



Australian Education Union - Federal Office

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FUND TAFE FIRST

The Australian Education Union calls on the Federal Opposition and the Government to fund TAFE first to address skills shortages.

Linda Simon, Federal TAFE President, called on both the Federal Opposition and the Howard Government to ensure that funding is first put into TAFE where it can make a difference in increasing the number of apprentices and other workers trained to take up jobs in skills shortage areas.

"Whilst Skills Australia, the independent statutory body announced as part of the ALP launch at the weekend, may assist industry in identifying workforce development needs, it will not train one young person or retrain one older worker. The announcement rightly points out that more than four million additional people will need to acquire qualifications from 2006 to 2016. This is why the AEU has made a claim on governments for an additional \$470 million in funding for TAFE in 2008.

"Unlike the Howard Government's Australian Technical Colleges which have been set up at an enormous cost to the Australian public and which will produce very few new workers overall, more than 1.3 million people attend TAFE each year," said Ms Simon.

"The focus of TAFE is quality vocational education and training for a broad spectrum of workers whilst still ensuring that skills shortage areas have first priority.

With \$470 million in additional recurrent funding, and a collaborative national review of TAFE's infrastructure and capital requirements, TAFE would be able to make a difference now in terms of achieving full employment and national competitiveness of the Australian economy."

"Both the Howard Government and the Federal Opposition have the opportunity to provide this funding as part of their election campaign commitments. Whether they do or not will be a real sign of whether they are serious about addressing the Nation's skills crisis," said Ms Simon.

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