



Enterprise Bargaining

THE AEU has called a special Council meeting for the first week of semester two, to consider all courses of action available to the union to address the lack of progress in enterprise negotiations. The call for this special meeting follows the decision by TAFE CEOs to once again walk away from any pretence of enterprise negotiations. It is now nearly two years since Victorian TAFE teachers have had a salary increase and teachers have had enough of waiting.

State of our TAFEs Survey

We have recently conducted a State of our TAFEs survey where teachers have been able to give us feedback on the true state of their working terms and conditions in Victorian TAFE Institutes. The results scored major media coverage and highlighted the plight of teachers in the system, where three out of five teachers are casuals.

The survey of 1,872 Victorian TAFE teachers reveals that inadequate pay, excessive workload and overcrowded classrooms are pushing teachers to their limit. Nearly 75% have considered leaving their jobs in the past 12 months, and of those, less than half saw themselves working in TAFE in five years.

The survey shows that increased casualisation of the workforce, excessive workload and a lack of resources continue to take a toll on TAFE teachers. The facts are:

- 73.4% of the respondents had considered leaving their jobs in the previous 12 months and less than half saw themselves working in TAFE in five years;
- of these respondents who had considered leaving their jobs in the last

12 months, 77.9% agreed that a pay rise would encourage them to stay;

- 49.2% of respondents said class sizes had increased over the last three years and 55.2% agreed that large class sizes were negatively impacting on educational outcomes;
- 80.8% of the respondents agreed that the quality of education being provided by TAFEs had been affected by a lack of funding.

The full report is available on our website www.aeuvic.asn.au

Proposed Victorian Skills Reform

The Vic Branch recently submitted a response to the government's Discussion Paper on Skills Reform. While the AEU supports the paper's objective of addressing current and future skills shortages, we are strongly opposed to many of the reforms proposed to implement this policy as they will lead to the effective privatisation of the public TAFE system through full contestability of funding, reduce public access to TAFE courses and exacerbate Victoria's skills crisis.

The proposed reforms include increasing fees to as much as double what they currently are, introducing a HECs style loan scheme, limiting the number of people who will be eligible for a government supported TAFE place and allowing private providers to have full access to public education funding which is currently allocated to public TAFEs and Adult Community and Further Education.

The AEU will continue to argue that increasing fees and introducing a loan scheme will without doubt put TAFE out of reach for most Victorians. Only by increasing investment in TAFE will the skills shortage be addressed. ❖

Gillian Robertson is Vic Branch vice president TAP sector and member of NTCE.