

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially Confidential

Firstly I would like to share some positive personal experiences of TAFE. TAFE has made me who I am. I had a difficult upbringing and was in and out of the foster care system. My first experience in TAFE was as a TVET student. Upon completing high school I attended TAFE and was then encouraged by my TAFE teachers to attend university. TAFE allowed me to break the mould. I went on to complete my BSZ98 - Assessment and Workplace Training and commenced teaching for TAFE in the areas of Business, IT, Community Services and youth at risk.

As a TAFE teacher I have seen TAFE transform people's lives. TAFE provides real work outcomes, a safe, supportive place for students to express themselves which is not matched, and will never be matched by private provider whom is primarily concerned about monetary return on investment. In addition private providers do not provide students with additional learner support, libraries, career counsellors and disability consultants which are essential to delivering holistic and quality training. Although I now work in another role in TAFE many of my previous students and associated employers still comment when I see them in public about how positive their experiences with TAFE were. Equally many previous students and associated employers who had previously studied or went on to study with private providers about the lack of support and reduced quality of training and assessment.

Many of the students with whom I have worked suffer great disadvantage (financial, academic and personal circumstance) and many times as with my own experience TAFE has been the catalyst for positive change.

Lastly I would like to illustrate some of the negative impacts of Smart and Skilled on TAFE. I live in a low socio-economic, regional community with reduced job opportunities. Many students who need to retrain to obtain a real job outcome are now having to pay extraordinary amounts of money to study as they have previously obtained a Certificate III level qualification. Students are extremely confused and worried they are potentially accruing large debts in relation to the new fee structure which is hard enough for an RTO to decipher. In addition the fees set by and the contributions made to TAFE are in many cases insufficient to cover the costs of quality training and assessment.