

AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION UNION
NATIONAL TAFE COUNCIL AGM
FRIDAY-SUNDAY, 15-17 JANUARY 2010, MELBOURNE

SUBSTANTIVE DECISIONS

CAMPAIGN

1. That the National TAFE Council endorses the “Invest in Quality/Invest in TAFE” Campaign. The focus of the Campaign should be the Federal Election in 2010, and Branches and Associated Bodies should be supported to commence campaigning immediately. National TAFE Council recognises that Federal Government funding for TAFE has decreased significantly, with a drop in real terms despite increases in student enrolments. A critical part of the campaign is to ensure significantly increased funding in real terms for TAFE including funding to meet the COAG domestic student participation targets and to lift completion rates in TAFE and VET.
2. That the National TAFE Council recognises the importance of and urges all Branches and Associated Bodies to lobby politicians at the federal and state level to achieve the objective of the “Invest in Quality/Invest in TAFE”. Federal Office will provide campaign material which will include Fact Sheets and a Campaign website.
3. That all relevant activities and materials discussed in the Campaign Workshops at the 2010 National TAFE Council AGM be incorporated into the “Invest in Quality/Invest in TAFE” strategy.
4. One of the campaign strategies should be to conduct an education campaign for members and non-members, State and Federal politicians and the community, with an emphasis on the original purpose of TAFE which includes broad-based initial vocational education and training, second chance and further education, and lifelong learning.
5. That the key points made by AGM presenters be incorporated into campaign materials.

THE ADULT MIGRANT ENGLISH PROGRAM

The ability of public providers of the Adult Migrant English Program to continue to offer a quality, professional service to migrants is undermined by the tender requirements to follow principles of National Competition Policy such as the requirement to address ‘competitive neutrality’ in their pricing. Public providers are penalised for offering a high standard of service. The increased shift of risks to the provider makes maintenance of a quality service more problematic.

The AMEP is integral to migrants’ settlement outcomes. It “plays a major contribution in facilitating the social inclusion and economic participation of migrants and humanitarian entrants in Australian society”. Disruption to this vital provision forced through changing providers is particularly detrimental to the lives of this student population.

Teachers in the AMEP are predominantly female, highly qualified and at the top end of their pay scales. There is also a disproportionate number of casual female staff. The possible loss of contracts will lead to loss of jobs, valuable experience and expertise.

This National TAFE Council AGM requests immediate and ongoing consultation between the AEU senior officers and associated unions, relevant Federal Government ministers and DIAC to ensure quality and professional provision of the Adult Migrant English Program. In line with existing AEU policy, this AGM seeks the following:

- a guarantee of recurrent funding to the public providers and the abolition of tendering
- a lifting of the two-year wait for social security benefits for those attending AMEP classes to remove a financial impediment to accessing this critical language learning entitlement
- the provision of sufficient ESL education for migrants and refugees to obtain employment at their appropriate skill level and to exercise their privileges and responsibilities as citizens
- that the principle of “competitive neutrality” be applied equally to public and private providers. Private providers must be prohibited from subsidising their tender bids from other funds generated by other activities

We condemn the failure of DIAC to release the 2008 Review of the AMEP Report as well as the associated Ernst and Young Audit and, as part of the promised commitment to a more open government, request that these documents be released immediately.

We will continue to actively campaign against the tendering of AMEP funding. However, we welcome certain requirements and features in the current tender for which we have continually campaigned including:

- the alignment of AMEP courses with school holidays and the abolition of continuous enrolment. Together these are a welcome return to commonly accepted standards of educational delivery
- a maximum class size of 20 students
- teacher assistance provided for e-learning and library attendance
- access to e-modules with no hours deducted
- Distance learners to be provided with a minimum of one hour of teacher assistance per week over the telephone
- the return of a Citizenship Course to professional delivery by teachers
- the recognition of the need for specialised courses including pronunciation and literacy.

QUALIFICATIONS

1. This National TAFE Council AGM endorses the following nine Principles for TAFE/VET professional teaching qualification as the basis for a TAFE teacher qualifications policy document to be developed in consultation with Branches and Associated Bodies throughout 2010:
 - (i) A TAFE Teacher, like teachers in other sectors, exercises complex professional judgement in the design, selection and staging of educational practice. TAFE teachers teach in diverse settings across diverse qualifications with a diverse student body. TAFE teachers must simultaneously engage and equip their students for work and further study.

- (ii) New teachers should have access to professional development upon commencing teaching to ensure they have the 'survival skills' they need while developing their knowledge, skills and expertise as a TAFE/VET teacher.
 - (iii) TAFE/VET teachers come from diverse backgrounds which include diverse industrial and occupational backgrounds, but which also include teachers with different qualification levels ranging from TAFE/VET certificates to PhDs. There needs to be a range of TAFE/VET teaching qualifications designed to support TAFE/VET teachers who have different kinds and levels of educational qualifications.
 - (iv) TAFE/VET teaching qualifications need to provide TAFE/VET teachers with systematic access to the knowledge bases that underpins TAFE/VET teaching. This includes competing theoretical approaches to pedagogy, curriculum, students and their characteristics, the social contexts of teaching, and the social, political and philosophical dimensions of teaching.
 - (v) A set of qualifications needs to be developed which is appropriate to teachers at different points in their teaching practice, career development and continuing professional development. This should include a range of offerings that are relevant to teachers who may take coordination roles and also to teachers taking on roles of educational leadership.
 - (vi) TAFE/VET teaching qualifications need to provide TAFE/VET teachers with systematic access to the specific knowledge bases underpinning their particular disciplinary and/or vocational field of practice. This includes opportunities to extend their knowledge of their own field of practice and to maintain their industry currency and links with industry, but also access to knowledge about teaching their particular disciplinary/occupational field.
 - (vii) TAFE/VET teachers need to be able to contribute to their profession – which includes the teaching profession, but also to their occupational/industry/disciplinary field of practice. Teachers need to be able to participate in debates and controversies in their professional fields of practice.
 - (viii) TAFE/VET teachers need to be able to work with industry, employers, unions, professional associations, government agencies, community organisations, and families.
 - (ix) Qualification requirements need to be built into an employment strategy which puts the responsibility on the employer to fund and provide equitable/appropriate opportunities for teachers to access relevant courses of education.
2. That this policy be brought to the 2011 National TAFE Council AGM.
 3. That the National TAFE Council Executive consider organising conferences or seminars nationally, and in States and Territories in 2010.

SUSAN HOPGOOD

That the 2010 National TAFE Council congratulate Susan Hopgood on her election to the presidency of Education International. National TAFE Council understands that election to this high office is a recognition of Susan's standing in the sphere of education and training at the state, national and international levels