

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

Organisation: Bryant Engineering

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The Director and Honourable Members,
Legislative Council General Purpose Standing Committee No.6,
Vocational education and training in New South Wales,

I am writing this letter to communicate my dissatisfaction of the changes to TAFE training under the NSW State Government's Smart and Skilled program.

I am a Fitter Machinist by trade and operate a small business in Wagga Wagga regional NSW. For the last 10 years I have employed a new apprentice at least every 2 years. I am committed to training apprentices as I see this as a strategic decision to ensure my business can meet market demand. It is my opinion there are not enough tradesman within my industry and the training of apprentices is essential for the future of my business.

I have attended forums provided in the Riverina by TAFE NSW, met with representatives of TAFE NSW- Riverina Institute and written letters highlighting my concerns to my local Members of parliament.

I am disappointed with the responses I have received as they have failed to recognise and address the impacts within the Smart and Skilled program on my business and the quality and availability of tradesman in the future.

The most noticeable concern is the reduction of learning hours my apprentices will have at our TAFE facility. Previously apprentices had access to 288 hours per year of theory and practical learning. However, the changes reduced the learning hours to a mere 160 learning hours per year.

My questions to the Committee are:

- Should school children or university students be expected to learn the same amount of information with a 45% reduction in learning hours?
- Why is apprentice training at TAFE seen as less important than other forms of education?
- Should NSW TAFE's goal be the education of students who can contribute to society rather than the initial financial value of training?
- How is the money within our TAFE systems been allocated? Is the capital being absorbed through the higher and middle management rather than supporting the individual students?
- How do you expect trades to maintain high standards of workmanship and quality under the Smart and Skilled program given the reduction of training hours and funding?
- Why are the fitting machining trades' hours being reduced more than other trades? (For example automotive, panel beating or spray painting?)

The previous system was producing quality tradesman and I believe reducing funding and TAFE learning hours is placing the future of the trade sector in jeopardy, ultimately affecting industry, small business and individuals.

I appreciate the opportunity to voice my concern and look forward to hearing the thoughts of the Committee relating to vocational training in New South Wales.

Yours Sincerely,
Andrew Bryant (Managing Director)
Bryant Engineering Pty Ltd