



Australian Education Union - Federal Office

Ground Floor, 120 Clarendon Street, Southbank, Victoria, 3006
Phone : +61 (0)3 9693 1800 Fax : +61 (0)3 9693 1805
Email : aeu@aeufederal.org.au Website : www.aeufederal.org.au

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FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CONTINUES ITS ATTACKS ON TAFE

New Federal Minister for Vocational and Further Education, Andrew Robb, used his address to the National Press Club yesterday to again criticise the work of TAFE, TAFE teachers and the 1.4 million students who undertake quality courses through TAFE every year.

Linda Simon, Federal TAFE President, expressed disappointment at the continued attack on public education. "As Mr Robb himself acknowledges, he has only been in the job a short time, and he has not taken the opportunity to discuss any of the issues he raises with TAFE teachers or their union. It is apparent from his comments that he has neither visited TAFE colleges, nor taken any notice of the NCVER data on high satisfaction rates of both students and employers with TAFE. We ask Mr Robb to make the facts available on which he bases his negative comments. TAFE Institutes across the country have different structures appropriate to their particular state or territory requirements, but what they do all share in common are great educational courses and opportunities for young people and workers of all ages."

"If, on the other hand, the Minister is suggesting that TAFE colleges require updating of facilities, then he has the opportunity to redress this issue and provide additional funding to TAFE, rather than squandering it on Australian Technical Colleges which, if successful, would only partly train at the most 7500 apprentices in a narrow range of trade areas", said Ms Simon.

"One of the most significant problems with this Federal Government is their preparedness to only listen to those who prop up their ideological viewpoint. This is apparent, as Mr Robb thinks the answer to improving vocational education and training is by putting TAFE teachers on individual contracts. TAFE teachers from around the country will be travelling to Canberra on 8, 9 and 10 May, to lobby Federal members of Parliament. We hope that the Minister will take the opportunity to learn some facts from those who teach in our great TAFE colleges", said Ms Simon.

For further information, please contact:

Linda Simon
Federal TAFE President
0411 550 439

Pat Forward
Federal TAFE Secretary
0425 743 954

Erin Farley
Media
0409 510 879