

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially Confidential

- As a TAFE teacher with over 10 years' experience I have come to realise what an important institution TAFE is in supporting young adults transition from School to the work force. I have been privileged to watch quite a number of my ex-students gain employment in the environmental field. I have been as thrilled as they, to be part of this important development.

I have also witnessed (and been part of) the personal development many of my students who have overcome social issues, traumatic personal events, consistent failure, aggression and depression. I currently have a student who has 'blossomed' from an angry young man who left the school environment because he suffered bullying to a smiling, confident young adult who has found his passion in the environment and revealed an intelligence and skill for plant identification that still shocks ...and delights...him.

The secure and professional TAFE environment has allowed these students to avoid "falling through the gaps". Not only are they happy but they are not a burden on society's medical purse or are they welfare recipients.

- The new *Smart and Skilled* Program has proved a disaster in my opinion. Course hours have been slashed. How can a committed teacher like myself have the face to face time I need to impart the course content in a meaningful way? Field trips and Practical hours have had to be reduced. This translates into students having less time and opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge they need to join the workforce in the conservation and environment industry.

As well as my TAFE career I have worked as an Ecological consultant and as a Contract Bush Regenerator. There are industry standards and expectations.....I know...I have been there. With reduced hours it is impossible to 'turn out' adequately skilled students.

The Conservation & Environment industry are not impressed with the cuts to TAFE as it is obvious that standards will fall and new employees will be less efficient. Safety will also suffer.

- There have been numerous media reports of shonky Private Education Providers. The ABC television program "The 7.30 Report" has revealed some unscrupulous providers and there have been numerous newspaper articles to the same effect. And yet NSW TAFE is forced to compete with these low calibre (and sometimes law-breaking) organisations. This is a tragic course to follow. The Victorian government saw the folly of destroying TAFE and the South Australian government is coming to the same realisation. I have friends in S.A. who have walked away from careers in the TAFE sector – despondent and disbelieving at the ineptitude of the people pushing this destruction.
- The recent TAFE enrolment fiascos must have turned many potential students away. I have experienced this in the Hunter Institute having spoken to potential students who have been confused and exasperated with the cumbersome system. I also have a son who has enrolled

in TAFE on the north coast and has reported to me the frustrations and exorbitant expense of trying to enrol in a basic Certificate 3 level course.

In short, I am stunned at the damaging and purposeful dismantling of an Institution that has supported youth from school age through to the job market for many, many decades. We mustn't forget the thousands of adults, also, who have been able to make career changes, or re-enter the workforce through a TAFE education.

What is the sense in destroying such a tried and trusted institution? I know the simple answer.....cutting costs. The State and Federal governments should be ashamed of their mismanagement of this important educational system. "Someone" should be held accountable for the "Train wreck" that NSW TAFE currently is .