



## ***Australian Education Union - Federal Office***

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### **Technical Colleges Proposal Wasteful and Unworkable**

The AEU has condemned the Coalition's proposal to fund 24 technical colleges as an exercise in wasteful duplication which Australia's young people can ill afford.

AEU Federal President Ms Pat Byrne said "It is another attempt by the Coalition to cover up the Howard Government's years of neglect of the vocational education and training sector, which has resulted in significant skills shortages in key industries."

"Far from lifting the status of vocational education and the traditional trades, these colleges will have the effect of narrowing educational choices and opportunities. The Coalition proposes another layer of bureaucracy and duplicated facilities which will leach much needed funding and resources away from established state schools and TAFE institutions", Ms Byrne said.

"The proposal is driven by the Coalition's ideological opposition to public education, and its inability to establish positive relations with state governments. The Coalition's inequitable federal funding model would also apply to tenders for these new colleges and any proposal to develop these colleges without state cooperation would render them unworkable."

Ms Byrne said: "Australia currently has a network of highly regarded public TAFE institutions. These TAFEs are crying out for resources to upgrade facilities in the resource-intensive areas of the traditional trades in order to meet the sophisticated demands of the modern economy. Instead of directing money into established institutions the Coalition wants to waste money by duplicating these existing buildings."

"The only winner out of Howard's proposal will be a beefed-up federal bureaucracy. Wasteful competition between existing providers will undermine vocational education and training both in secondary schools and TAFE. There are critical shortages of trades teachers and this strategy will take trained teaching staff from the public system, a move which will accelerate the present crisis."

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