

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date received: 30/07/2015

Partially Confidential

My name is _____ and I write this submission in reply to the inquiry by the Upper House of the NSW Parliament into Vocational Education and Training. Smart and Skilled.

Since leaving the workforce through forced redundancy in 2012 I have been self-funded as a retiree seeking other employment. After almost forty years of continuous employment I've found myself in employment competition with a much younger and educationally prepared field of competitors.

I sought assistance in the first instance from the government agencies designed to support people with their employment goals and provide financial assistance. I found there was no actual assistance.

After registering for NewStart, I was obliged to attend an employment agency that offered little to no assistance to ensure a position of employment was found. There are little more than "middle men" to enforce the requirement set by CentreLink.

As an initiative I made enquiries into the educational system and decided my best chance of a secure financial future, would be to change my way of thinking. With that in mind I undertook the Mature Age Course of Education, (MACE), at TAFE, which allowed me to refresh/update my skills to better prepare for employment.

I found myself in a class that consisted of long term unemployed, students with learning disabilities and early school leavers that had little to no interest in learning or completing their secondary education. Most were disruptive and distracting and appeared to be attending to fulfil the requirements of CentreLink in order to receive their payments.

I had misunderstood what the Cert II course entailed.

During that period of six months I found the facilitators/teachers to be quite competent, dedicated and tolerant of the behaviour exhibited by the students in classes. When action became necessary with individuals, I was given no impression of "singling out" or "bullying" of those individuals.

As part of the classes I felt "included" in all aspects of the set curriculum. While I had the behavioural distractions of learning, which paled in comparison to those of the dedicated educators, I felt the lessons were well structured in order to ensure full comprehension of the available material to everyone.

I am aware that courses are being dropped or moved to locations that could become restrictive to individuals. In my case I am a self-funded retiree living north of Wyong. I have limited access to exhaustive and rising educational costs brought about by budget cuts by both the Federal and State Liberal governments.

I currently travel to Wyong Campus as my closest and could possibly travel to Ourimbah without undue hardship. However, should courses be transferred to Gosford or Hamilton TAFE campus, I would have to reconsider the viability of education versus travel and therefore cost, as I have an elderly mother and both campuses are approximately one and a half hours round trip.

I thank you for your time and hope together with other submissions you will receive, it allows you to come to a decision beneficial to all.

Yours sincerely