



Australian Education Union - Federal Office

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AEU TAFE CONSIDERS MORE CAMPAIGN ACTION

The Australian Education Union is holding a two day meeting of TAFE representatives from around Australia on Thursday, 19 and Friday, 20 August to progress its campaign to encourage TAFE students to vote in the forthcoming federal election and to pressure the political parties to increase their investment in TAFE.

"More than 100,000 leaflets have been distributed in TAFE institutions around Australia over the last two months," said Pat Forward, AEU Federal TAFE Secretary.

"The leaflets have highlighted the plight of the public TAFE system at a time when thousands of students are being turned away from TAFE institutions around the country because of the neglect of the Federal Government."

The Australian Education Union estimates that more than 40,000 people are turned away from TAFE each year. Many of them are young people. This comes at a time when the ACTU and industry have pinpointed skill shortages as a critical issue for the future of the Australian economy.

The June 2004 ACCI Survey of Investor Confidence identified skill shortages as the number one constraint on investment. The ACTU estimates that over the next five years 170,000 trades people will leave industry but only 40,000 will enter it, suggesting a significant shortage of 130,000 skilled workers.

"The Howard Government's refusal to adequately fund the TAFE system at a time when industry is crying out for skilled workers shows a reckless disregard for the future of the Australian economy. After three terms in office, the Howard Government must accept responsibility for the current skill shortage, students being turned away and the funding crisis in TAFE," said Ms Forward.

Over the next two days, the AEU will be considering strategies to extend its very successful 'Enrol to Vote and Vote 1 for TAFE' campaign in the lead up to the election.

"It is critical that the hundreds of thousands of TAFE students eligible to vote in the next election enrol as soon as possible – and support the public TAFE system when they do so."

For further information, please contact:

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