

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

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Partially Confidential

SUBMISSION ON TAFE - FOR JOHN KAYE (THE GREENS)
BY PETER BIRCHALL - PODIATRIST AND BLACKSMITH.

TAFE, I have attended various trade and other courses since 1968. My apprenticeship course as a Patternmaker was the first. I was taught skills and values that I still use today.

What exactly does "Smart and Skilled" mean! I would bet that most of the academics that are supposed to be running TAFE would not know a screwdriver from a hammer or how to use these basic hand held tools. From what I hear it seems that they are deliberately, by slight of hand, trying to destroy our learning institutes.

At present I would probably be classified as a second chance learner, whatever that means. I have attended many courses at Ultimo, Granville and Richmond over the past 47 years.

All the teachers were dedicated to their area of expertise and therefore my education has been fabulous indeed.

I once had a particular University Professor who was conducting an agricultural course say to me that I was the least educated of the group. I didn't have a uni-degree, but the rest of the class did. That was in 2000. Some ten minutes later, after I had written down every course etc that I had completed through various TAFES and other bodies, he read this long list and rapidly changed his "tune".

Funding for TAFE and other government portfolios e.g. State Health.

If you went through the excessive middle management layers of over paid public servants in any government department you could eliminate many of "red tape manufacturers" and save vast amounts of money, time and energy for our state. Yes, put them on the dole, it would be a hell of a lot cheaper. Talking of funding and saving money within the system, when a budget is allocated for a year and you have a good manager who manages his or her funding well, well then, at present if they had saved money by good practice, and have funds un-spent then shock, horror, they are forced to "blow" their savings on silly wastes not needed but they "must" use all their allotted budget in that year.

Why not give them a "credit" and when their business actually needs equipment etc then the funds are available. Too logical! Funding for TAFE should be based more on the trade trained heads of department then organised by people that have "no" training or understanding of any craft or trade.

My present continued training is the trade course of the most ancient craft of blacksmithing. Our head teacher, _____ is snowed under with paperwork instead of being able to focus more on the actual core of the craft. He needs a clerk to take over doing the red tape paperwork and enrolment matters, let him be freed of this shackle. I dare say that most trade teachers are being "bogged" down with the same red tape overload.

Why was the Department of TAFE removed from the Department of Education and moved to the Minister for Regional Development, Skills and Small Business?

This is typical of government waste and more red tape. Spokesmen and women always talk about improving the system, reducing red tape, but as they say in the real world "If the system is the answer then the bloody question must have been stupid"!

If the Government is serious about Trade Training then they must return to basic values and really eliminate red tape that absorbs vast amounts of tax payers money. With saving made as mentioned then the cost to government and future students of all training with the TAFE system should be considerable.