

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

Name: Ms Catherine Blakey

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As a graduate of Yallah TAFE I am very disturbed by the cuts in government funding to TAFE, cuts in course offerings and the increase in student fees.

I studied Bush Regeneration (now Conservation and Land Management), gaining qualifications that enabled me to secure employment as a Bush Regeneration contractor, and now as an employee of Wollongong City Council. It gave me practical skills in weed control, as well as knowledge in site assessment, plant identification and more. I was so fortunate that this was a course provided hands-on practice through field trips and site visits. Our teachers were knowledgeable, experienced and passionate.

I attended TAFE for a year when I deferred studies at University. Some personal problems had meant I lost my motivation for academia. However, TAFE re-inspired me to learn, with the practical, hands-on learning and wonderful teachers.

I have been really saddened to hear that one of my old teachers has since left TAFE, to work as a private contractor. This was because at TAFE there was no job security, and with the changes in fee increases, there were fears (which sadly have shown to be true) that enrolment figures would not be reached to make the course viable to run. This is such a loss for future students.

Submission: Inquiry into Vocational Education and Training in NSW

I am concerned about state government funding being given to private colleges, that are run for profit, and have poor quality teachers, library facilities and teaching resources.

Investing in quality public education is essential to build a prosperous economy in NSW.