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HOWARD NEGLECTS TAFE STUDENTS

This year's budget, which entirely ignores Australia's 1.3M TAFE students, will mean that more than 50,000 TAFE students will miss out on a TAFE course.

The state and federal governments failed to reach agreement on TAFE funding earlier this year. This is because the federal government refused to provide additional funds for those students who are missing out on TAFE places.

Successive years of underfunding of the TAFE system have resulted in:

- Tens of thousands of students missing out on places each year. In 2004, it is estimated that this figure will be 50,000 students
- Increased pressure on equipment and resources
- Increased reliance on casual employment for TAFE teachers
- Increased pressure on students in terms of fees and materials costs
- Skills shortages in key industry areas
- Pressure on TAFE institutions in regional and remote areas

Failure to support the public TAFE system sends a very strong message to the community and to industry about the low regard in which this federal government holds the TAFE system

"Unless additional funds are found urgently for the system, many thousands of young people will be turned away from TAFE. This reduces their options for the future, and consigns them to long periods of unemployment," said Pat Forward, Federal TAFE Secretary, Australian Education Union.

"Australia needs a well resourced public TAFE system if it is to provide the skills needed for industry. Most importantly, it needs to provide opportunities for young people to gain employment, and to embark on their life-long path of contribution to Australia's future."

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