

**Submission  
No 276**

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

**Name:** Ms Patricia Phelan

**Date received:** 29/09/2015

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

**NAME:** Patricia Phelan

**DATE SUBMITTED:** 29 September 2015

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My name is Patricia Phelan, I'm 52 and currently enrolled in Tertiary Preparation Certificate (TPC) at Belmont TAFE.

I'm making this submission because I believe that TAFE needs to have courses to offer to people who want to improve and make a better life for themselves.

TAFE is a community based centre and local kids can access the Campus easily.

I'm a diabetic, and therefore am unable to get a license. If Belmont TAFE were to close and I had to travel to Tighes Hill Campus. I would have to get up at 5:30am just to get to class.

Because the hours have been cut, you need to be present at every second of each class, otherwise you would miss out on the benefits of doing the course in the first place and you would be disruptive to other students.

### **My Personal Story & TAFE**

I had a drug and alcohol addiction for 10 years. I was a functioning alcoholic and drug addict, while still working for many years as a cleaner.

I singled myself into rehab in 2010 because I was suicidal and I was there for 8 and half months. When I got out, I was lost and tempted to go back.

At the beginning of last year I was feeling like I wanted to get back on the drugs and my mental health conditions was not good and I spent some time in the Mater Hospital undergoing treatment.

One day I decided that I would venture out into the big world and I went to Belmont TAFE just to ask about courses. I ended up enrolling in Skills for Work and Training which I successfully completed. I then went on to complete 3 certificates before enrolling this year for TPC.

As a result of my TAFE enrolment, my confidence has dramatically improved.

The staff at Belmont TAFE are amazing. Just recently my daughter lost her baby and the staff were incredible in offering their support to me during such a tough period.

There are so many people who need TAFE in their lives. There are apprentices who need the campus to get their skills, there are kids who cannot succeed at regular schools and benefit greatly from TAFE.

I want to know that my children and grandchildren have TAFE to attend if they need to in the future.

Given my experience with Belmont TAFE, I think that it should be kept in public hands for those looking to gain skills and for those who are looking to re-train.

If there wasn't public funding available for courses such as the ones that I've completed, I fear that I would be back in hospital with issues related to my mental illness.