



Australian Education Union - Federal Office

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Urgent Investment Required in TAFE

The Australian Education Union will today release two new reports which reveal the extent of the under-funding of TAFE and the consequences for thousands of people who are missing out on training and education as a result.

The reports are a survey of over 2,600 teachers and managers working in TAFEs around the country and a research paper prepared by the Centre for the Economics of Education and Training (CEET) at Monash University.

AEU Federal President, Angelo Gavrielatos said the TAFE survey showed:

- 70 per cent of teachers and managers said their TAFE did not have enough resources to meet industry needs, particularly in the local community.
- 58 per cent of teachers and managers said they had been forced to turn away students in the last two years.
- 46 per cent said there were student waiting lists in their TAFE.
- The areas where waiting lists were highest were engineering and related technologies (21 per cent), education (17 per cent) and language, literacy and numeracy courses (16 per cent).

“This survey reveals that TAFEs are unable to meet the growing demand from students or industry because they are so starved of funds,” Mr Gavrielatos said.

“Students are being turned away or forced to wait in trade areas like engineering where there are critical national skills shortages.

“The CEET report reveals government spending per hour on public vocational education and training declined by 12 per cent between 2003 and 2008.

“TAFE’s funding would have been \$624 million (or 17 per cent) higher in 2008 than it actually was if both the spending per hour and its share of the money allocated by governments had been maintained at 2003 levels.

“The report also shows that to reach the ambitious COAG targets set for increased qualifications, an additional \$200 million must be spent on average every year between 2009 and 2020.

Mr Gavrielatos said the union would run a new campaign for higher funding for TAFE and an urgent injection of money was required in the budget in May.

“TAFE is recognised as one of the highest quality providers of training and education anywhere in the world and our prosperity as a nation is directly linked to it,” he said.

“TAFE provides opportunities for all Australians to get vital skills, to learn a trade or change careers and to rise above economic or social disadvantage and yet it is being systematically starved of funding.

“There will be no education revolution in Australia unless we invest substantially more in TAFE.

“The Federal Government has a responsibility to lead the way in this area and to push the state and territory governments to invest more.

“As the Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard has pointed out, some of the things that will not be possible without TAFE in the next decade include the ‘*national broadband network, cleaner power generation, hybrid and electric vehicles, more efficient houses and buildings and capturing carbon*’.

“It is a worthy goal to have the best trained and educated workforce in the world. But only by investing in our high quality TAFEs can we achieve it.

“We fully support the COAG targets which aim to dramatically increase the number of Australians with post-school qualifications. However they need to be funded.”

The State of our TAFEs survey is available at:

www.aeufederal.org.au/Publications/2010/TAFESurveyreport.pdf

The CEET report is available at:

www.aeufederal.org.au/Publications/2010/CEETreport2010.pdf

MEDIA ADVISORY

AEU Federal President Angelo Gavrielatos will release the reports at a media conference at the Senate entrance of Parliament House in Canberra at 9.30am today, Tuesday March 16.

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