

# TAFE Campaign 2004

## 2004 National TAFE Campaign Framework

TAFE makes a vital, energising and unique contribution to Australian society. A viable and well-maintained public TAFE system is critical to the social and economic future of Australia.

The majority of problems experienced by TAFE in recent years are attributable to the Federal (Howard) Government's funding cuts and its political ideology which favours the private sector.

The 2004 National TAFE Campaign is a critical one-off opportunity to influence all politicians to reverse these attacks.

It is vital that all AEU members contact their local Federal politicians and Federal Election candidates to obtain written commitments to increase funding, in real terms, for TAFE.

### AEU Claim

- The Federal (Howard) Government has consistently demonstrated contempt for the national TAFE system. The AEU believes the TAFE system is best served by having a government which is committed to a sustainable, publicly funded and accessible vocational education and training sector.
- Increased Commonwealth funding is required to ensure that the States are not "arm twisted" to pursue revenue-raising schemes which reduce quality provision or access to learning opportunities.
- The AEU believes future ANTA Agreements need to include a "significant increases in real levels of funding for TAFE" clause, in line with the quantum in the AEU Alternative ANTA Agreement. (The key words being "real" and "TAFE").
- The TAFE presence across Australia is a significant infrastructure network which provides an ongoing community and economic focal point. Regional, remote and rural areas are priority areas for maintaining and building a TAFE presence.
- The AEU believes the closing down of TAFE campuses reduces access and increases unmet demand.

The AEU also recognises that this economic rationalist shift, away from the community development role of TAFE, creates and exacerbates inequity of access and experience in the sector, particularly for women and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

### AEU Strategies

AEU members need to appreciate the gravity of the current situation. The objective is to encourage member activism.

AEU Activists' network needs to be mobilised with a focus on:

- House of Representatives targeted seats. These targeted seats will be identified by Branches/Associated Bodies.
- Senate candidates/parties. A centrally co-ordinated approach in each Branch and Associated Body is proposed.
- Local members to be approached and commitments sought relating to the AEU claim.
- Other unions – where indications are that significant alliances need to be built.
- Establishing lobbying groups in electorates, which will include TAFE teachers, students and community members.



## IN THE FEDERAL ELECTION

The AEU has a range of strategies at its disposal to achieve its objectives, including:

- Communicating with all TAFE workers and targeting particularly vulnerable groups such as casual, sessional, contract and part time workers.
- Organising events which generate interest.
- Enrolling students who are first-time voters.
- Use of case studies.
- Getting politicians into TAFE Colleges.
- Getting TAFE Directors onside.
- “Sundowner” events – informal functions.

Such issues as the following be considered for inclusion in material to be drawn up for the AEU National TAFE Campaign:

- funding
- access to TAFE courses
- unmet demand
- closing down of campuses
- rationalization of courses
- winding back of resources/services (including student counseling and library services)
- reduction for capping of fee-for-service provisions
- nominal hours
- casualisation
- resource for life-long learning
- the 2004 Activists’ Seminar to be used as a pivotal focus for the TAFE 2004 Federal Election Campaign and that a single/two page document, highlighting key information be prepared by Federal Office. A postcard reflecting this also to be developed and these then be made available to Branches/Associated Bodies for use as required.

A summary of the AEU Alternative ANTA Agreement be prepared for distribution.