



20 November 2007

MORE TAFE TEACHERS NEEDED

TAFE Institutes across the country will be unable to find qualified and experienced TAFE teachers as the skills crisis hits the vocational education and training system, said the Australian Education Union today.

Linda Simon, AEU Federal TAFE President today called for the Federal Government and Labor Opposition to recognise the need to invest in the future of young people and existing workers by supporting a Quality Improvement Fund.

"The Quality Improvement Fund is a critical part of the Australian Education Union's TAFE Claim, requiring a resource commitment of \$120 million in 2008, increasing to \$555 million in 2011," said Ms Simon.

"This Fund recognises that teachers and students are at the heart of the TAFE system. Governments need to adopt effective strategies around succession planning and workforce renewal, and to do this, they must invest in TAFE teachers.

"Not only do we not have enough TAFE teachers particularly in skills shortage areas, many teachers are only employed on a casual basis and should be offered secure employment in TAFE. Lack of funding to TAFE generally, with a cut of 26% since the current Federal Government has been in office, has meant a lack of investment in the TAFE teaching profession," said Ms Simon.

"This election offers an opportunity for both the major parties to announce policies which support a confident and productive future for the public TAFE system.

"The Fund would also support ongoing professional development for TAFE teachers, particularly with return to industry programs so that our teachers remain up-to-date with current technical and workforce practices."

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