

**Submission
No 39**

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

Name: Mr Peter Druery

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I love my TAFE, which both gave me my start in my own career and later the opportunity to pass on experience, knowledge and skills to next generations. Sadly under Smart and Skilled this is being destroyed. From my perspective all vocational education providers, TAFE following this requirement to compete, are decreasing the face-to-face teaching time with students, delivering qualifications that, in many cases, are not worth the paper that they are written on and will not get them the jobs they need. The employers are being short changed in the end by people who do not have the skills that they should. They cannot achieve these skills with such shortened courses, too much online delivery, and too much ticking of boxes rather than direct teaching, tuition and student support. Of course these things always cost money to deliver. You get what you pay for. Well, in the case of the students, that is the whole point. You should, but they are being short changed at the expense of the taxpayer who's money is going into the pockets of too many private RTOs.

This is the direct result of opening up to what is known as a "fully contestable" funding system under the various LNP state governments.

Right across all states of Australia TAFE, the cornerstone of the sector, is being dragged down by this flawed marketisation to compete on the same basis as private providers.

Students often do not understand they are being rorted until the damage is done. In NSW it is the LNP's Smart and Skilled reform that is the catalyst for this. The major damage is being done right now repeating the disaster that has been the experiment in Victoria.

Most TAFE teachers can't openly talk about this for fear of losing their jobs. I can. I have recently retired in disgust. I would be very reluctant as an employer to hire the graduates of the now greatly shortened course(s) that I taught for so many years as a result of these changes. This is very sad and alarming but unfortunately true. All due to severe funding cuts to TAFE under what is not very smart and leading to very unskilled.