



## ***Australian Education Union - Federal Office***

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### **Over 40,000 young people to miss out on a TAFE place, as Federal Government freezes funds** ***Regional and rural to be hard hit***

The Australian Education Union said today the Federal Government's refusal to provide additional TAFE funding will mean that over 40,000 young people will miss out on a TAFE place next year.

In a meeting with the Australian National Training Authority Ministerial Council, Federal Education Minister Brendan Nelson has frozen Federal TAFE Funding to the States and is threatening to make further cuts if the States do not agree to the Commonwealth's offer.

The Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) Funding Agreement is the foundation of the TAFE system. The Federal Government has been steadily undermining this agreement through funding cuts and freezes, despite the fact that over the last 10 years there has been an annual growth rate of 5.9% in the TAFE sector.

Pat Forward, Federal AEU TAFE President, said "The Commonwealth TAFE funding offer is effectively a massive funding cut, and will mean over 40,000 people will miss out on a TAFE position next year. It will also mean higher fees, which many people just cannot afford."

"This is truly a crisis for the TAFE sector, and in particular it will be rural and regional Australians that will pay the price as the smaller TAFE's just cannot continue to absorb further cuts. There is nothing left to cut. TAFEs are already running on the smell of an oily rag," said Ms Forward.

Unemployment and underemployment stands at around 1.3 million – yet skill shortages continue to plague the economy. The AEU said it was important to increase the supply of skills in the economy through investing more in vocational education and training.

The Union said that the funding freeze will also impact on the quality of education for the current 1.7million TAFE students.

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