

Submission
No 49

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date received: 13/07/2015

Partially Confidential

Positive experiences of TAFE

There are many stories from students that have completed courses at TAFE in Adult Basic Education and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. Most of these 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 (ie 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.

My students have found particularly useful the courses which have blended mainstream classes such as hospitality, business and childcare which provide language and literacy assistance ie two teachers, one trained in Adult Education and one in a particular career. Unfortunately these courses have been affected by the cost cutting agenda and profit making mentality now in VET. With the Smart and Skilled implementation at the beginning of this year class sizes in many areas have doubled, class hours have been slashed and courses cut or just designed around assessment. Students are finding it too difficult to succeed and either drop out or miss classes. Their self-esteem and confidence declines which results in a lack of motivation.

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. (Allens Consulting).

Unfortunately this is no longer the case. Students now have to pay somewhere between \$80 concession fee to \$360, depending on their previous circumstances. Courses equivalent to Year 10 or Year 12 are up to \$1500. 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.

Smart and Skilled impacts on TAFE

- Students have been turned off education because of the fees (eg Cert 3 in Landscaping \$12,000)
- 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. Teacher was unable to know who was in the class)
- Rural campuses are “hibernating” classes rooms and building because they are not being used
- Education has been turned into Business with managers having on educational experiences, more managers and less teachers, increased record keeping and less teaching