts of teachers, managed to commence a course of study were not been able to enrol for several months.
2. Since the implementation of Smart and Skilled, there has been a huge increase in the number of courses offered at Diploma level and a decrease in the number of courses being offered at Cert II and Cert III levels. The reason for this is simple. RTOs are able to generate greater income from Cert IV and Diploma level courses. But, what this means is that students, who do not have the option to enrol in prevocational courses that will assist them to develop the foundation skills needed for higher level courses, are being left with no choice but to enrol in Diploma, or other higher level courses, without the basic skills needed to successfully complete such courses. The consequence of this is that many students are enrolled in courses they do not have the capacity to complete

and many withdraw or do not complete their course. It is inevitable that this will impact on the morale of individuals and their motivation to undertake any other courses of study.

3. Another major problem for students, since the commencement of Smart and Skilled on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2015, has been access to accurate information about the level of fees to be paid. Prior to the implementation of Smart and Skilled fees were determined on the basis of the level of course that a student enrolled in but this criterion has been replaced by a much more complicated fee structure which has been a nightmare for administration staff, teachers and students to navigate. For example, I am personally aware of a number of students who have disabilities who applied online to undertake TAFE courses who received a print out from the TAFE NSW Course Cost Calculator TEA stating that they would be required to pay \$0.00 fees who later received letters demanding fees. One such student received a bill for \$15,500.
4. Another student, that I know, who received a TEA stating he had to pay \$0.00, before he commenced his course, was later accused of providing false information on his course application with the intent that this would enable him to avoid having to pay for another course. This was not the case. The student concerned clearly stated that he already had a Diploma on his application and this was substantiated by a copy of the printed application he submitted. Problems like these would never have happened before Smart and Skilled was implemented and problems like this make TAFE look bad even though TAFE is not responsible.

Surely, the NSW Government, in its implementation of Smart and Skilled, has a responsibility for ensuring that TAFE Institutes across NSW have access to an administrative system that enables them to provide accurate information to potential students about the level of fees that they have to pay and thereby maintain registration to operate as an RTO under the conditions set by the Australian Skills Quality Authority, ASQA.

5. Another problem that has intensified since the implementation of Smart and Skilled is the availability of "Access Courses" that target the needs of disadvantaged people, in particular people with disabilities. Access courses are courses that have been designed and tailored to the specific needs of people who have disabilities, in particular those who have an intellectual disability, and have been offered in TAFE NSW campuses across NSW for over 30 years.

The IPART Recommendations acknowledged that 'in some circumstances, referred to as 'thin markets' provision of additional funds through "Community Service Obligation" or CSO payments may need to be made available to TAFE and that all TAFE NSW Institutes have received such funds for this calendar year. However, the way that such funds have been allocated is resulting in a discretionary and unregulated system of allocating such resources. As a consequence of this some TAFE Institutes have allocated funds for the delivery of "Access Courses" while others have not.

6. Another issue is the level of support available to accommodate for the needs of students who have disabilities who have high support needs. Some students have not been provided with the level of support needed and this has resulted in legal action.

However, despite all of this and the huge number of complaints from students, teachers, employers and other members of the public, the NSW Government has remained determined to hold firm in its denial that there are any major problems with the system. The consequence of the failure of the system and the huge increases in fees for courses delivered under Smart and Skilled is that individuals are losing the motivation to undertake VET courses in NSW.

### **9. From a Teacher in Sydney**

In the Sydney Institute HSC subjects which are combined Year 11 and Year 12 which previously had an allocation of six hours a week have been reduced to four.

In the Tertiary Preparation Certificate which is an alternative to the HSC for mature age students subjects have been reduced from four to three hours a week.

This of course generates stress and anxiety for both students and teachers and makes it very difficult to do justice to the curriculum.

Vocational Education and Training plays a major role in the rehabilitation of inmates in prisons and in reducing the likelihood of them re-offending.

Yet NSW prisoners are not classed as a "disadvantaged group" under TAFE's Smart and Skilled and are therefore required to pay full fees for all courses including external courses. Most inmates cannot afford these fees and only Aboriginal inmates or inmates with a disability are eligible for an exemption.

### **10. From a Teacher on the North Coast**

As a part time casual teacher for North Coast TAFE I work over a number of campuses and have seen the devastating and immediate impact of the Baird government's new Smart and skilled regime. Unfortunately the suffering caused by this policy will hit the most vulnerable in our community the hardest. The students and the casual teaching staff will be most affected.

The faculty of TAFE I work in, and the only one I can comment on is the Education, Employment and Support section of TAFE. In this faculty we provide a second chance at education for many disadvantaged people in our community. We help young people who have not coped in the school system, and many older people who have little educational or employment experience. Often these students will go on to find employment or become involved in further study.

The head teachers I work for are all dedicated and caring professionals. Despite severe government cuts they have successfully managed to provide a wide range of courses for the TAFE community. However savings have had to be made and most class times have been reduced by ½ to 1 hour or up to 28%. Worse still the semester has been reduced from 18 weeks to 15 weeks which further reduces the learning/teaching time.

In EE&S this year:

- Our Year 12 equivalent course, the Tertiary Preparation Certificate, class time has been slashed by 36% in one campus



- Certificate 2 and 3 classes generally have lost between 17% and 38% of teaching time.

With such reductions in class time each semester it is obvious that it will be extremely difficult for our students to achieve their course outcomes. Of course, the expectation from management will be that somehow the teachers will make up for this loss of time. And no doubt the teachers will do their best for the students in their care by staying back after class, sacrificing lunch breaks, and working online, and without pay, to help the students.

The Baird cuts have also negatively affected the everyday lives of casual teachers. In the EE&S faculty of North Coast TAFE over 70% of the teaching staff is casual. Of course casual workers with no contract are vulnerable to exploitation and an easy mark for Baird's Smart and Skilled cuts. Whole classes had to be axed from the start of the semester. I saw two staff members in tears as the realisation hit that they would no longer be able to pay the mortgage.

In our household, where we have two, hardworking and professional 'part time' casual teachers, we have certainly felt the cuts. Due to reduced class times we have suffered a combined household income reduction of 22%. Not only that but now we are only paid for 30 weeks of the year. It will be difficult to survive the remaining 22 weeks on savings for families like ours. We are by no means an exception. There are many teachers who will suffer similarly.

Unfortunately for North Coast TAFE, this lack of regard for the frontline workers in the organisation will mean that in future it will be extremely difficult to recruit and hold new, younger teachers. It is unlikely that potential new teachers will want to make a career in a workplace that is casualised, uncertain and, frankly, exploitative.

I understand that cuts are required under Smart and Skilled but it seems very unfair that all the savings are made through cuts to the 'part-time' casual teaching staff, and cuts to student class time. (Students, after all, are the very reason for our existence.) Unfortunately, 'part time' casual teachers and students are easy marks for exploitation.

It is obvious that the government cuts to TAFE are already having a devastating impact on the quality of education provided. The situation will only get worse if Smart and Skilled is allowed to continue.

## **11. An employer on the Central Coast**

I write to you to raise my concern for Deaf students undertaking studies at TAFE NSW in 2015. I write to you as a small business owner who employs an apprentice plumber who is Deaf. The apprentice has been working for us full time since June 2013 and attends weekly classes TAFE NSW.

For many years, TAFE NSW has been an accessible place of education for students of all backgrounds and abilities, including support needs. Deaf students have historically been provided interpreting and note taking support to allow them to participate in the classroom. As Deaf students statistically have poor literacy levels than their hearing peers, they are offered further support with literacy Numeracy tutorials when required.

Until June 2013 Our Apprentice had no job. He received income from the Disability Support Pension whilst spending hours a day applying for work. For each interview he attended, his

deafness was seen as a barrier to employment. That was until he began his apprenticeship in plumbing with us. With the assistance of the Deaf society of NSW employment service, he eagerly signed on for an apprenticeship and began attending weekly classes at TAFE NSW

Teacher consultant for Deaf and Hearing Impaired students assessed our apprentices support needs and consulted the relative faculty. Due to the practical element of this course it was determined that only one Auslan (Australian Sign Language) Interpreter was needed for the 8 hour class. A note taker was also engaged for the theory component, equating to four hours weekly. With this support he has excelled, achieving some of the highest marks in the class. He is no longer dependant on the DSP and instead is a functioning member of the Australian workforce and a valued employee of our business.

Essential supports cost the institute \$704.00 a week. This equates to \$12672.00 per semester. This cost has been historically funded recurrently. Yet with the funding cuts to be implemented from January 2015, TAFE will only receive a total of \$313.83 from NSW smart and skilled disability loading and \$5500.08 from federally funded from Disabled Australian Apprentice Wage Scheme (DAAWS). This totals \$5813.91 per semester, creating a shortfall of \$6858.09 per semester. Post January 2015, our apprentice will have a further 3 semesters to complete in order to qualify in his trade. This is a grand total of \$20574.27 in unfunded support costs.

This is just one example, I have heard that some other students will have a shortfall of over \$50 000 per semester under the new funding model, particularly those who will not receive the DAAWS funding.

Therefore I ask you to clarify who will be responsible to cover shortfall in funding for current and future students with disabilities at TAFE? Specifically, will deaf students be able to complete studies at TAFE post 2015 with Auslan interpreters and other required support?

Funding cuts to disabled students in TAFE will affect my employee, my business and the overall community in the longer term. Without appropriate supports and access to TAFE courses, Deaf people will be destined to a future of welfare dependency or significant under employment. It's a sad day when a government thinks that cutting funding from disabled students will be a saving.