

CAMPAIGNING

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... Despite a national skills shortage the Howard government continues to underfund TAFE, with 34,200 people unable to gain a place in 2005. The AEU calls on all governments to commit to a publicly funded TAFE as the preferred provider of vocational education and training in Australia. TAFE must remain affordable and accessible for all students. ...
—From the AEU Federal Conference 2007 Statement: A New Deal is Needed

2007 is a crucial year for the AEU and its members. Federal TAFE Secretary **PAT FORWARD** outlines some important elements of the AEU TAFE Division's campaign plans for the coming year.

TAFE Lobbying

Canberra 9 – 10 May

AEU TAFE activists will be converging on Canberra on Wednesday 9 and Thursday 10 May for the first major lobbying activity in this critical election year.

TAFE teachers will be coming from every state and territory to lobby their members of Parliament on both sides of politics. The key message is the critical state of TAFE funding, and the need to support the public TAFE system. The lobbying event will be used to launch the **'Enrol to Vote/ Vote 1 TAFE'** campaign which will be the core of the AEU's work throughout 2007.

All states and territories have prepared their activists for the lobbying activity and are contacting local politicians in preparation for the meetings in May. ❖

Affordable TAFE roundtable

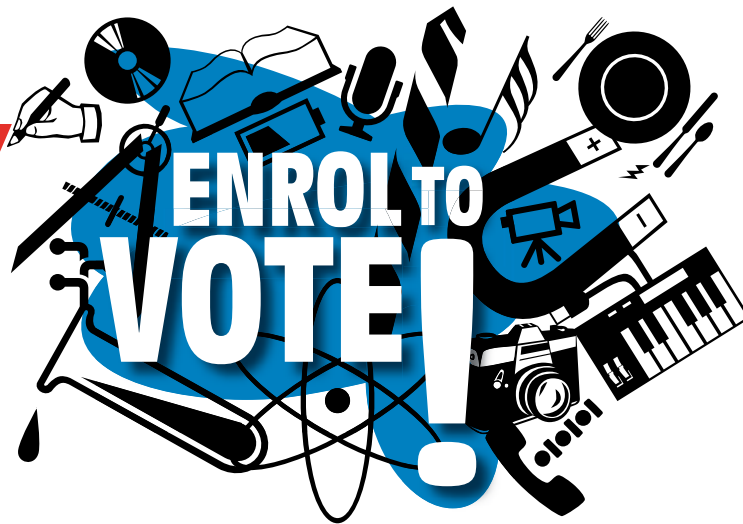
A major feature of the May lobbying event in Canberra will be the Affordable TAFE roundtable, to be held at the Canberra Institute of Technology on Wednesday evening, 9 May.

The Affordable TAFE roundtable will focus on the major issues facing TAFE, including the costs associated with studying at TAFE, the impact that these costs have on students, as well as more general issues associated with funding and the public provider.

Adrian Marron, formally TAFE Director at Wodonga TAFE and currently Executive Director TAFE SA Adelaide North, has agreed to host and facilitate the event. Adrian facilitated the highly successful hypothetical held at Old Parliament House a few years ago.

The Affordable TAFE roundtable will have a "hypothetical" flavour. Currently, participants who have agreed to attend include Sharan Burrow, Jim Davidson (Deputy Secretary, DEST), Dr Peter Kell, Dr Bruce Chapman, May Hicks (ACCI), Megan Lilly (AiG), Jim Barron (GTA), and Elaine Wells from the CIT Students Association. Stephen Smith (ALP), Andrew Robb (Coalition), Kerry Nettle (Greens) and Barry Peddle (TDA) have all been invited. ❖

2007



ENROL TO VOTE Campaign



The AEU has developed a Kit for the lobbying activity. The **'Enrol to Vote/Vote 1 TAFE'** was endorsed at the 2007 AGM and Federal Conference. A poster, tri-fold leaflet, sticker and a range of Fact Sheets and Briefing papers have been designed and produced for the Lobbying Kit. The Kit also contains a copy of the TAFE Futures Key Findings document, and the 'Dos and Don'ts of Successful Lobbying'.

Recent changes to the Electoral Act mean that most people will have until 8pm on the day the election is announced to enrol to vote and people who are already enrolled will have only three days to change their address if they need to. 17 year olds who will turn 18 before election day and those who expect to become Australian citizens before the election have only these three days. As well, from mid April 2007, everyone will be required to provide proof of identity when enrolling

or updating their enrolment. This could prove difficult for many young people, especially those who do not yet have a driver's license.

The focus of the "Enrol to Vote/Vote 1 TAFE" campaign is to raise the awareness of all people attending TAFE, but especially first time voters of the need to enrol to vote, and of the changes that have occurred since the last election. As well, the AEU will be asking all TAFE students to think about TAFE when they do vote.

The TAFE Futures Inquiry held last year highlighted the many problems confronting the public TAFE system and TAFE students in particular. At the core of the campaign is the fact that nearly 1.3 million Australians annually attend TAFE — and most are very satisfied with their TAFE experience. What TAFE Futures showed was the level of awareness of funding pressures which most TAFE students have. ❖



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