

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date received: 14/08/2015

Partially Confidential

Dear Sir/Madam,

I write this submission to register my disgust in the implementation of the Smart and Skilled funding system.

I have been a TAFE teacher for in excess of twenty five years and this is by far the worst thing to happen to the training apprentices receive. Because of the reduced funding and the fact that the institute take 42% off the top of that funding to “run” the colleges, there is not much to train an apprentice.

Due to the lack of money assigned to teaching, we have been directed to reduce our student attendance from 36 days per year for three years to train an apprentice down to 27 days for a stage 1 apprentice, 21 days for a stage 2 apprentice and 17 days for a stage 3 apprentice.

What used to be 108 days to train an apprentice will now be 65 days – a reduction of 40% in face to face teaching and there are no provisions for students with learning difficulties to run over time.

We have told by management that every student WILL complete on time. Does this mean we are supposed to just pass them in every unit so they can achieve success in their apprenticeship whether they are capable or not, because if we mark them “not compliant” in any of their units there is no way they can complete their apprenticeship unless they can afford to come back to TAFE after their “time” has run out and pay their own fees to complete. This is an option most people with learning difficulties cannot afford as they are often from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Their other option will be to drop out of their apprenticeship and start claiming unemployment benefits.

I heard on ABC radio this week that there is a looming skills shortage of “Tradies”. This is only going to get worst from here on as the time to train an apprentice is slashed to comply with funding shortages.

We are being told by management and other agencies that industry wants Smart and skilled and the reductions in training time it necessitates, but strangely enough when I talk with industry, and I do quite often, they say to put it back how it was as they would prefer properly trained staff.

The term “Smart and Skilled” may fool a lot of people, but when the bulk of your working life has been committed to train young people in a trade I have a great passion for, I see it nothing more than a way for the Government to slash funding to training at the expense of a properly trained and skilled workforce. Sure future “tradies” may have the qualification, but will they have the knowledge and skills - probably not.

Please act to return quality and quantity training for our future work force.