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AEU calls on Federal Government to “Get Serious” about VET

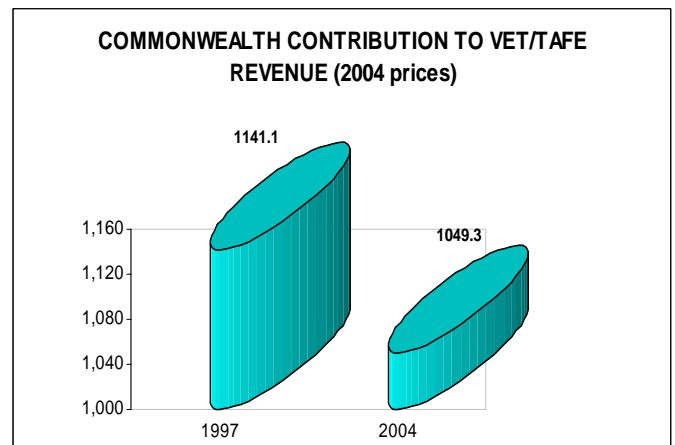
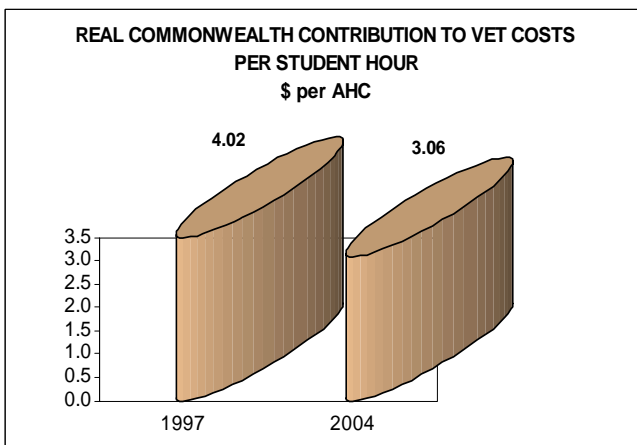
The Howard Government needs to move past its obsession with ideologically-driven policies and experiments such as Australian Technical Colleges and get serious about supporting Vocational Education and Training (VET) according to Australian Education Union Federal TAFE Secretary, Pat Forward.

Ms Forward was commenting in the wake of the release by the NCVER of its annual *Australian Vocational Education and Training Statistics: Financial Information* report, which shows that, in real terms, Commonwealth funding for VET is nearly a dollar less per student hour in 2004 than it was in 1997 (see charts below). If per student hour funding were maintained at 1997 levels, the Commonwealth would have contributed an additional \$328.7m in 2004.

“After nearly a decade of funding cuts, the Prime Minister is calling for action to address skills shortages,” Ms Forward noted, “yet his government persists with VET funding policies that have seen both the numbers of people undertaking training and the number of hours of training undertaken fall”.

“The number of students undertaking training in 2004 was the lowest since 1998,” Ms Forward said.

“The Government makes much of its Australian Technical Colleges initiative,” said Ms Forward, “but the truth is that these colleges will serve only a handful of students. TAFE Institutes, on the other hand, the bulwark of the Australian training system, have been systematically starved of funds by the Howard Government”.



Sources: NCVER, Australian Vocational Education and Training Statistics, Financial Information 2004; NCVER, Australian Vocational Education and Training Statistics, Students and Outcomes, 2004; ABS 6401.0.

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