



19 April 2007

TAFE HECS CALL AN EXCUSE FOR LACK OF GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Calls for the introduction of a HECS-type system for TAFE courses in a Treasury Working Paper released yesterday are further evidence of increased pressures on TAFE students as a result of governments under-funding. The Australian Education Union said that HECS was the wrong solution to growing costs in TAFE.

AEU Federal TAFE Secretary Ms Pat Forward said that a HECS in TAFE is a lazy and short-sighted solution to a problem which is the responsibility of state and federal governments.

"It is just too easy to shift the costs to individual students, whether in the short term or the long term," said Ms Forward.

"High fees are already discouraging students from undertaking TAFE courses and a HECS would simply lead to more fees and charges in the same way as it has done in higher education."

"Applying a HECS to TAFE will just worsen the 200,000 shortage of skilled workers Australia is already facing."

"The key point this paper misses is that if funding for TAFE had been sustained at 1996 levels, then there would have been no reason for such an increase and no need for income contingent loans to be considered."

"TAFE provides not just training, but also a second chance and further education for many adults. TAFE should be funded by all governments to provide training and education at an affordable cost to students. Income contingent loans should not be necessary."

"The Australian community benefits from high participation rates in vocational education and training, and individuals pay for their education through increased participation in the workforce as a result of their vocational studies."

"Industry and governments should not be allowed to shirk their responsibility to properly invest in the sector. Young working class students, and older people returning to study should not be forced to shoulder additional financial burdens," Ms Forward said.

The AEU is holding an Affordable TAFE Roundtable in Canberra on the 9th May to encourage debate and discussion in this area.

For further information, please contact:

Pat Forward
 Federal TAFE Secretary
 0425 743 954

Linda Simon
 Federal TAFE President
 0411 550 439

Erin Farley
 Media
 0409 510 879