

# CAMPAIGN 2007



## THE AEU TAFE CLAIM

Increased investment in TAFE is crucial to the future of Australian society. Independent research confirms that increased investment in the TAFE system leads to improved economic and social outcomes for individuals and society. This requires a significant and sustained commitment from governments to upgrade, improve and maintain the TAFE system.

Such a commitment needs to take account of the projected growth in enrolments, the economy's anticipated need for higher level qualifications, investment in retraining the existing workforce and strategies to engage those in society who are under- or un-employed. It also needs to recognise the strategic role that TAFE can play in assisting industry and communities to develop practices which are environmentally sustainable.

Additional funds also need to be provided in key areas to address specific systemic requirements. These include building, technology and system improvements, capital maintenance, infrastructure growth in new technology, and research and innovation capacity building, particularly in the area of sustainable development.

Investment also needs to be made in workforce transition and renewal and professional development, including return-to-industry programs and strategies to address unacceptably high levels of casual employment.

Greater attention needs to be paid to students in TAFE. Investment needs to be increased in the area of student services and support programs, including libraries and information centres, and relief needs to be provided in the area of fees and charges.

### System growth

An increased funding commitment for the next four years to meet projected needs in vocational education and training would require:

### System Growth Commitments

2008	\$350M
2009	\$725M
2010	\$1125M
2011	\$1550M

### Building technology and system improvements

The TAFE system needs to grow to meet the increased needs of the economy, the environment and society. TAFE institutes will only be able to provide the education and training needs of the Australian community if they have the highest quality buildings, equipment and infrastructure for its students.

The AEU proposes a collaborative national review of the infrastructure and capital requirements of the TAFE system in 2008. The review should occur in the context of a much greater emphasis on ecological sustainability, and cover the following areas:

- Capital maintenance and improvement.
- Infrastructure growth in new technology areas.
- Research and innovation capacity building.

### Teachers

Teachers and students are at the heart of the TAFE system. TAFE has unacceptably and disproportionately high levels of casually employed teachers which has a direct impact on the overall quality of the system. Most commentators acknowledge the neglect of the TAFE teaching workforce, including the lack of effective strategies around succession planning and workforce renewal. The range of innovative options open to government to invest in

workforce support and renewal are considerable. The AEU proposes a quality improvement fund for TAFE to address the following key issues:

- Unacceptably high levels of casual employment.
- Workforce transition and renewal.
- Ongoing professional development, including increased investment in return to industry programs.

The Quality Improvement Fund would require a resource commitment of:

### Quality Improvement Fund

2008	\$120M
2009	\$250M
2010	\$395M
2011	\$555M

### Students

Growth and renewal of the TAFE system needs to be underpinned by support for TAFE students, in terms of both a more equitable approach to fees and charges, and a serious commitment to facilities and amenities at TAFE Institutes. The AEU proposes a national summit which includes representatives of the wide range of students who attend TAFE Institutes to consider the following issues:

- Increased investment in student services and support programs.
- Relief for fees and charges. ❖