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TAFE Teacher



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TAFE in the 21st Century

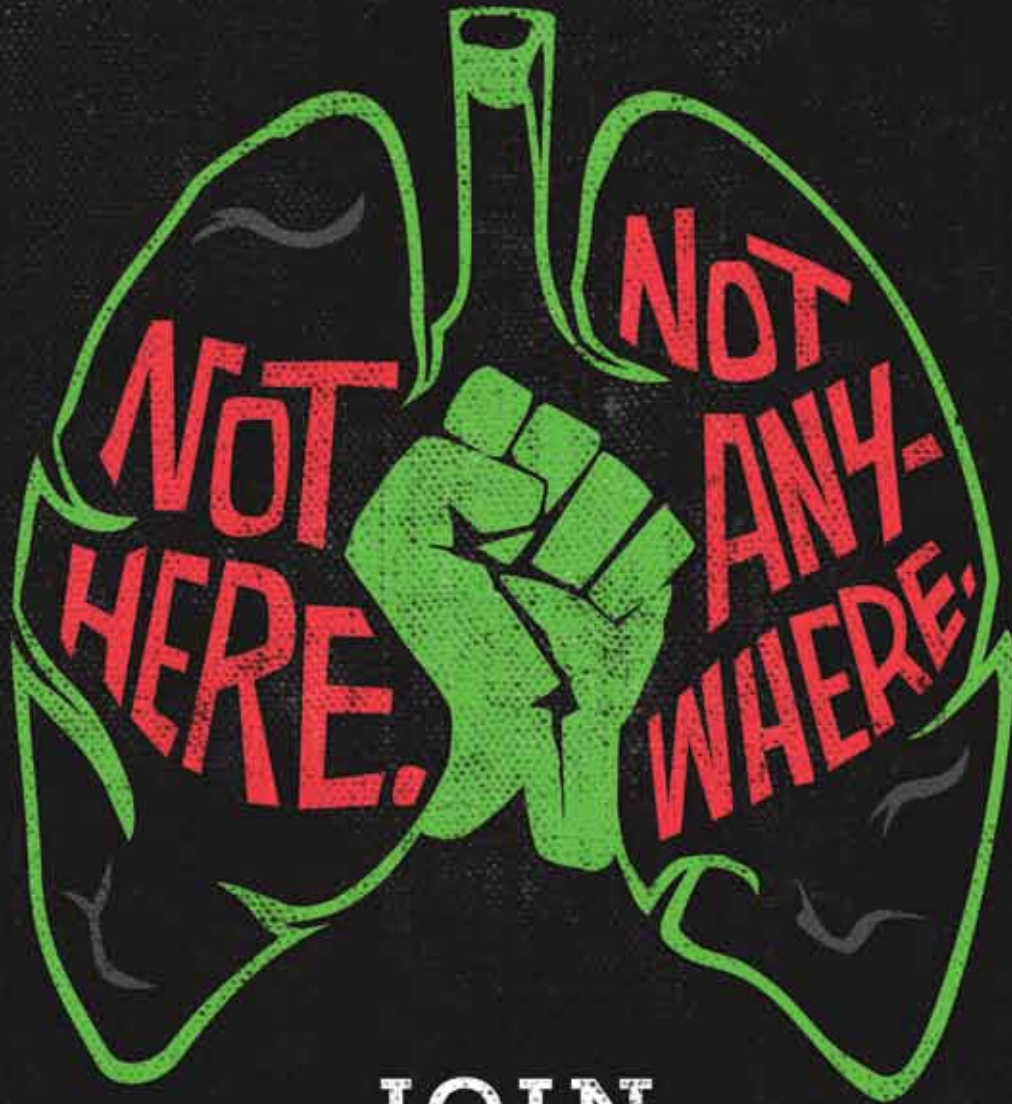
**TAFE students dominate
WorldSkills competition**

**SA Government closes
seven TAFE campuses**

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MICHELLE PURDY, AEU FEDERAL TAFE PRESIDENT

Funding TAFE is a vote winner

As the TAFE cuts continue, with news in August that another seven TAFE campuses are to close in South Australia on top of the 16 other campuses that have closed in recent years, we must never forget the lessons of the past that brought us to this point.

IT'S heartening to see from the Super Saturday by-elections in July that support for TAFE funding was a real vote winner. According to ReachTEL polling, over three-quarters of respondents in the Tasmanian seat of Braddon said that TAFE funding was a deciding factor and in the Queensland seat of Longman, 62.6 per cent of respondents said the funding of public TAFE was personally important to them in deciding how to cast their vote.

But there is still much work to be done as we build the campaign towards the Federal election. We need to make sure that all politicians across Australia, particularly Senator Michaelia Cash, the new Minister for Small and Family Business, Skills and Vocational Education, understand the importance and significance of a strong public TAFE sector. In June, our National TAFE day celebrations did just that. Our event in Parliament House was the biggest yet and this was echoed around the country with community events in TAFE campuses, see page 6 for the full story.

As the TAFE cuts continue, with news in August that another seven TAFE campuses are to close in South Australia on top of the 16 other campuses that have

closed in recent years, we must never forget the lessons of the past that brought us to this point. In this issue John Pardy completes his two part series charting the policy trajectory that has led us to the 'unmaking of TAFE' see page 12.

However, we also need to be bold and look towards new thinking. Professor Anne Jones picks up the thread of Pardy's piece by re-imagining a strong TAFE sector into the 21st Century. Indeed, hope and opportunity for TAFE abound in this issue.

TAFE students continue to dominate the WorldSkills competition, showcasing TAFEs as centres of excellence and the stories from some of the winning students highlight it's the commitment of their teachers who go above and beyond everyday work that ensures the students shine. Also, a new research project in New South Wales shows how encouraging women into male dominated trades is not only good for diversity, but can help plug the skills gap in regional Australia.

Finally, as we go to print on World Mental Health Day, a timely reminder from Beyond Blue that mental health challenges can affect anyone, at any time and that we can only look after others if we look after ourselves. ●

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South Australian Government **ABANDONS TAFE**



The news from South Australia of the new Liberal Government's closure of seven TAFE campuses across the State is devastating, if not surprising. Earlier this year, AEU South Australia President Howard Spreadbury warned voters "Steven Marshall and the South Australian Liberals would fully privatise our training system, leaving big corporate training providers syphoning off millions of taxpayer dollars and ripping-off students."

BY CORRENA HAYTHORPE

IT TOOK less than six months for Mr Spreadbury's words to become reality with the Liberals first budget announcement. While the budget was framed as an investment of \$109 million dollars over five years to support TAFE, the treasurer called it a 'bail out' demonstrating an inherent lack of commitment to public education and signalling the Liberal Government's eventual plan to walk away from TAFE altogether.

Rather than investing in TAFE, the government will carve out \$33 million over four years through campus closures under the auspices of 'operating efficiencies' furthering its privatisation agenda and demonstrating a priority for making money rather than providing a quality and accessible education that is open to everyone.

Over the past five years, 700 full time jobs have been lost across the TAFE sector in South Australia, decimating broader communities. TAFE is often one of the biggest employers in regional locations and it is yet again these locations that

will be hit the hardest, with campuses targeted for closure to include Tea Tree Gully, Port Adelaide, Urrbrae, Parafield, Wudinna, Roxby Downs and Coober Pedy.

TAFE plays an integral role in local communities, providing programs even when they are not financially viable, but because they offer pathways to further education or meet social needs. Newstart courses which equip young unemployed people with the skills and training they need to seek and gain employment will disappear under these closures leaving students in regional and remote areas to suffer the most.

As Mr Spreadbury reflected "Just imagine being a student in Coober Pedy. TAFE provides the only pathway for people in this remote community to gain vocational training. Closing the campus means closing off opportunities for this community to access education."

The closures will have not only have a devastating effect on local communities, they will also impact local economies across the state. Port Adelaide is the heart of the ship building

market in South Australia; Government should be leveraging the anticipated demand for skills in this industry as an opportunity to develop a strong public TAFE sector, while creating jobs and growth for the region.

TAFE already has a proven record for providing innovative courses that meet the skills and training needs for the local economy. As Nursery and Garden Industry of South Australia acting CEO Geoffrey Fuller told the Adelaide Advertiser, "Gardens, landscaping and horticulture in general are among the strongest growing areas of our state's economy, so why take away the leading provider of training for the sector?"

"Certainly, some private organisations conduct worthy courses, but horticulture courses need equipment and training facilities that are already set up at TAFE sites, not to mention the experience and skills of lecturers. Once gone, these will never be replaced."

Port Adelaide Student Nurse Amanda Tolhurst spoke to the media on the day the cuts were announced and echoed this sentiment. "The



whole point of TAFE is work based, community based training to get people started in jobs. If you take it away from the community, the skills base across South Australia is going to drop" she said.

Another Port Adelaide student, Sue Leech, is studying women's education – a range of courses which are designed to provide women with the skills, knowledge and self-confidence to deal with education, career and life changes. As a former prisoner she emphasised the success that TAFE SA has achieved with assisting women prisoners rehabilitate back into the community. She is now about to start university. "If you take this away it will affect the women coming out of prison" she said.

The campus closures are being justified by the Liberal Government as a response to external reviews last year which highlighted concerns around quality, leadership and strategic direction. Yet, the Government cannot continue to defund TAFE and expect it to achieve high quality outcomes.

The South Australian Education Minister, John Gardner has stressed that the VET market of the future "will be will be based on contestability, access and choice" while the the former Education Minister – and current Labor shadow minister – Susan Close is urging caution. "Across the country public vocational training needs to be strengthened. You don't strengthen TAFE by closing campuses. Every state has learned lessons about trying to go too fast towards having TAFE compete on a level playing field with non-govern-

ment providers."

Now is not the time to be closing TAFEs. We need to invest in the future. We need a strong public TAFE sector that is not having to compete with private providers for limited public funding. Too much recent public policy has viewed vocational education as a commodity, believing it will thrive in a commercial market that will naturally improve teaching and improve student outcomes. However, as history teaches us, it often leads to a lack of diversity in the range of courses available because only the money-making courses survive. This in turn leads to a closure of regional TAFE campuses which denies access to vocational education, often to the people who need it most.

Now, more than ever is the time to invest in TAFE and invest in the skills of the future. TAFE must be championed as a public institution that benefits the whole of society in terms of employment, social cohesion and economic prosperity. It provides education and vocation to everyone and deserves better than the severe cuts that this South Australian Liberal Government budget delivers. ●

Correna Haythorpe is AEU federal president

NATIONAL TAFE DAY



In June TAFE teachers, students, Stop TAFE Cuts supporters, unions and community members celebrated National TAFE Day. Around the country at campuses, union offices, workplaces and schools 'TAFE-ies' took time to recognise the contributions of our TAFE system, and reminded politicians that TAFE is too good to lose! Morning teas, barbeques, concerts, rallies, and informal gatherings were held in each state and territory.

BY ROSIE SCROGGIE

AS in previous years, a reception was held at Parliament House in Canberra to mark TAFE Day. Co-hosted by the AEU, AMWU and ETU, this year's reception was the biggest yet with politicians and stakeholders mingling with apprentices, students, teachers and unionists.

In addition to the Leader of the Opposition, Bill Shorten, addressing the reception, three special guest speakers were invited by the AEU.

Alanna Dennien, an apprentice from Queensland, Phil Smith, a TAFE teacher and AEU member from Victoria, and Valerie Lester, a mother whose daughter was caught up in the VET FEE-HELP rorts. Valerie is also a TAFE teacher at Swinburne University.

We would like to share edited versions of these speeches with you, as well as photos from celebrations around the country.

Thanks to all members and supporters who joined us in celebrating National TAFE Day.

Phillip Smith, Carpentry Teacher, Victoria

"I want to talk about TAFE and what it means to me – and what it means to my community – because TAFE is all about community.

We teach national qualifications at a local level. Practical education and applied learning delivered in partnerships and networks of local employers and communities.

I've been in TAFE long enough to have seen what a disaster marketisation has been. The public TAFE has been consistently damaged. We have witnessed our communities, students, parents and employers lose confidence in the sector as a whole. It's vital that a public TAFE survives and is rebuilt.

The race to the bottom that marketisation has created, is a race we didn't need. It's a race that no one wins. 8,000 people have lost their jobs in Victoria alone, over 5,000 in New South Wales, 1,500 plus in Queensland and close to 600 in South Australia. This loss of knowledge and course offerings effects hope and opportunities for the many who rely on TAFE.

TAFE desperately needs renewed investment in its workforce. Insecure work and unsustainable workloads make it an unattractive career option. At 52 I am, and have been for the past 15 years, the youngest teacher in my department. I love my job, but, we need to get serious about recruiting and supporting qualification pathways for new TAFE teachers and real development opportunities for current teaching staff.

Vocational training in Australia can be traced back to 1827 when the first Mechanics Institute was established in Hobart. To see the trust and confidence disappearing in the sector should be a source of national shame.

The way in which we have trained and supported Australians for generations, has made us globally competitive and sought-after. I've experienced this first hand, being fortunate enough to have worked overseas and interstate off the back of my own TAFE education. I've seen numerous students go on to be successful, contributing positively to society in their own right.

Cuts to TAFE have watered down our capacity to deliver the range of courses that we once did. Communities suffer when the range of courses

on offer is reduced, many people simply stop engaging in education at all.

We have the opportunity to restore TAFE to its rightful place in our education system. 70% guaranteed funding

would go a long way to restoring confidence to the institutes that have been struggling to make ends meet. Public TAFE should be focused on education methodology not marketing strategies.

More than ever students need global skills and knowledge; such as problem solving, innovation development, high level technical and communication skills. These are broad skills that should be embedded in vocational education. Many of these have been forgotten in the way we now deliver skills training.

It's frustrating for a teacher to work on competency based training courses that are more focused on compliance and audits than education.

At the most basic level TAFE represents access to education for many in our community that have lost touch with education, or those who want to up skill to increase their opportunities in employment. This should include access to quality facilities and technology.

A quality public TAFE should be funded to meet the broad needs of the nation and its people in an ever changing world.

Vocational education should be diverse in the skills it teaches and deep in the knowledge and capability that it enables. A public TAFE should encourage and support lifelong learning." ●



Valerie Lester, mother and TAFE Teacher, Victoria

"I would like to first talk about the effects that dodgy operators have had on my daughter Rachel, now aged 20, and our family.

When my daughter told me that she wanted to enrol in a Diploma of Fitness at SAGE Institute in October 2016, I initially refused. As a TAFE teacher I had naturally had serious misgivings about RTOs and some of their reputations.

However, in order to keep Rachel engaged in education after her gap year, in something she was passionate about, my husband and I finally relented to the pressure from our daughter and some fairly convincing literature on the course. We paid a deposit of \$1440 and enrolled her.

Rachel actually loved her course and was a star student but barely five months after she had started, SAGE collapsed. She was absolutely devastated, disillusioned and extremely angry. As a result of this, Rachel worked two hospitality jobs, saved up and went back overseas and has not yet returned.

I felt extremely guilty and also foolish, but was determined to have Rachel's debt wiped so that she could start afresh. We also found out she has no Recognised Prior Learning for her course.

Since then I have been on a frustrating mission, dealing with a variety of agencies – such as the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) and the Australian Council for Private Education whose support has been sadly lacking. Despite supplying necessary paperwork, their communication skills are disappointing to say the least. I am now dealing with a Federal VET Ombudsman investigator. I continue to supply them with paperwork. I have navigated a Unique Student Identifier website where after two hours I

finally retrieved her number and a transcript. The investigation is ongoing. We are almost made to feel like criminals when we are in fact the victims of corruption.

An important point that I would like to make is that if an educated and literate person, and also native speaker like myself is experiencing such difficulty in resolving this issue, what must it be like for non-native speakers in new and emerging communities, many of whom have been left in limbo and with meaningless Certificate IIIs. Some were pulled out of classes by their Job Active providers and told to do courses otherwise their benefits would be cut. Others simply believed in the Australian education system and fell prey to the offer of cheap and quick courses with the promise of a job. Operators disappeared or reinvented themselves somewhere else.

The lesson to be learnt from this debacle is that our TAFEs need to be supported and allowed to do what they do best – provide excellent teaching and learning, pathways to life-long learning for our communities. Their reputation should not be undermined by greed and corruption and lack of regulation."



Ged Kearney



Graham Perrett



Jenny McAllister



Joel Fitzgibbon



Bob Katter



Alanna Dennien, TAFE apprentice, Queensland

"I have been involved within TAFE on and off now for 13 years and I am currently a TAFE student in Queensland. I started my TAFE education when I was in Year 8 in a small country town called Biloela. I completed courses in beauty, business, human resources and safety. Biloela did not have many avenues after high school apart from the mining and agricultural sectors. Luckily enough, by me completing the TAFE business course, it was a step forward to gaining my first fulltime employment as I had not made plans to attend university. This job was within a small maintenance department for a crane hire company and was the beginning of a career I never imagined.

Over the years, I continued to build on my knowledge through TAFE and I was fortunate with this education, to work all over Australia in remote towns and mine sites within Queensland, the Northern Territory and Western Australia as a Maintenance Planner for Mining Machinery. This work allowed me to be accepted into CQ University to complete a graduate Diploma in Asset and Maintenance Management which I'm currently completing as distance education. I can confidently say that it was due to my early start in TAFE that I had the opportunity to experience these places, the work and the culture it brought with it.

Currently, I am a third-year Heavy Diesel Technician Apprentice for an OEM completing my study through TAFE Queensland at Acacia Ridge in Brisbane. This course is partially government funded and without this funding my apprenticeship would be non-existent. This apprenticeship has been an overwhelming experience, in a way that has given me self-confidence to complete the tasks I face day to day. TAFE allows me to be prepared with knowledge of machine systems and components for when I experience these in practice. Last week I was working 15 hour days removing and rebuilding an engine from a 70 tonne mining machine and I

can't even explain to you how that feels to look at something that big and know that I rebuilt it. I've already had such a rewarding career due to the study I have completed, but this apprenticeship will open many doors for me into the future.

I speak for myself on the importance TAFE has played in my life, but I also need to mention here how TAFE and its funding has helped others. Both of my younger brothers and my partner have completed Diesel Fitting apprenticeships through TAFE QLD. All three had the opportunity within small town communities and small businesses. Without the funding and support from the government, the chances that these apprenticeships would have even been offered would be next to nothing. Three young men now have a career and the skills that will support them and their families for life and they contribute to the skilled labour that is in demand in the present economy.

Without the current TAFE funding for programs such as apprenticeships, companies would not financially be able to offer these opportunities. Everyday people like myself would not have the opportunity to gain the qualifications they desire and to experience a rewarding career.

I applaud TAFE and what it has taught me and I'm evidence that you don't need to go straight to university after school to succeed. I urge the Australian government to look at people with stories like mine to understand how important this funding is for educational growth within communities in our country. For me, TAFE has aided my career in positive and rewarding ways and I hope that others will have the same opportunities that I have had in the future." ●



Australia's Young Skilled Workers Compete to Skills Squad dominated

Australia's world cup soccer dreams may have been short-lived, but a team of 23 young Australians are competing to fly the flag for Australia on the global stage of the WorldSkills International Championships in Russia next year.



WIDELY recognised as the 'Olympics' of the skills sector, the WorldSkills competition is open to all Training Providers and is an opportunity for universities, TAFEs and Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) to showcase their most talented students and benchmark them against the best in Australia, while promoting the training provider as a centre of excellence in skills training and delivery. This year the shortlisted team is made up entirely of students at public institutions with 19 of the 23 strong shortlist studying at TAFEs around the country.

The team members, known as the 'Skills Squad', were selected after their success at the recent WorldSkills Australia National Championships, which took place in Sydney in July 2018. The championships saw over 400 of Australia's best apprentices and trainees compete for the title of National Champion in one of the 50 trade and skill categories.

The Skills Squad team members, who range in age from 17 to 23, will spend the next nine months working with a dedicated training manager for the chance of being selected to represent Australia at the world's biggest skills excellence competition, where the best young apprentices and trainees from more than 70 nations will compete for the title of World Champion in Kazan, Russia, in August 2019.

Courtney New is studying applied fashion design and merchandising at TAFE NSW. She credits her TAFE teachers for understanding the level of commitment needed to train for WorldSkills and assisting her with other classwork so that she didn't fall behind and still complete the course with the rest of her class. 'My teachers were also always there to answer questions, of which I had many, regarding my designs, techniques in sewing and helping me figure out what I needed improvement on. One of my teachers even began mentoring me outside of my regular class time, even going so far as to give up some of her weekend time to help me in my training right near the end'. After the national competition ended, that teacher offered Courtney an internship position in her own fashion business so she could continue to train with her and refine her skills while her other TAFE teachers supported her by providing her with equipment, assistance and even some textbooks on different sewing

take on the World's Best in Russia 2019 by TAFE students

This year the shortlisted team is made up entirely of students at public institutions with 19 of the 23 strong shortlist studying at TAFEs around the country.

techniques 'which will help me enhance my skills over the next few months of training and better prepare me to compete internationally' said Courtney.

Reports of TAFE teachers going above and beyond were echoed around the county. Joshua Boon praised TasTAFE and his teacher Jai Maluga for supporting him with use of facilities and material for training as well as out of work hours training. 'I am very grateful to TasTAFE and my teachers for the amazing support they have given me' he said.

Patrick Brennan of TAFE Queensland said his teacher Carl Balke was a major influence for him to become involved in WorldSkills. 'He was the one that invited me to compete in the regionals and from there, has put everything into training and mentoring not only me but also the other two Queenslanders.'

Joshua Simons praised South Bank TAFE Queensland for supporting him even after he finished his diploma in 2017, and Gorgia Maliukaetau of Riverina TAFE said 'the staff have been so encouraging and supportive and have always pushed me to achieve the best that I can in my industry. My journey all began with TAFE and they continue to support my ambitions even after graduating in 2016!'

Skills Squad team members have been selected from a broad array of trades and skills, ranging from traditional trades such as Bricklaying and Cabinetmaking to skills of the future including Cloud Computing and IT Network Systems Administration. The team of 23 includes five females in the trade/skill areas of 3D Digital Game Art, Car Painting, Beauty Therapy, Fashion Technology and Graphic Design Technology.

At the last international championships, held in 2017 in Abu Dhabi, Australia finished in 10th position. The CEO of WorldSkills Australia, Brett Judd is keen to equal or beat that position this year, but it's not just about the competition "Many of the skills being represented are in the skills shortage areas for Australia. For WorldSkills to have outstanding competitors in these areas is very encouraging and an absolute credit to the competitors, their training providers and employers." ●





Unmaking of TAFE

This article is part two of a two-part series. It focuses on the policy trajectory that created a national training framework, a 'training market' and the introduction of VET FEE-HELP and looks at how these policies brought TAFE to near ruin.

JOHN PARDY

INCREASING participation in education in Australia, both at the school and at the tertiary level represents a dramatic social and cultural shift. This occurred in the late 1980s early 1990s and these statistics from Victoria illustrate the magnitude of the changes. The apparent retention rate to Year 12 increased from 47% in 1986, to 81% in 1992 before declining to 79% in 1993.

For TAFE, this period also involved significant change. More closely aligning TAFE offerings to the economy and labour market, and the introduction of competency-based training (CBT) redefined TAFE teaching and learning.

More aligning of the nation's economy with education, and training for skills development was progressed by the Federal Minister

for Education, in the Hawke Labor government (1983-1991). The Hawke and Keating federal government (1983-1996) undertook broad ranging macro and micro economic reforms that transformed the Australian economy and society. These changes also included changes to TAFE, universities and schools.

While the 1970's can be viewed as a time of reforming secondary schooling, the 1990s involved far reaching reforms of post-school, tertiary education in Australia. Universities underwent significant reform as did TAFE. Reforming universities focused upon creating a unified national system where former Colleges of Advanced Education, Teachers Colleges, Printing and Textile Colleges and Pharmacy colleges were transformed into universities.

TAFE on the other hand was reformed to become more industry oriented through the creation of national industry standards. Up until

that point, TAFE operated with state based, industry informed, knowledge based curricula. The change would involve national industry designed qualifications known as training packages that would replace curriculum.

A policy platform at the time, *Australia Reconstructed*, established a new body to consider national skills needs. The National Board of Employment, Education and Training (NBEET) was formed with a partner agency called the Employment Skills Formation Council (ESFC). Together NBEET and the ESFC inaugurated, industry advisory arrangements to determine the delivery of what was to become known as Vocational Education and Training (VET). This shift from a focus on TAFE to VET was a reorientation of TAFE.

While TAFE was the key state and territory government owned public provider, it would not from then on, be the sole or only providers of

skills development. The notion of a training market was a key feature of the policy direction for VET, which has had continuing ramifications for how TAFE operates today.

When Paul Keating assumed the Prime Ministership in 1992, he set about establishing the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) as a statutory authority with the mission of forming a more consistent national Vocational Education and Training (VET) system. The States and Territories formally recognised the national leadership role of ANTA through their own legislation, which established their own VET systems as the 'State Training Authorities' under the ANTA agreement.

ANTA achieved considerable progress in developing and overseeing an industry led national training framework. ANTA was abolished in 2004. This was a centrepiece of former Prime Minister Keating's policy direction. In a speech in 2003, former Prime Minister Paul Keating reflected that

"In this country, approximately 40 per cent of secondary school students go to tertiary institutions . . . what were we to do with the other 60 per cent of kids, many of whom often cascaded into nothing? The answer was for the Commonwealth to involve itself directly in funding the growth of TAFE".

While TAFE has an important educational role in a changed Australia, its capacities have been hampered. As a result of the reforms of the 1990s, industry was handed the central policy role in Australian VET and TAFE, meaning that communities, so vital in the earlier establishment of TAFE in the 1970s were left out. The advent of a more marketised sector with the addition of student fees would further exacerbate damage to TAFE and its relationship to its communities.

In the 2000s a new way for considering and remaking TAFE/VET was premised upon a loosely defined set of ideas called 'market design'. Moving past notions of processes between governments and industry that characterised ANTA, market design was about designing and setting the rules of exchange between consumers and providers. The rules of the game, if you like were the focus of market design in order to get the right outcomes.

At the time it was thought with good market design, governments could harness market forces by setting incentives and accounting for risk. In crude terms, market design reduced education provision and the activities of TAFE to the structure of buyers and sellers within this new policy paradigm.

In this paradigm of market design a TAFE institute was not conceptualised as significantly different from a private provider. Debates about public versus private in this paradigm are considered irrelevant.

As part of this policy approach contestable funding connected to student training entitlements was rolled out differently in different states and territories. In real terms what this paradigm of market design would mean for TAFE would be shaped by the particular state and territory government approaches to what has become known as student training entitlement schemes.

VET FEE-HELP first introduced by the Howard Liberal national coalition government in 2007 introduced a new model of financing VET and TAFE provision. In 2012, the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform extended the use of VET FEE-Help in the demand driven contestable market design approach to VET. By 2015, all states and territories had introduced a student training entitlement scheme.

TAFE was sidelined as the key public institution in this policy wave of industry-led and then market design. Market design, through student

entitlement schemes resulted in student entitlement approaches to financing whereby states and territories in effect shifted cost onto students through federal government financed income contingent loans.

Allocating resources directly effects the viability and quality of education offered and experienced. TAFE, up until the late 1990s was buoyed by reasonable investment by state, territory and federal governments. This reasonable investment occurred through the recognition of the importance of TAFE.

Remaking TAFE

TAFE today needs to be remade to do more than just be a 'provider among other providers'. ACOTAFE made TAFE central in communities as an important educational resource to support individuals, communities and businesses and companies deal and cope with a changing world. This vision encapsulated in ACOTAFE in the 1970s needs to be equalled with a renewed vision as we enter the third decade of the twenty first century.

The industry lead system that underpinned this approach as progressed by ANTA, needs to give way to more localised industry informed curricula approaches to underpin a TAFE education that redresses social, technological and economic change.

The role of TAFE in Australia differs from that of other VET providers.

TAFE has a responsibility to the public and the communities where it resides. The challenge for TAFE today in the current competitive education and training market context is to differently reinvent and re-legitimise its place.

The reinvention, or more precisely remaking

of TAFE, needs to occur in a policy climate that goes past a preoccupation with income contingent loans and financing. In the second decade of the twentieth century more students are staying on to complete secondary schooling. But not everywhere. Country students, and those in remote locations, are less likely to complete school, as are children from economically disadvantaged households. Indigenous children are also less likely to complete secondary school. Women, migrants, and those who have been retrenched because of technological changes need TAFE to reorient and adjust through learning for different and new forms of work.

The teaching and learning experiences that have made TAFE what it is are not replicated or reproduced in secondary schools or universities. TAFE institutionally has always been more than a 'provider' subject to poorly conceived policy. There is need for national agreement about the role TAFE has in each state and territory in guiding a broader VET system. The industry advisory arrangements progressed through NBEET and then ANTA and ITABS divested significant education funds away from direct education delivery, with relatively minimal improvements in quality. Investing funds back to TAFE through states and territories to ensure industry informed TAFE offerings will move some way to redressing the imbalance that has occurred for TAFE education.

Only by remaking TAFE, in ways that move past previous policy precepts will we inaugurate a new era in TAFE provision. What needs to be central to a new policy imaginary is TAFE as an institution that is not residual to schools or universities but one where the institutional vision is about communities and industries adjusting to changes, both foreseen and unforeseen is front and centre. ●

John Pardy is Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Education at Monash University.

TAFE must reengage with communities and connect with industry and enterprises in different ways to previously through ANTA. This is necessary to build curriculum responses that do not hollow out solid educational response.

ATTRACTING and RETAINING women tradies in regional Australia

Encouraging women into TAFE to learn trades could help fill major skills shortages in regional Australia. Yet despite major efforts from government, industry and education providers the number of women in the manual trades in Australia has barely shifted over the past 20 years.

EMERGING preliminary research from Charles Sturt University is revealing the factors that support and facilitate the success of women in manual trades in regional Australia. The research team is led by Dr Donna Bridges and includes Dr Stacey Jenkins, Dr Larissa Bamberry and Associate Professor Branka Krivokapic-Skoko. This team of researchers spoke to employers, trades women, job network agencies, education providers, government, councils and trade unions in New South Wales to understand the barriers to recruiting and retaining women.

Barriers to recruitment

So why don't women want to become apprentices?

The harsh reality is that recruiting women is difficult. The world of work is gendered terrain where cultural norms dictate which jobs women and men should perform. Quite simply, trades are seen as a masculine occupation by women. They don't associate manual jobs as one suitable for them and don't have female role models to look up to, or to visit them in schools.

Influenced by these gender norms, families are dissuading girls away from taking up trades in a bid to protect them from working in a male dominated environment. Partly because they want to protect them from heavy lifting and dirty work, but also to protect them from fears of sexual harassment, or worse.

To compound this, schools reinforce the gendered norms with some school career advisors considering manual trades to be masculine professions and only offering information to boys rather than encouraging girls to

consider them as an option.

Olivia Brown, AEU Federal Women's Officer and a former TAFE student, believes that we need to see a cultural shift in society. "We need to actively engage women, especially young women, with the premise that they are both equally capable of achieving success in technical careers, and that the indicators of that success are not inherently of a gendered nature whatsoever. To overcome previous social norms which have previously repressed women from high-skilled technical work, women must be encouraged and exposed to technical skills at a young age, both within the family home and with various opportunities during their education at school. I found during my time running a technical trade camp for high school girls, many were surprised at their natural technical ability, and were then able to correlate success, enjoyment and satisfaction within a technical field of work, something they would never come to realise without such exposure."

Barriers to retention

Masculine cultures can be resistant to diversity and by implication change and many women reported being expected to fit into dysfunctional male-dominated cultures. The resistance to including women manifests in bullying and sexual harassment causing women to drop out, or if they report it using appropriate channels, they can become ostracised or victimised. The researchers found that while the deliberate use of foul language is acceptable to women in many instances, vulgarity and sexist slurs focused on individuals is not.

Many women reported being told to 'toughen up'

and not cause too many problems. They were told they were too 'prickly', too easily offended, or too thin skinned which ultimately lays the blame on individual women as being the problem and takes the emphasis off a dysfunctional culture.

Dr Stacey Jenkins affirmed that TAFE teachers can play a large role in helping women feel supported in the classroom. 'The women we spoke to said the younger males within the classroom could be quite disruptive...the teacher's confidence in classroom behaviour management and equity matters played a contributing role in how comfortable the women felt.'

"The women who were mature in age in the classroom noted they felt their age and life experience helped them in being resilient and dealing with the disruptive and sometimes sexist and inappropriate behaviour of the younger males. There was some discussion offered from them that it would be useful if consideration could be given to trying to ensure that if there were other females doing the same trade, that the training provider should try and ensure that they be placed in the same classroom, as a support for each other, as otherwise they could feel quite isolated" she said.

Isolation also led to women feeling they were being scrutinised under an uncomfortable spotlight. The spotlighting phenomena can also cause women to feel as though they need to out-perform their male colleagues in the amount of work they do and how well they do it. The pressure to perform is compounded further by being in the spotlight, not only for oneself but by representing all women. Women tradies felt because the industry has so few women, those



that are visible establish a benchmark. Therefore, they felt that if one woman's performance is poor, the perception of all women's capacity or performance is damaged.

Damaging rumours or 'jokes' that women only acquired their job through 'sexual favours' are also extremely detrimental to the self-esteem of women and workplace relationships between women and men, ultimately leading to concerns about workplace safety.

Breaking down the barriers

While there clearly needs to be an increase in diversity and a change in culture, Stacey Jenkins concluded 'On a positive note one of the tradeswomen noted they still rely on their TAFE teacher as a mentor and is in regular contact with

him, which she has felt has been very valuable.' Indeed, mentoring, buddy systems, all women teams, networking initiatives and using social media were all seen as effective ways to break down barriers. TAFE NSW in the South region has piloted several female mentoring programs with positive outcomes.

Discussions also highlighted how successful community education and awareness programmes, which focused on early engagement with girls can help to 'normalise' women tradies. Examples include Women's Sheds; Supporting and Linking Tradeswomen (SALT) a not-for-profit network of female tradies that began with seven tradeswomen in Wollongong in 2009 and now has representatives nationwide, and a programme where women 'on the tools' share their experiences with school children and women in the community.

The researchers believe TAFEs can make an important contribution to developing support and retention strategies in male-dominated trades by recognising young women's existing levels of resilience, and building in skills training for all qualifications in the areas of resilience, adaptability, team work and communication.

While more research needs to be undertaken to determine whether there are differences amongst the regional areas, it is clear that targeted actions are needed to achieve sustainable social and cultural changes for women in the trades. Changes that not only benefit women and men but build skilled communities and a global future for regional Australia. ●

TAFE in the 21st Century



The crisis in Australian vocational education is more than a funding, marketisation or system design issue: it is a question of the fitness of our vocational education model for our times.

In the context of revolutionary digital technologies, continued globalisation, population ageing and changes to work patterns such as the emergence of the gig and post-work economies, we are failing to repurpose our vocational education resources to develop the twenty-first century capabilities needed by individuals, communities and industries.

Manpower on steroids

AFTER forty years of training reform, policymakers, industry stakeholders and even many educators regard vocational education primarily as a means of producing manpower as cheaply as possible. Successive state/territory and federal governments have managed vocational education as a cost to be reduced rather than as an investment in the individual or in social good.

The understanding that the vocational education sector exists primarily to serve industry rather than individuals or communities is almost universally accepted in the public policy and polemic concerning the sector.

Yet, over the past five years there has been growing evidence that the vocational education sector has suffered from an excess of training reform. Growth in for profit private provision has

positioned to meet the needs of twenty-first century industries let alone individuals and communities.

We do not know how work and employment opportunities will change in the near future. What we do know is that people will need occupational breadth as well as educational depth to adapt and thrive as industries and society change. Researchers who have looked specifically at how vocational education can prepare people for digital disruption emphasise the importance of acquiring broad technical skills that can be adapted and applied in novel contexts, complemented by what have become known as twenty-first century capabilities (Baker, 2016; Committee for Economic Development of Australia, 2015)

Capabilities are much broader than the combinations of skills and knowledge specified by the Australian Qualifications Framework: capabilities also encompass dispositions and attitudes (Barnett & Coate, 2005; Hager & Holland, 2007

learners graduate with the strong core literacy, numeracy and digital skills needed to underpin all other learning.

- Australian vocational education curriculum and teaching do not address the twenty-first century capabilities needed for long-term employability and community engagement.
- The applied and workplace-situated pedagogies required to develop high-level technical skills are not regarded as distinctive pedagogies requiring research and development to keep pace with workplace change.
- Our vocational education institutions and systems are not well prepared to respond to disruptive change.
- Vocational education institutions have neither capability nor capacity for innovation.

Evidence of the vocational education contribution to innovation comes from the Office of the Chief Scientist, which in March 2016 reported that "... people with vocational education level qualifications had a much higher level of business

TAFE institutes, as permanent public institutions, ought to be the natural leaders for developing and sustaining applied vocational education research and innovation in Australia.

siphoned government and individual investment into private pockets with little return to industry or community. Vocational education continues to be the Cinderella of the education system despite the fact that in 2016, 4.2 million Australians participated in it.¹

Reduced funding has meant less investment in teaching practice and vocational education research, greatly affecting the capacity of the sector to maintain its knowledge, renew its educational practices and adapt as society and industry change. Despite their best efforts, vocational education providers, even the enduring public institutions, are not resourced to innovate. Given the public ownership of, and historical investment in, TAFE institutions, these ought to be leading the development of new vocational education knowledge and innovative practices. However, TAFE institutions have lost much of their capacity to evaluate and renew their educational practice and thinking.

Australia's vocational education sector remains in the past, painstakingly preparing people to perform known, narrowly defined tasks for yesterday's industries. Vocational education and the vocational education system are not

I identify five critical gaps in the preparedness of Australian vocational education to support the preparation and ongoing education of individuals for twenty-first century life and work:

- There is insufficient capacity to ensure

ownership compared to those with university level qualifications" and "... of the STEM-qualified population, approximately two-thirds held vocational education and training (vocational education) qualifications, while one-third were higher education graduates with bachelor





degrees or higher... The vocational education sector makes a critical contribution to Australia's STEM skills base, a contribution yet to be fully reflected in the evidence base for policy development.' (Office of the Chief Scientist, 2016, p158)

This contribution is invisible to policymakers, the media and the general public. For example, the vocational education sector did not initially feature in the Australian Governments National Innovation and Science Agenda. Lack of recognition of vocational education's role in innovation means that we have neglected to build the capability needed to optimise that contribution. Recent policies have failed to build the capacity of vocational education institutions and their graduates to undertake research and foster innovative capability.

TAFE institutes, as permanent public institutions, ought to be the natural leaders for developing and sustaining applied vocational education research and innovation in Australia. Despite limited resources, some are working towards this, such as Holmesglen Institute with its Centre for Applied Research and Innovation and TAFE Queensland, which is building an applied research portfolio. However, lack of resources, means that TAFE institutes and the vocational education sector generally are not achieving their potential contribution to innovation. Significant investment in applied research and innovation infrastructure and staff capability is needed to enable Australian TAFE institutes to create the organisational cultures that will produce future

adjusters and implementers of innovations.

Strong core skills

First, there must be a genuine, adequately funded commitment to ensuring all adults have strong core literacy, numeracy and digital skills as a basis for ongoing participation in work and community. This commitment must acknowledge the specialised needs of significant groups such as early school leavers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and recently arrived migrants.

Qualifications for twenty-first-century industries

Our narrow, behaviourist vocational qualifications need to be broadened for the twenty-first century to ensure that technical skills are transferable and complemented by twenty-first century capabilities such as critical thinking, creativity, adaptability and entrepreneurship.

The range of qualifications levels available through vocational education must expand. Vocational education of the future could offer vocational qualifications ranging from AQF 1 to 10 designed for applied and workplace-situated learning. Higher, including degree level, apprenticeships could be expanded to cover a much larger range of industries, recognising the value of situating vocational education in real workplaces. Incentives may be needed to encourage reluctant employers to host on-the-job learning.

In the future even more than in the past, vocational education qualifications must meet the

needs of individuals seeking to reskill or upskill throughout a lengthened working life as well as new entrants to the workforce; some of these will be seeking new employment opportunities after interrupted lives. These many circumstances require an expanded range of qualifications, skill sets, micro-credentials and pathways. Skilful curriculum design will be necessary to ensure that individuals are able to achieve the mix of core skills, technical skills and capabilities needed at each critical life and employment stage.

To address this complexity, many are arguing for a localised approach to ownership and development of vocational education qualifications, giving providers ownership and allowing them to respond agilely to local needs (Billett, 2016; Wheelahan, 2015). Such a change would mean an end to industry ownership of national qualifications, but not necessarily of vocational standards. The development of national industry standards to frame technical skills development in locally developed qualifications could maintain the qualification portability and recognition which has been so useful in Australia.

Twenty-first century teaching

There is a need to recognise and resource high quality, self-renewing vocational education teaching. This requires serious initial and continuing teacher education in applied and workplace-situated pedagogies. To develop and maintain its relevance in a changing workforce

environment, vocational education teaching practice must be based on applied research into the development and evaluation of the applied and workplace-situated pedagogies required to develop high-level technical skills and twenty-first-century capabilities in context. Twenty-first-century vocational education must operate within a lifelong learning context, respond to digital disruption in education as well as industry and nurture innovation. It will take much more professional development than a certificate IV to meet these needs.

Future ready vocational education providers

We need a network of 'grown-up' institutions, each with its own sense of purpose related to its aspirations for its students, not to current government policy. TAFE institutions, as large, enduring public providers are the natural anchor institutions for such a network (Wheelahan, Buchanan, Goedegebuure, Mallet & McKew, 2017). There is no reason why TAFE institutions could not become the repositories for excellence in vocational education practice on behalf of all education institutions.

Autonomous twenty-first-century vocational education providers should develop their own qualifications and quality standards reflecting local needs and national industry standards as appropriate. TAFE and other vocational education institutions already deliver mixes of vocational qualifications from foundation certificate to postgraduate level (AQF 1-9) depending on local needs.

An integrated tertiary education sector

Given that the workforce will need more higher-level vocational qualifications in future, perhaps we no longer need to designate qualifications as vocational and higher education. In future it may be more useful to differentiate what we now think of as VET institutions on the basis of their specialist expertise in applied and workplace-situated learning, understanding that increasingly learning will take place in and around workplaces.

As the need for higher-level voca-



There is no reason why TAFE institutions could not become the repositories for excellence in vocational education practice on behalf of all education institutions.

tional education increases, it becomes increasingly nonsensical to retain hard sectoral and funding boundaries between institutions that primarily deliver vocational education and those that primarily deliver higher education. Parity of esteem can only come with parity of policy and resourcing. ●

Anne Jones is an Emeritus Professor at Victoria University

This is an edited extract from Vocational Education for the 21st Century published in August 2018 by the LH Martin Institute, University of Melbourne. It is one of a series of discussion papers contributing to the debate necessary to reform and invigorate the TAFE sector. A full version is available on the L H Martin Website.

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¹ (<https://www.ncver.edu.au/data/collection/total-vocational-education-students-and-courses>)

Recognising and rewarding



Nominations open for the **Arthur Hamilton Award**

This is your chance to celebrate an AEU member who is making an outstanding contribution to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education.

The Arthur Hamilton Award commemorates the achievements of Arthur Hamilton, a Palawa man who was active in promoting cross-cultural awareness, recognition of Indigenous peoples and the right for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to access a high quality public education.

The winner will receive a \$1500 prize and be flown to Melbourne to accept the Award at the AEU's annual Federal Conference in February 2019.

All nominees will receive a certificate from the AEU.

Get nominating!

Download your nomination form at:

aeufederal.org.au/our-work/indigenous

or, request a form from

Suzanne Lowndes: (03) 9693 1800

slowndes@aeufederal.org.au

Closing date for nominations is
Friday 9 November 2018

Find out more

Visit **aeufederal.org.au/our-work/indigenous**

or contact AEU federal secretary,

Susan Hopgood: aeu@aeufederal.org.au



The 2017 Arthur Hamilton Award went to Literature Production Centre (LPC) at Yirrkala School.

The Award was presented by Correna Haythorpe, AEU Federal President (left), to R  rriwuy Marika (centre) and Yalmay Yunupingu (from the LPC team), at the 2018 AEU Federal Conference

Achieving Excellence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education

Upon his appointment to the role of Special Envoy for Indigenous Affairs in the new Morrison Government, Tony Abbott said he would focus on education 'as the absolute key to a better future for Indigenous kids and the key to reconciliation'.

WHAT'S really needed to improve education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students?

Dr Kevin Lowe of Macquarie University, an education researcher and Gubbi Gubbi man from south-east Queensland is one of a team of 13 academics from 10 universities who systematically reviewed and interrogated over 10,000 studies between 2016-2018 to shed light on the educational experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families.

The purpose of the project is to critique policy and practice and to provide research-informed directions on how education could be structured to provide success for students.

Dr Lowe is quick to maintain there is no quick, tick box solution to achieving excellence. 'For students transitioning to adult education there are no silver bullets. It really does come down to building good relationships. The most engaged students will always be the ones that have a high level of trust and respect for the teachers. That's often based on the teacher knowing about the students, their families and their local histories.'

'In the past there has been a lot of misinformation about specific Aboriginal learning styles which has problematised the student with an assumption that Aboriginal students can't handle complex text. This simply isn't true. All students learn differently and a variety of quality forms of learning still need to be taken' he said

The comprehensive research project encompassed preschool to post-secondary education and the emerging themes in the research showed that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learner identity is closely linked to cultural identity and connectedness. The main points of the research are:

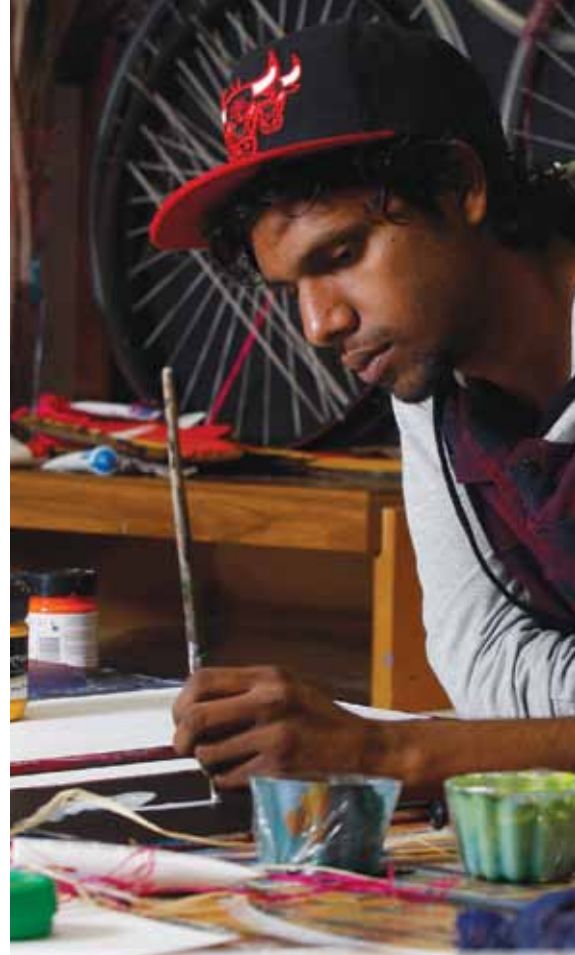
- That student's Indigenous identity as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander student needs to be understood and supported by the institution.
- Empirical evidence demonstrates that racism negatively impacts the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from primary school, through high school, and to later life.
- The impacts on students are harmful, wide-reaching and life-long. They influence academic achievement, self-concept attitudes to language, emotional wellbeing, physical health, school attendance, and post-

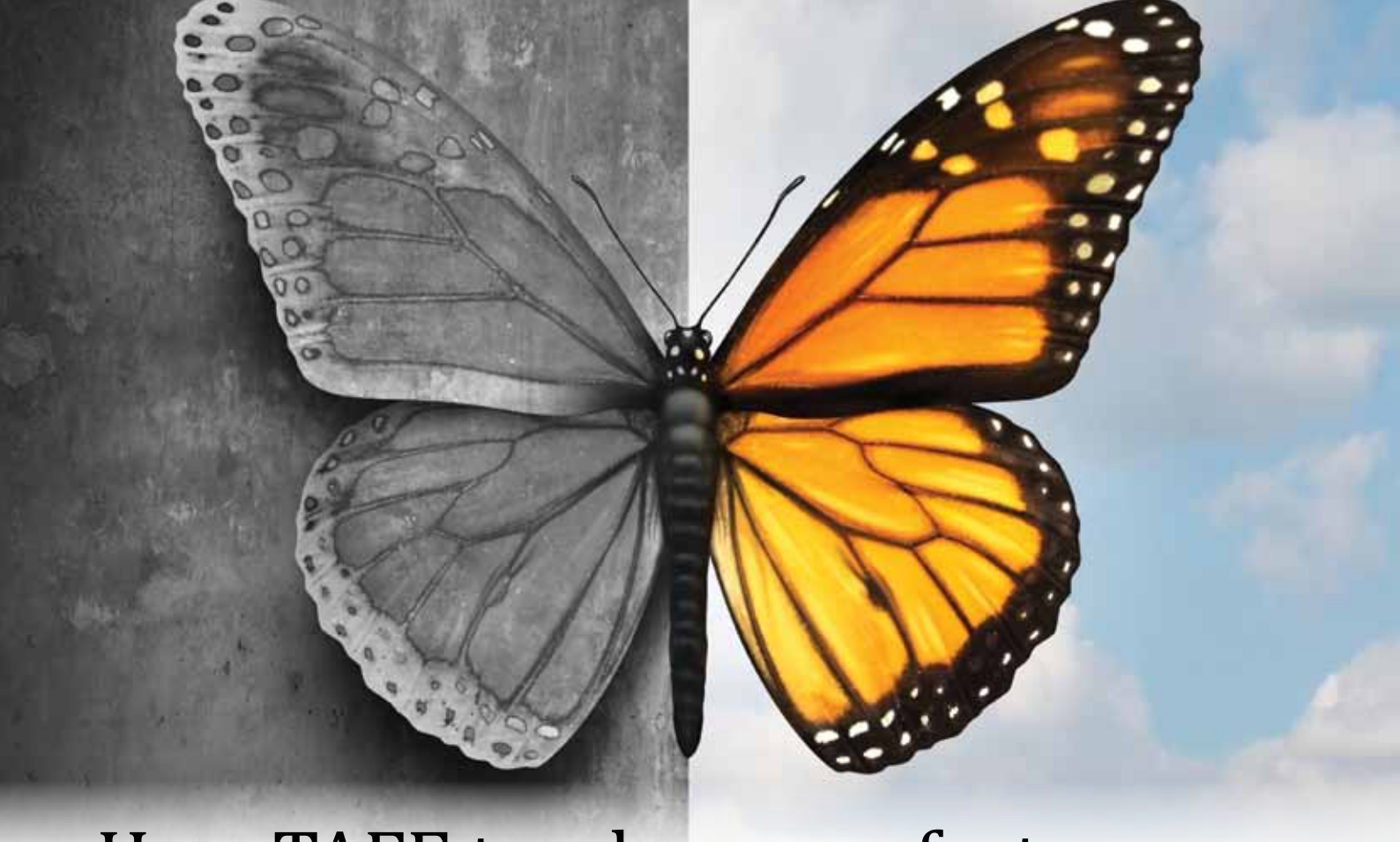
school pathways — and eventually school choice and engagement when those students become parents.

- In future, professional learning practices must more genuinely (a) ensure that Indigenous peoples contribute to leading these activities, (b) explicitly address issues to do with culture, (anti) racism, power, and relationships in schooling, and (c) localise the politics of knowledge.
- Curriculum must be developed locally, at the institution level in order for students to understand what the teacher has to teach. Place-based decision-making is crucial for effective learning.
- Authentic, purposeful and relationally based engagement between institutions and Aboriginal communities lay the ground for successful student engagement. Approaches to learning must engage students emotionally, as well as behaviorally and cognitively.
- The involvement of parents and community and having local staff employed and supported make a positive difference to remote students' success.
- That parents' value and are invested in programs that speak directly to providing their children with effective teaching, high value programs that are seen to support students' identity and cultural connection.

As a former TAFE Teacher, Dr Lowe recommends TAFE educators reach out to students and find out how they define success from an Indigenous perspective by discovering their aspirations. 'At TAFE it is so important to tease out the question of success as it can be about so much more than outcomes for Aboriginal students. Just taking that approach leaves so many attributes ignored. Success can be linked to community well-being and a strong commitment to deepening knowledge of place based local learning' he said.

'While all the kids I've ever spoken to said they wanted a job at the end of their course, Aboriginal kids also say they want to be identified and valued as Aboriginal. Having confidence that the TAFE and teachers have high expectations and recognize their student identity is connected to culture, place and family will ultimately build resilience and stronger students'. ●





How TAFE teachers can foster good mental health in themselves and others

TAFE teachers have an important role in fostering young people's futures. Teaching is hugely rewarding, but it also comes with great responsibility.

BY: NADINE BARTHOLOMEUSZ-RAYMOND

B EING a teacher is more than teaching the curriculum – it is also about being a role model for good mental health.

Tomorrow's educators will shape children's physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. *beyondblue* encourages TAFE teachers to recognise that to help others thrive, you must first be empowered with the skills to look after your mental health. Leading by example, you can demonstrate to pre-service educators how they can support their mental health and foster the wellbeing of their students.

Mental health challenges can affect anyone, at any time

If you looked around the staff room, you'd likely see peers and managers who are dealing with a mental health condition, though rarely could you tell from a glance or even general conversation. Mental ill health is most often a hidden burden.

One in five workers in Australia is likely to be experiencing a mental health condition; depression and anxiety are the most common.

While recent research has found more people are seeking support and treatment than ever before, stigma still stops many from getting the help they need to recover.

Mental health exists on a continuum. Often, we are thriving and able to bounce back quickly from challenges. Other times, we find challenges we might usually navigate with ease feel significantly harder to overcome.

Challenges that impact our ability to perform at work can include tight deadlines and heavy workloads. Sometimes we face more complex challenges, such as negative workplace culture, strained relationships with colleagues or managers, lack of clarity about our responsibilities, or job insecurity.

These can cause us to feel stressed, anxious, worried or upset and impact our mood at work and feelings towards work.

One in five Australians has taken time off work in the past 12 months because they felt stressed, anxious, depressed or mentally unhealthy.

When work-related stress becomes intense, comes from multiple sources or persists for long periods of time, it can increase risks to our physical and mental health or cause an existing condition to worsen.

Start with the basics of self care

When it comes to mental health, you can't separate issues that affect your wellbeing at or outside work. So, it's important to pay attention to your overall health.

To stay mentally healthy, you need to:

Maintain a healthy lifestyle

It's always important to look after the basics: eat nutritious meals and drink plenty of water, follow a sleep routine and exercise moderately on a regular basis. Reduce or eliminate your consumption of alcohol, caffeine and nicotine.

Invest in your social relationships

Good mental health is linked to having a supportive network of people you can relax and have fun with, as well as call on during difficult times. Make an effort to stay in touch with friends – it doesn't always have to be in person, you can still reap the benefits of social connectedness by catching up over emails and phone calls during busy times.

Manage and challenge your thoughts

Psychological studies have shown we can manage our thoughts, feelings and behaviours to approach problems with a positive attitude. It's known as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT).

When you have a negative or unhelpful thought after experiencing a difficult situation, question the thought. Ask yourself:

- If a close friend or someone I loved was thinking this way, what would I tell them?
- Five years from now when I look back will I see things differently?
- Are the things I'm jumping to conclusions about justified by evidence?
- What am I ignoring about my strengths and how I'm currently coping?

Strategies to practise at work

beyondblue's workplace mental health website Heads Up (www.headsup.org.au) provides practical tips to ensure you're working in ways that contribute to good mental health.

Schedule meetings in core work hours:

Block out time in your work calendar when you're not available for meetings. This might include hours just before or after your workday.

Make use of breaks:

Take your breaks outside of your workplace and get some fresh air. Exercise or do a stimulating activity such as reading or completing puzzles.

Set realistic deadlines and deliver on them:

Writing to-do lists and breaking down projects by tasks can help you to keep on top of your workload and deliver work on time, which will reduce the potential of feeling stressed or overwhelmed.

Sometimes, it's OK to say 'no':

You don't have to agree to take on other people's work all the time. Say 'no' and state your reasons – when your response is genuine, it won't mean you are letting the team down.

Limit working extra hours and taking work home:

It's ok to stay late every now and then, but regularly working beyond your standard hours can negatively impact your health.

Turn off work-related notifications after work:

It can be tempting to check emails and messages from managers and colleagues outside work hours. But once you've left work for the day, switch off and focus on fostering things important to your personal life.

Take holiday leave:

Holidays can take your mind off work and help you to return to work feeling refreshed and ready to be productive.

Make use of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP):

An EAP or similar program assists employees with personal and work-related issues that might impact their job performance and wellbeing. Your state body of the Australian Education Union can provide contact details for your EAP.

Explore suitable flexible working arrangements:

Discuss options with your manager to create a work schedule that better suits your lifestyle. You might like to negotiate flexibility in your working hours or locations, commit to longer days for a shorter work week, work split shifts or job share.

National Education Initiative

TAFE teachers play a critical role in training pre-service educators about how to foster good mental health for themselves and for children and young people.

Half of all lifetime mental health issues emerge by the age of 14 and one in seven young people aged 4 – 17 experience a mental health condition in any given year.

As part of a recent *beyondblue* study, 83 per cent of health experts agreed that 'increasing resilience among children aged 0–12 could potentially prevent mental health issues during childhood and/or later in life'.

beyondblue will shortly launch the National Education Initiative which will build on the success of KidsMatter and MindMatters; the Australian Government initiatives for schools and early learning services that we developed in conjunction with leading education and health organisations.

The National Education Initiative will incorporate Response Ability; a training program that provides resources and support to pre-service teachers of primary and secondary schools and early learning services.

This ground-breaking initiative is about making mental health awareness and practices part of the daily routine of every early learning service, primary and secondary school across Australia.

Educators will learn how to look after their own mental health and to look out for others – as they build healthy learning communities in which our children and young people can thrive.

It's about giving everyone the tools and confidence to support children's mental health in an environment that is welcoming and safe.

That gives you, our busy educators, the 'how to' to promote good mental health, know what to look out for, what to do and where to go to get help for children who are struggling.

Because we know that good mental health – just like good physical health – means that children stay engaged in their early learning service and at school, they concentrate better and are in the best position to achieve their best academic results.

If you would like to learn more about the *beyondblue* National Education Initiative, sign up to receive email updates: <https://bb.org.au/education-initiative>

Nadine Bartholomeusz-Raymond is beyondblue's General Manager of Education and Families and is leading the National Education Initiative.



As teachers in public TAFE institutions across the country, we are committed to supporting every person who needs access to high quality vocational, adult and further education.

In the last few decades, governments have attempted to privatise the TAFE sector, directing government funding to voracious private for-profit providers. Increasingly, the cost of TAFE and vocational education has been shifted from governments onto students through loans schemes and a failure to adequately resource TAFE.

TAFE and vocational education remain the worst funded education sectors in the country, with funding having been cut by more than 15% between 2007 and 2016. Government expenditure has declined by 31.5% over the past 10 years.

The damage inflicted on the sector, particularly as a result of underfunding and attempts to privatise have eroded the viability of colleges and undermined confidence in the system. In Australia overall, TAFE's share of publicly funded hours declined from 81% in 2009 to 54% in 2016. Enrolments in the sector have declined alarmingly in the last four years.

The Turnbull Government has overseen the debacle of the VET FEE-HELP scheme, allowing it to escalate so badly that experts estimate more than \$7 billion has been expended on the scheme, a significant proportion of which will never be recovered. Under the Turnbull government, funding has been slashed and support for the system has collapsed.

TAFE is a highly regarded educational institution which has supported individuals, communities and employers for decades. It has developed partnerships with employers and communities to provide pathways for students to employment, further education and university. It provides support for those seeking employment for the first time, those who missed opportunities at school, and those who seek retraining and further education throughout their lives.

STOPTAFECUTS.COM.AU





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CALL FOR ACTION

THE AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION UNION CALLS ON THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO:

- 1 Guarantee a minimum 70% government funding to the public TAFE system.** No public funding should go to private for-profit providers, consistent with other education sectors.

This must include investment to address high levels of precarious and casual employment, neglect of professional development and support and workload intensification.
- 2 Restore funding and rebuild the system,** which will restore confidence in the quality of the courses and qualifications and the institution.
- 3 Abandon the failed student loans experiment,** and cancel the debts of all students caught up in private for-profit provider scams.
- 4 Re-invest in the TAFE teaching workforce** and develop a future-focused TAFE workforce development strategy in collaboration with the profession and the union, based on degree-level teaching qualifications to augment the industry qualifications required to prepare people for work and for participation in society.
- 5 Develop a capital investment strategy,** in consultation with state governments to address the deplorable state of TAFE facilities around the country. TAFE students should have access to high quality learning facilities, commensurate at least with those enjoyed by their university cousins. This would address the issue of parity of esteem, and rebuild confidence in the sector.
- 6 Support a comprehensive independent inquiry into TAFE** to consider a broad range of issues including: the collapse in confidence and support for competency based training and training packages; the lack of overall investment, and the development of curriculum and courses.

Act now

There are some easy ways you can get involved and help the Stop TAFE Cuts campaign. Go to <http://stoptafecuts.com.au/act-now> and download resources.



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Download a guarantee funding poster and ask your local MP to sign it. Take a photo and upload it to our gallery.



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It's the perfect starter kit for getting active.



TAKE A PHOTO

Download some Stop TAFE Cuts signs and get supporters at your TAFE to be in a photo at your campus. Like supporters at My TAFE stoptafecuts.com.au/my-tafe



GET INFORMED

Check out our resources page for factsheets, leaflets and comment pieces.

stoptafecuts.com.au/resources



What are the lessons for TAFE from the Global Education Reform Movement?

To paraphrase Jeremy Bentham, the 18th century English social reformer, 'TAFE teachers have a right to know the authors of their suffering'. This is the first of two abbreviated articles that examine the outcomes from an international crusade to impose the discipline of the market on the provision of education. The results of the marketisation of schooling are the focus of this article, while the second questions if there are similar outcomes observed in the TAFE sector.¹

BY DR DON ZOELLNER

THE so-called Global Education Reform Movement (GERM) is constructed from a related set of dogmas associated with open and competitive markets:

- provider choice and competition
- for-profit providers of education and training
- efficiency combined with higher quality
- high-stakes external testing
- narrowing of curriculum and
- the use of under-or unqualified, and therefore cheaper, teachers.

The wide-spread introduction of market-based provision of education and training has its genesis in a highly influential, but remarkably short, mid-20th century paper authored by the Nobel Prize winning American economist, Milton Friedman. His basic proposition was that education was

not a valid activity of the state. Public provision of education results in 'an indiscriminate extension of government responsibility' in countries that are philosophically aligned with free enterprise, such as Australia.

In a study designed to determine if the promised improvements that were expected of increased marketisation and privatisation of school education had materialised, three paired sets of countries were compared over several decades. One of each pair had pursued the GERM policies while the other had adopted policy drivers enabling the provision of a public investment approach to education. The comparators were Chile-Cuba, Sweden-Finland and United States (several states)-Canada (Ontario). By using the results of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) and some other standard measures, it was shown that Chile, Sweden and the United States had not produced the anticipated beneficial results

from their single-minded implementation of the GERM. In addition system-wide student achievement had actually decreased while the transfer of ownership or management to private agents had resulted in growing levels of inequality and segregation of students and their families.

Furthermore, a broader analysis of the international data demonstrates that in the countries pursuing GERM the entire national cohort's results show 'lower academic standards for all students, including the so-called academically elite' that fled to private schooling. Chile, which was advised by Friedman directly, now has students that are 'left in the dust, achievement-wise' by Cuba's publicly-managed schools in spite of the island nation's greater economic challenges. Sweden's overall student achievement has dropped 'precipitously' from being one of the most highly educated countries in Europe to now performing well below the current OECD average in PISA. 'In PISA 2013, in all subject areas, Sweden is the country whose performance has declined the most'. In contrast, Finland chose the public investment approach and now consistently leads the PISA results due to public provision of education, highly qualified teachers, low-stakes assessment and whole-child teaching and learning strategies.

The United States is more complex, but states with the highest overall PISA results have the least number of charter schools and lower levels of privatisation while those states with the most advanced market-based reforms are consistently lower performers. This result stands in stark contrast to Ontario's students who demonstrated significantly improved PISA scores after a hard fought election replaced the GERM-promoting politicians and their policies with an explicit system of education treated as a public investment in its youth.

The Global Education Reform Movement has experienced stable bi-partisan political support in Australia since the late 1980s. The long term implementation of the GERM's competition parameters into the education sector has resulted in the Australian Productivity Commission's declaration of the increased value to users and the whole community that choice and competition has produced from the 'well established market for schools'. In making its assessment of the potential costs and benefits of economic reform options the Productivity Commission examines five attributes:

- quality – incentives for providers to offer high-quality services
- equity – who is effected by reform and how
- efficiency – incentives for providers to reduce costs and maintain quality
- responsiveness – providers being more

responsive to user's needs and

- accountability – more accountability to funders (taxpayers and users).

Using the same PISA results from the previously discussed international comparisons of the impact of GERM, it is difficult to attribute higher *quality* outcomes to the establishment of a marketised Australian schooling sector. In their analysis of the 2015 PISA scores, the Australian Council for Educational Research describes that 'not only is Australia slipping backwards relative

...while the transfer of ownership or management to private agents had resulted in growing levels of inequality and segregation of students and their families.

to other countries, but we are getting worse at preparing our students for the everyday challenges of adult life. The science, reading and mathematics achievement of Australian students is in absolute decline'.

In terms of *efficiency*, The Australian Bureau of Statistics indicates that the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for all of the economic groups used in the measure for the period 2006-2017 has increased by a total of 29.9 per cent (average of 2.9 per cent per year). In the same period the CPI for secondary education rose 73.2 per cent (6.1 per cent annually) and primary education rose 61.6 per cent (5.13 per cent per annum). The cost of schooling in the marketised sector has increased at more than double the rate of the national cost of living in each and every year rather than the hypothesised reductions produced by increased competition.

The attribute of *equity* is also going backwards in Australia's privatised and marketised schooling system. In common with Chile, Sweden and the United States, Australia's median PISA scores have fallen consistently since 2000 and 'while all cohorts [of SES percentile] have fared worse, the performance at the bottom has fallen by almost 50 per cent more than those at the top'. 'It is well-documented that Australian students' performance is declining relative to global peers. Another feature of Australian education is the inequality widens as children move through their school years'. This clear trend corresponds with increasing privatisation. 'Seventy per cent of primary school students go

to public schools, but the number of secondary school students in public schools has now fallen below 60 per cent'. Even inside the public sector, marketisation has also resulted in the near total exclusion of students from the lower SES percentiles being accepted into selective schools.

GERM advocates view the shift of students from the public to private sector as a positive indicator of provider *responsiveness* to the increased parental choice created by the provision of public funds to private schools in order to support the market. This intervention actually commenced in the 1950s when the Australian Government funded the Catholic system to avoid its collapse under the strain of the post-war baby boom and increased immigration. The federal government's willingness to increase the market share of private schools has been a consistent feature of post-war public policy. In 1958 non-government schools enrolled 24 per cent of all Australian school children and this had dropped to 21 per cent by 1975; while in private secondary schools the share of enrolments fell from one third in 1961 to just under a quarter in 1975.

It seems probable that the discipline of the marketplace would meet the Productivity Commission's requirement for increased *accountability* that comes from educational microeconomic reform. The broad patterns of shifting enrolments between school sectors and individual schools, in a fully informed market, will hold schools to account as student enrolments determine income and the future existence of the school. These results give an indication as to the measures of success that are apparently politically acceptable to governments. Quality, equity and efficiency can each decrease significantly as a result of marketisation and privatisation of education services as long as a user choice market exists and providers rise and fall on the basis of this choice being exercised.

In light of John Quiggin's view of market failure in education expressed in this journal last year, the second article asks whether this internationally consistent correlation between the introduction of the Friedman-inspired GERM into national school education policy leading to decreased education outcomes, amplified inequity and increased costs can be found in post-school education. Can a *prima facie* case be made that marketisation actually produces worse outcomes in the vocational education and training sector as well? ●

¹ The fully referenced complete paper is available from Dr Don Zoellner, don.zoellner@cdu.edu.au.

World's-first national inquiry into workplace sexual harassment

As thousands of women take to social media to share their stories of sexual harassment as part of the #metoo movement, the Australian Human Rights Commission is launching the world's first national inquiry into workplace sexual harassment.



It comes in the wake of last year's report into sexual assault at Australian universities, which revealed 87 per cent of students who were sexually assaulted did not make a formal report or complaint to their university.

Sexual harassment is described as any unwanted or uninvited sexual behavior that is offensive, intimidating or humiliating. It is against the law, yet every year sexual harassment in the workplace is one of the most common types of complaints received by the Commission under the Sex Discrimination Act.

Sexual harassment disproportionately affects women with 1 in 5 experiencing sexual harassment in the workplace at some time in their careers. However, 1 in 20 men also report experiencing sexual harassment in the workplace.

The wide use of mobile phones, email and social networking websites is creating new spaces where sexual harassment may occur.

Commissioner Kate Jenkins launched the inquiry in June saying it 'will involve an in-depth examination of sexual harassment in the workplace, nation-wide consultation and extensive research. Importantly, the Inquiry will provide employees, employers and all members of the public with an opportunity to participate in developing a solution to ensure Australian workplaces are safe and respectful for everyone.'

The 12-month inquiry will not consider individual complaints, but take a systemic approach. It will consider:

- The economic impact of sexual harassment
- The drivers of sexual harassment
- The role of technology and social media in both perpetuating and identifying sexual harassment
- Means of preventing sexual harassment in workplaces
- Best practice approaches
- And identify any necessary legislative change.

The AEU will be making a submission to the Inquiry.

The Inquiry will not be considering individual complaints but if you would like to contribute information about systemic issues or improvements, please contact the AEU Federal Women's Officer, Olivia Brown, in confidence on

(03) 9693 1800 or **obrown@aeufederal.org.au** ●

“

The CEOs are making millions in bonuses but

our pay just isn't keeping up”



Join

changetherules.org.au



Around Australia

NEW SOUTH WALES

MAXINE SHARKEY

THE Stop TAFE Cuts campaign is ratcheting up a notch or two in NSW since joining with the *Change the Rules* Federal campaign. Members joined in the national door knock on Saturday September 1 and have participated in blitzes of targeted federal seats across the state. Supporters have handed out hundreds of TAFE flyers at train stations during the morning and afternoon peak hours, engaged with hundreds of shoppers at street stalls and “done our block” letterboxing *Stop TAFE Cuts* information leaflets. These events will continue to be held up until the Federal election.

NSW delegates will travel to Canberra during the September Parliamentary sitting to have opposition members sign the ‘I Support Guaranteed Funding for TAFE pledge’. This will be followed up with visits to MPs electorate offices with small delegations of TAFE teachers. Members who would like to be a part of these delegations should contact their Organiser.

For the first time in many years, the TAFE members Trade Union Training courses have been refreshed. There are short courses aimed at teachers on the ground that can be delivered in or near the workplace during lunchtime or before or after work. These short courses, which are titled ‘Know Your Rights at Work’, are full of employment information. These courses can lead on to a follow up half day course delivered in a geographic region, inclusive of a lunch or dinner to allow members and officers to mix in a more informal social gathering. The longer three day TAFE basic course has also been revamped by abutting it to a TAFE TA Council to allow more members to have a taster of this important decision making process. The delivery of these new courses has re-engaged many

activists and created new enthusiasm for our various campaigns. Of course, work is ongoing to assist members in the workplace who are encountering difficulties with the ever changing landscape of ONE TAFE. ●

Maxine Sharkey is the NSW member of the National TAFE Council Executive

VICTORIA

GREG BARCLAY

VICTORIAN TAFE teachers have overwhelmingly voted YES (95%) for the new Multi Enterprise Agreement (MEA) for the 12 standalone TAFEs in Victoria. Negotiations for a new enterprise agreement commenced in March 2013, with a pause in negotiations in 2015 when the current agreement was ‘rolled over’ to allow TAFE teachers to have a salary increase in recognition of the length of time the negotiations had dragged on.

This new MEA will provide a strong base to support TAFE teachers and TAFE teaching for the next decade and beyond in Victoria.

Key elements of the in-principle agreement include -

- 5.4% upfront pay rise plus 2.7% twice a year – a total 23.7% over four years.
- Teacher salary at T5 classification moves from \$85,613 to \$105,877 by November 2021.
- A new incremental point, with salary of \$109,207 by the end of the agreement.
- A new career and classification structure.
- A new arrangement for ‘approved teaching qualifications’
- Recognition and more formal promotion of Applied Research as a part of TAFE teachers work.
- Introduction of mandatory work plans, giving members better control over workload, with much

more clarity around the work that teachers do.

- Limits for annual teaching to 800 hours per year, with 30 minutes for every teaching hour to undertake planning and assessment.
- New definition of teaching to include, when required, pastoral care, counselling, supervision and consultation as part of the 800 teaching hours.
- 20 days paid family violence leave.
- Ongoing employment as the default mode, with an annual conversion to secure employment for eligible casual and fixed-term teachers.
- Annual and weekly attendance arrangements (maintained).
- Overtime for work outside 8 hrs per day, 38 hrs a week and 1,748 hrs a year with right to reasonable refusal.

While the MEA only applies to the 12 standalone TAFEs, the agreement has set the new benchmark for the dual sector universities to measure their negotiations against.

There are already reports that TAFE teachers at the dual sector universities are leaving their teaching positions to take up teaching positions at the stand alone TAFEs given the better wages and conditions that the new MEA will deliver. ●

Greg Barclay is the Victorian member of the National TAFE Council Executive

QUEENSLAND

DAVID TERRAUDS

THE current TAFE Queensland Educators Certified Agreement 2016 is due to expire on 30 June 2019 and as of 1 April 2019 negotiations will commence on a replacement TAFE Queensland Educator Certified Agreement. Central Queensland University VET educator members will not be included in this

process as their Agreement will not expire until 30 June 2021.

The Educational Team Leader (ETL) role pilot is approaching finalisation. The ETL is a hybrid manager/ teacher position which aims to insert a certain level of decision making authority into the teaching team. Similar to a head of department in a school setting the aim is to have an educator released from teaching duties in order to undertake management duties.

The value of the position is seen as being its embedded and informed decision making capacity. A review of higher education positions in TAFE Queensland is also underway. The aim of both the ETL and Higher Education review is to formalise the conditions of employment for these categories of staff within the Award. The reviews were undertakings committed to in the 2016 Certified Agreement. ●

David Terrauds is the Queensland member of the National TAFE Council Executive.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

TONY SUTHERLAND

SEE page 5 for full story on the closure of seven TAFE campuses announced in the September budget.

The AEU had a big win in the South Australian Employment tribunal (SAET) as part of our Secure Jobs campaign. We sought a determination on the modes of employment for 47 applicant members employed in temporary employment (some as long as 10 years) to a secure form of employment. The members stood strong and determined over a long 18 month battle resulting in a decision by SAET that TAFE SA was in breach of the Enterprise Agreement. This has resulted in those applicants



becoming permanent employees.

ASQA return in September to audit a number of TAFESA qualifications. Considering the amount of work that was required after the last audit debacle, and the devastating impact on the public profile of TAFESA, the AEU will be watching this process closely to work with members who may be impacted. ●

Tony Sutherland is the SA member of the National TAFE Council Executive

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

GARY HEDGER

OUR General agreement expired on 15 December 2017 and a replacement agreement has now been voted on and has been accepted by an overwhelming majority of TAFE members. The agreement date was backdated to 15 December as part of the signing of the agreement. The replacement agreement is a 2 year agreement and has a \$1000 per year pay rise in accordance with the state government's current wages policy.

A major component of the replacement agreement was obtaining a very clear conversion to permanency process for lecturers on fixed term contracts.

As a result there was a substantial number of lecturers converted to permanent status. Prior to this round of negotiations, colleges had been employing almost 200 lecturers on fixed term contracts for lengthy periods of time, often five or more years. Those lecturers with four or more years of ongoing service have now been – or are in the process of being offered permanent contracts. Once this is complete offers will be extended to those lecturers with between two and four years of service; this will see approximately 100 more people converted. Once

that is completed, all future FTC employees will be eligible for conversion after two years of employment in an area of ongoing need.

While this has been extremely positive for TAFE members, the recent introduction of a new student management system (SMS) has been less well received. The roll out to date has resulted in significant workload pressures for staff as processes take far longer than previously; terminology is unsuitable; data migration is problematic with information disappearing; students are unable to get results from any time prior to the implementation of the new system. This has caused chaos across the those colleges affected. Pressure is being put on lecturing staff to resolve the issues at great cost to their well-being.

The SSTUWA is seeking a delay in the further rollout of the SMS until these issues are resolved. ●

Gary Hedger is the WA member of the National TAFE Council Executive

TASMANIA

SIMON BAILEY

THE TAFE Executive provided TasTAFE with its log of claims on 9 August. The log was developed from meetings held around the state. The Executive has produced a document which takes into account the needs of all its members.

The log includes the following:

- Changes to the modes of teaching whereby we move to one mode of teaching which will cover all teachers on or off campus or who deliver programs online.
- Redefine the definition of teacher duties – Duties other Than Teaching (DOTT) becomes Duties Relating to Teaching.
- New maximum weekly teaching load of up to 21 hours. Any hours delivered above 21 hours incurs a 50% salary loading to be paid to the teacher.

- New planning clause which will require TasTAFE to provide a yearly plan to each team.
- New Personal Development clause to ensure staff are allocated time for PD activities.
- Wage rise of 3% per annum.
- Review of promotes positions including AST2
- Introduction of the correctional facilities allowance for all TasTAFE staff delivering programs for the justice department
- Improvements for gender equality
- Improved consultation and dispute resolution clause
- Improved union encouragement clause.

Members support the call for a wage policy which allows for higher than a 2% wage rise and call on the government to bargain in good faith.

Members are working to prepare for the upcoming reregistration audit that will commence in October. Under the previous CEO, focus was taken away from ensuring the organisation was meeting ASQA compliance requirements. Whilst much effort is now being done to restore TasTAFE to its former self it may be too little too late as the auditors will focus on qualifications delivered beyond a 12 month time frame. Any changes which have been put in place this year will not rectify non-compliance issues which may be present from previously delivered qualifications. ●

Simon Bailey is the Tasmanian member of the National TAFE Council Executive

ACT

KAREN NOBLE

SO far, 2018 seems like a year of loose ends. There are lots of projects, improvements, restructures, directions, negotiations but we are still waiting for some conclusions. Importantly, our Enterprise Bargaining

continues and hopefully will conclude soon.

I asked a range of members for a quick comment about 2018, so far: highs, lows, frustrations, achievements. Here are some of their comments.

- An Innovation project has supported the development for the automotive light vehicle mechanical trade delivery taking the teaching and assessing to the next level. There are streamlined assessments using current technologies. These significant improvements will enhance our work with apprentices. The CIT team is happy to talk with other TAFEs about this work.
- Another team is working through a major makeover of the Accounting Diploma. It has been a great project but it could do with more time and resources.
- Many processes are under review for improvement: recognition, industry placements, using USI transcripts, desk top modernisation, improvements to Wi-Fi, Banner and network upgrades, updating the TAE, all needed and hopefully ready for implementation soon.
- Another team commented on grappling with the workload of qualifications in 'teach out' while rolling out new qualifications at the same time, the joys of training packages with a hefty workload and not enough hours.
- A big low is feeling disrespected as teachers, more and more being regarded as only trainers and assessors who are expected to take their lead from more generalist staff.
- Budgets are tight yet Executive staff are spending time and resources at off site 'retreats' with an external consultant, not sure what is being achieved. ●

Karen Noble is the ACT member of the National TAFE Council Executive

FOR A FAIR GO FOR ALL CHILDREN

All schools should be funded fairly based on the unique needs of each child. But because of changes by the Liberal-National government in Canberra, public schools are missing out on **\$1.9 billion** in urgently needed funding this year and next year. Join us and fight for fair funding for public schools – for smaller class sizes, more one-on-one support, and additional teachers and support staff.

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