

THE AUSTRALIAN

TAFE Teacher

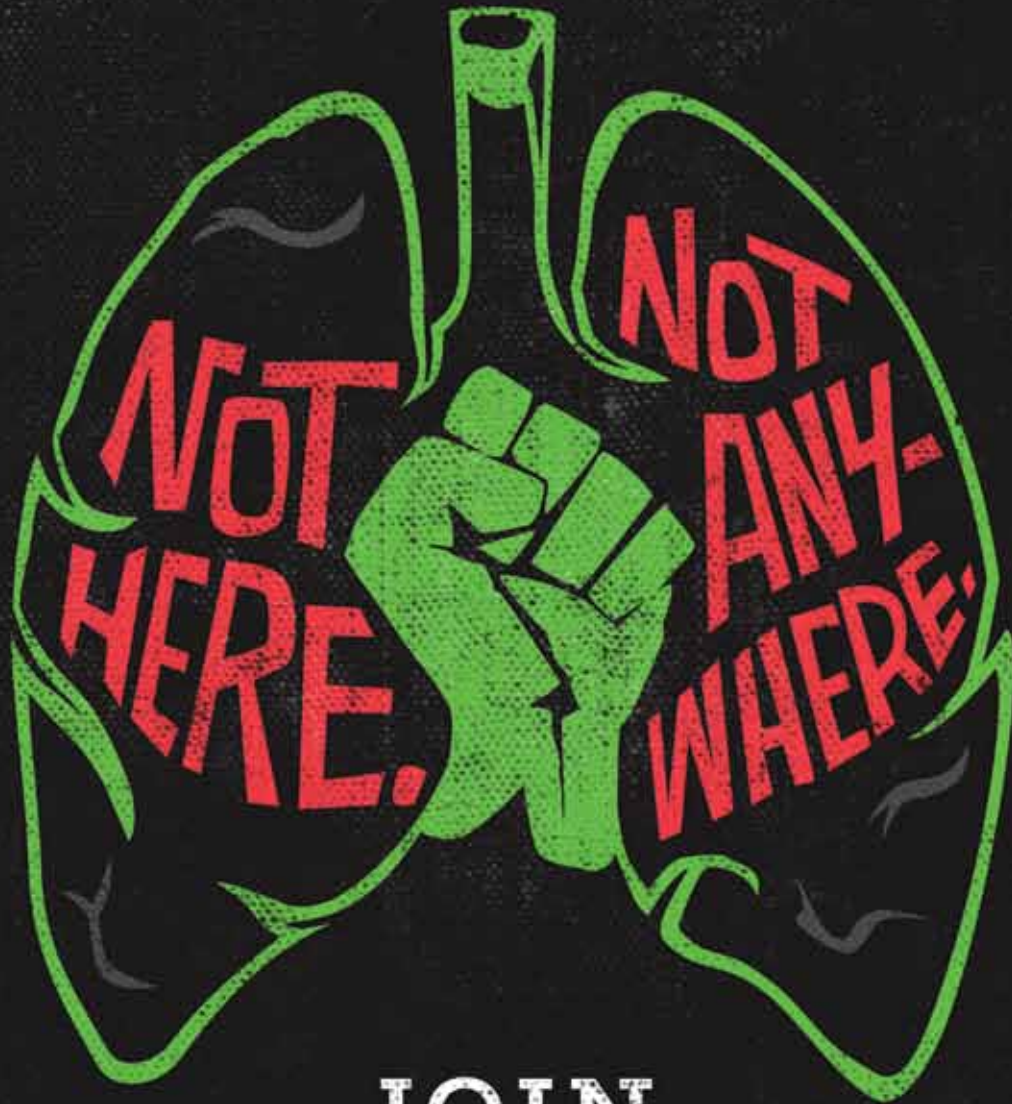


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CRUNCH TIME FOR TAFE

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Cover image: AEU National TAFE Executive with delegates at the AEU National Conference

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MICHELLE PURDY, AEU FEDERAL TAFE PRESIDENT

The Education Election

IT'S CRUNCH time for TAFE. Education is shaping up to be one of the key battlegrounds in the upcoming election campaign and the winner of the battle will decide the fate of TAFE.

As TAFE teachers, support staff and educators we are all committed to a strong, publicly funded TAFE sector that is the custodian of knowledge, skills and traditions for an ever-increasing range of industries.

Yet, thanks to the 15 per cent cut in funding between 2007 and 2016, TAFE remains the worst-funded education sector, so we have the most to fight for and the most to lose.

We can't assume that everyone in the community understands the complexities of the TAFE funding story, or even knows that the fate of TAFE is being held in their hands. But, as educators we are in a strong position to change this and raise voter awareness by sharing our TAFE stories. We all know that people don't always hold politicians in high esteem, but they do trust experts and we are the experts.

We mustn't forget that with the political turmoil of the past six months, increasing numbers of students are becoming disillusioned with our political system and we are at risk of a high level of voter absenteeism or donkey votes. It's up to us to turn their frustration into hope

Not one single Federal Liberal or Nationals MP or Senator has signed our 'Stop TAFE Cuts' pledge.

and make sure that they are enrolled to vote and use it wisely. Our TAFE depends on it.

The conversations that we have over the next few weeks really could change the election. We need to use every opportunity to engage with as many people that we can - friends, family, colleagues, neighbours and even people who we don't think will agree with us.

On pages 5-6 you'll find information on the current policies of all the political parties to help inform the conversations and on pages 8-9 there are more suggestions of ways to get involved in campaign activities.

Many of you will already have been involved in the campaign to get our Stop TAFE Cuts pledges signed by MPs and Senators. I'm happy to report that nearly all Labor MPs and Senators signed the pledge before it was announced as Labor policy. Many Greens politicians also signed the pledge and are committed to TAFE as an

essential part of our public education system.

Not one single Federal Liberal or Nationals MP or Senator has signed the Stop TAFE Cuts pledge.

Without a change in government, the cuts will continue.

But, we know that we are powerful when we mobilise. My own electorate of Braddon is living proof. In the weeks before the recent by-election, the AEU ran a comprehensive campaign to raise awareness of the issues facing TAFE.

AEU members were out in force door knocking, making telephone calls and holding events and having those vital conversations. Over three-quarters of respondents to the ReachTEL poll undertaken to measure the effectiveness of the campaign, stated that TAFE was personally important to them in deciding how to cast their vote.

This is our greatest opportunity to resist any attempts to further privatise the vocational education system and reduce the role of TAFE.

Yet, if we don't make every effort to have the conversations around the election and we lose the battle, the only debate will be around what takes the place of TAFE.

This is our best chance. I hope you will join me in the fight for TAFE. ●

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.



GUARANTEE 70% FUNDING

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.



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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

Australian Education Union Annual Federal Conference 22 – 24 February 2019

Which political parties are pledging to Stop TAFE Cuts?



The AEU invited the leaders of the three main political parties in Australia to address its Annual National Conference in February and outline their policies for TAFE.

Leader of the Opposition, Bill Shorten MP; Deputy Leader, Tanya Plibersek MP and Leader of the Australian Greens, Senator Richard Di Natale accepted.

The Prime Minister did not respond to the AEU's invitation.

The future of TAFE is guaranteed under a Labor or Greens government. Both leaders firmly nailed their colours to the TAFE mast in speeches to a packed conference room.



LABOR

Outlining the ALP's vision, Mr Shorten said "We've made it our mission in Labor to have the best possible education policy. No country can be great unless we have good education."

The ALP is pledging to rebuild the TAFE system by properly funding TAFE with a minimum of two thirds of public vocational education funding – in line with the key demand of the Stop TAFE Cuts campaign.

"We intend to properly fund TAFE. We will put two of every three dollars at least of vocational education spending into public TAFE. Full Stop," Mr Shorten promised.

The ALP is also committed to putting an end to the "Morrison Government's privatisation and marketisation agenda". "We are backing our commitments with proper resources," he said.

"I have a view that better schools trumps bigger banks. I have a view that better TAFE trumps bigger multi-national profits," he said.

Mr Shorten told delegates that as a nation we need to choose our priorities – either bigger banks, tax loopholes for the top end of town or education. "We chose education. It is a very clear cut choice," he said.

Tanya Plibersek rose to speak about the value of education to the individual, the economy and society. "Education is the greatest opportunity we have to reduce inequality and bring genuine social justice to this country.

"Education is the most important contribution we can make to our long-term prosperity as a nation. The way we compete in the world on our terms, with high wages and an innovative, productive economy is by giving a great education to all our people," she said.

To ensure that everyone has the opportunity for a great education, Labor is putting TAFE at the centre of its higher education policy. Their 'once in a generation' National Inquiry into Post- Secondary Education provides the opportunity to examine a range of issues that are crucial to TAFE, such as ensuring the establishment of a high quality, efficient, effective and modern post-secondary education system in Australia. The Inquiry's broad terms of reference include examining how to ensure education courses and qualifications are responsive to the changes occurring in the labor market and society and remain fit for purpose; and also how to strengthen cooperation between government, educators, unions and business to ensure the high quality apprenticeship system is high quality, can adapt to technological change and encourages commitment and investment from all parties benefiting from the system.

The terms of reference were devised and agreed by educators, unions and business leaders to ensure that the National Inquiry can be launched in the first one hundred days of a Labor Government. ●

For the latest on the election policies of the three main political parties, see the Stop TAFE Cuts website – stoptafecuts.com.au – or follow the Stop TAFE Cuts Facebook and Twitter pages.



AUSTRALIAN GREENS

PAYING tribute to the educators in the room, Richard Di Natale said “you are the builders that lay the foundations so that students can go as far as their curiosity will take them.”

Exceeding the calls for action in the AEU’s Stop TAFE Cuts manifesto, the Greens are pledging to rebuild TAFE by stripping all for-profit providers of public funding which would lift TAFE’s share of funding to close to 100%.

“The privatisation of vocational education was a train wreck that we saw coming a mile away. We want public money to support teachers and students back in our TAFE system,” Mr Di Natale said.

Mr Di Natale outlined his ‘transformational’ education policies which he described as founded on two key principles.

“Firstly, delivering universal access to life-long learning where high quality education and training is available to everyone who wants it. Not just those who can afford it.

“Secondly, it is about supporting educators as much as it is about supporting students because you simply can’t have one without the other,” he said.

The minor party’s proposal represents a significant investment in higher education in Australia and supports students, teachers and staff. Under the vision, Mr Di Natale told the conference that there would be “no barriers to access” and he wanted an end to “thinking of education as a business.”

“Education is so much more than a conveyor belt that is producing the workers of tomorrow... What you do is critical for building an engaged and just society,” Mr Di Natale said.

Acknowledging the burden of bureaucracy that is crippling the education system, Mr Di Natale said: “When you starve our public

institutions of public money, what you end up with is teachers drowning in administration duties and compliance and punitive regimes. We know from research that excessive workloads are the main reason that teachers leave the profession after a few years. We want teachers to teach, connect with students. If educators are demoralised then of course teacher quality is going to decline. We need to reverse that.”

The leader of the Greens emphasised to delegates his commitment to work with the profession. “We need to make sure that quality and equality exist in education. We need to work together to achieve it. Politicians working with teachers, making sure that you get the respect and recognition that you deserve.”

Like Labor, the Greens had their education policy costed by the Parliamentary Budget Office and assert it is possible to pay for free education right through from the age of three, through primary and secondary school to TAFE and university.

‘This is what a smart country does, it is what a fair country does and we can afford to do it. If you are prepared to taken on massive corporations that aren’t paying their fair share of tax. If you are prepared to close down loopholes. If you are prepared to make sure that corporation’s pay for the damage they do to the environment. You can invest in our future,’ Mr Di Natale said.

The leaders of both parties demonstrated that they understand the importance of saving TAFE through proper investment. In contrast, over the last six years TAFE has suffered under three Coalition Prime Ministers who have overseen funding cuts of over more than \$3 billion and allowed the number of people in vocational education to fall by nearly half.

It’s time to change the government. ●



For the latest on the election policies of the three main political parties, see the Stop TAFE Cuts website – stoptafecuts.com.au – or follow the Stop TAFE Cuts Facebook and Twitter pages.



After 40 years, it's time for a comprehensive TAFE inquiry

In February, the Australian Labor Party announced the terms of reference for their National Inquiry into Post-Secondary Education, promised in the first 100 days of office if they form government following the next federal election.

BY CORRENA HAYTHORPE

THE terms of reference are broad and solid. They include TAFE as an integral part of the review and reflect the advocacy of the AEU's Stop TAFE Cuts campaign for a comprehensive independent inquiry into TAFE – one that considers 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.

After forty years, a root and branch review is long overdue. The ALP promise stands in stark contrast to the piecemeal approach adopted by the Morrison Government. Their four-month review which was started in November was obviously initiated for political purposes and can only be viewed as a cynical attempt to rush through a quick pre-election announcement by the Prime Minister.

Conspicuously, the terms of reference of the current government's review did not even acknowledge TAFE in the terms of reference.

Labor's review is being lauded as a 'once in a generation' opportunity with deputy opposition leader Tanya Plibersek promising 'it will be as significant as Julia Gillard's Bradley Review and Gough Whitlam's Kangan Review.' Notably, it will look at vocational education and higher education as two equal divisions of tertiary education unlike the previous single or partial jurisdiction reviews.

Speaking at the National Press Club, Plibersek said, 'We need to make sure we don't have one strong system and one poor cousin. We need two strong, excellent, world class systems – university and TAFE.'

"At the moment we see a degree of cannibalisation of universities going after each other's student bases and even going after TAFE students to try and pinch some of the courses TAFE has traditionally offered."

The legacy of the Morrison Government will be a failed system of privatisation that enabled one of the worst examples of roting under the VET FEE-HELP Scheme and saddled an entire generation of Australians with massive debts, on top of a shameful series of cuts that has left the TAFE system in crisis.

Labor's National Inquiry into Post-Secondary Education offers an opportunity to reset and rebuild the architecture for a new bold reform agenda and ensure TAFE becomes a strong public institution for vocational education in Australia.

The Inquiry will examine and make recommendations on:

Building a high quality, efficient, effective, and modern post-secondary education system in Australia.

An equitable, sustainable, and transparent funding model for Australia's post-secondary education system.

Ensuring public institutions (TAFEs and universities) are at the centre of Australia's post-secondary education system.

Ensuring post-secondary education courses and qualifications are responsive to changes occurring in the labour market and society and remain fit-for-purpose.

Ensuring students are able to access the

institutions and courses they need to increase their skills, capabilities and knowledge without barriers to reaching their full potential.

The appropriate links that should exist between post-secondary education and work; the role of workplaces as sites of high-quality learning; and portability of qualifications.

Strengthening co-operation between government, educators, unions and business to ensure the apprenticeship system is high quality, accessible, can adapt to technological change, and encourages commitment and investment from all parties benefitting from the system.

Increasing participation of underrepresented and disadvantaged Australians in post-secondary education.

Addressing the unique needs of post-secondary students and institutions in regional and remote Australia.

Ensuring Australia continues to have a strong, competitive, diverse and sustainable international education sector.

Improving careers advice with appropriate value placed on vocational education and training.

The adequacy of funding available for infrastructure in post-secondary sectors.

The adequacy of national regulatory systems, including the roles and resourcing of relevant agencies, the mechanisms of institutional accountability, the qualifications framework and consumer protections for students. ●

Correna Haythorpe is AEU federal president



Get active in the Stop TAFE Cuts campaign

The Federal election will be critical to the future of TAFE and our focus has now turned to ensuring as many people as possible are enrolled to vote and that people vote for political parties that will put public education and TAFE first.

FROM 4 to 11 February the AEU ran an “Enrol to Vote for TAFE” week on TAFE campuses across Australia. We know that many young people, including first year TAFE students, are not enrolled. We had thousands of conversations with young people about the difference they could make in the election if they enrolled and voted, and how much TAFE depends on them using their voice to speak up and their vote.

But there is more we can do and we need your help. It is not too late to speak with people about enrolling to vote. You can visit our website www.StopTAFECuts.com.au/enrol for resources – we have posters and

flyers and links through to the Australian Electoral Commission enrolment website.

Over the coming months there will be full schedule of campaign activities you can get involved in. All the resources are available to download from our website, or email Brooke Mott bmott@aeufederal.org.au at our Federal Office and she will send you an activist kit with everything you need to participate. Include your t-shirt size in your email, and we’ll include a Stop TAFE Cuts t-shirt! ●

NATIONAL TAFE DAY

THURSDAY 13 JUNE 2019

Every year, National TAFE Day provides us with an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of our public TAFE system and to remind politicians that TAFE is too good to lose!

WE are asking AEU members around the country to get involved and hold an event in your campus, school or community to mark the day.

Please make sure you have signed up as a supporter on our website (www.stoptafecuts.com.au) followed us on Twitter (@TAFECampaign) and liked us on Facebook (Stop TAFE Cuts) to hear more about National TAFE Day closer to the date.





Display our election poster in a visible place such as your fence or your front window or car window.

Here's some ideas to get you started



Take a selfie with our election poster and send it to us on social media. You can find us at **Stop TAFE Cuts** on Facebook and **@TAFECampaign** on Twitter.

Gather your colleagues together at your TAFE Campus and take a photo with your election poster and send it to us on social media or email it to **bmott@aeufederal.org.au**

Participate in our “Do Your Block” for TAFE weekend during the election (delivering 250 flyers to your neighbours about TAFE) – sign up at **www.StopTAFECuts.com.au/election**

Share your TAFE story on Facebook or Twitter – post it to our pages or include the **#StopTAFECuts** hashtag so we can find it.

Ask your colleagues and friends to make sure they are signed up as supporters on the **Stop TAFE Cuts** website **www.stoptafecuts.com.au**

Join one of our doorknock weekends – sign up at **www.StopTAFECuts.com.au/election**

Sign up to hand out TAFE flyers at pre-poll voting booths and on the day – sign up at **www.StopTAFECuts.com.au/election**



TVET, capabilities and social justice

PROFESSOR LEESA WHEELAHAN

Editor's note:

This blog was first published in November 2018 by Education International (EI), the international federation of teacher education unions.¹

EI commissioned Professor Leesa Wheelahan and her team at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto to undertake a study to explore what vocational education could do to support social justice if it moved away from competency-based training, markets and privatisation.

The AEU is a proud member of EI, and participated in this research. The outcome is a case study on vocational education in Australia. This includes the voices of almost 900 TAFE teachers, education support workers, and others who support the TAFE system who participated in a survey about the purposes of vocational education and the extent to which it was able to support social justice given current funding and marketisation policies.²

The report shows how funding and marketisation have transformed vocational education since 2008 – when marketisation policies were systematically introduced in Australia. Wheelahan has added a new concluding paragraph to offer specific policy suggestions for Australia.





WHAT is technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and what does it do?

This can be a hard question to answer because there isn't a lot of agreement about what it does, what it should do, who should pay for it, how it should be offered, and whether it is offered in schools or in post-school TVET institutions (it does both, depending on the country). In contrast, even though it would be contested, most people could broadly agree on what schools and universities do.

Education International insists that TVET plays a crucial role in supporting social justice and sustainable and inclusive economic and social development.

EI commissioned us to undertake a study to explore what TVET would look like and could do if it supported the concept of human growth, rather than narrow notions of human capital. So far, we have undertaken in-depth case studies in Australia, England and Taiwan in the first stage of this project, and we reported on these case studies at EI's Further and Higher Education and Research conference in Taiwan last November.

We are using the capabilities approach to think about the role of TVET and what it should do. The capabilities approach was first developed by the Nobel Laureate and economist Amartya Sen and the philosopher Martha

TVET institutions are institutions and not providers. There is a big difference between the two. The notion of a provider implies one among many, and it doesn't much matter if it is this or that provider which is providing the 'service'. Providers come and go, and wax and wane in response to market demand.

Nussbaum. The capabilities approach is widely used to evaluate the extent to which social policies support disadvantaged groups in society to access the kinds of opportunities (and the resources they need to do so) that will enable them to make choices about how they will live,

who and how they will live, and to live lives that they have reason and value. The capabilities approach underpins the United Nation's Human Development Index.

We are using the capabilities approach as a contrast to government policies that focus on the role of TVET as supplying skilled labour to meet the immediate needs of the labour market.

These policies are based on human capital theory which posits a direct line between investment in skills and good labour market outcomes. Except that it doesn't work. Narrow human capital approaches have not been able to solve unemployment and skills mismatches and the lack of good jobs for large numbers of people, particularly in low and middle-income countries.

Public TVET institutions and TVET teachers in particular are often blamed for these outcomes for not teaching the 'right' kind of skills that are needed by employers. However, teachers and teacher unions are often not consulted or directly excluded from policy making processes about TVET and its curriculum, while at the same time, narrow instrumental curricula have been imposed on them, their institutions have been subject to funding cuts, and their sector subjected to marketisation and privatisation.

TVET's links to the labour market make it particularly vulnerable to policies of privatisation and it is the most privatised and marketised

sector of education.

It is the only sector of education where a reduction in the costs of teaching individual students is regarded as an efficiency, and not as a threat to the quality of provision as would be the case in the schools and higher education sectors.

TVET teachers have more holistic understandings of what TVET should do. In responding to a survey in this project, teachers from England, Australia and Taiwan listed the two most

important goals of TVET as developing students as active citizens who participate in their community and society and preparing students for their roles as workers.

In our research, we explored the role that TVET institutions can play as 'anchor' institutions of their communities in supporting socially inclusive and sustainable regional economic and social development. Rather than limit their work to responding to existing requirements for skills, TVET institutions need to be adequately funded

to consider the knowledge and skills that will be needed for work in the future, and to develop, codify and institutionalise this knowledge. They need to be sufficiently funded to engage with their communities and industries and to develop programmes that suit local needs.

Students who attend TVET should have the same opportunities to fulfil their aspirations as do students who go to universities. That means they need to have choices in the sorts of programs that they do, and the kinds of jobs they want rather than being limited to programmes linked to low-skilled 'in demand' jobs. This requires local TVET institutions that have deep connections with their communities and industries to help create these opportunities; institutions that are trusted to know what is best for their local communities and to work with social partners to create high quality vocational education that will create opportunities for students, rather than limit their opportunities through narrow training.

TVET institutions are *institutions* and not providers. There is a big difference between the two. The notion of a provider implies one among many, and it doesn't much matter if it is this or that provider which is providing the 'service'.

Providers come and go, and wax and wane in response to market demand. In this vision, the invisible hand of the market results in the provision of training for skills when and where as needed, with no need to invest in institutions, institutional capacity or teacher development. Governments only need to invest in markets, not institutions. Competition is seen to be a self-evident good, with profit as the incentive. The problem is that in a for profit market the point is to make profits, and, as the Australian and English case studies have shown, monstrous profits have been made by driving down quality and bringing the system to breaking point.

Building strong public TVET institutions requires investing in TVET teachers and providing them with opportunities to become and continue developing as expert teachers as well as industry experts. Strong institutions require well prepared, qualified and recognised staff. Expert TVET teachers need to be able to undertake research on how work is changing and develop



appropriate curriculum in response. They need to understand and be able to implement inclusive teaching and learning strategies to work with the most disadvantaged students, and to be able to build strong partnerships with their local communities and industries. Only strong public TVET systems that are built on trust in public institutions and TVET teachers can achieve these outcomes.

Coda

What does this mean for Australia? The challenge for policy is to rebuild a high trust system with trusted qualifications that government, students, employers, unions, communities and industries have reason to value. TAFE is the anchor of the public vocational education system. It is the public institution that fulfils public policy objectives and it should be funded to meet these objectives, and to develop and extend its distinct mission that is distinct from both schools and universities.

TAFE can support sustainable and inclusive social and economic development in regions throughout Australia. This means that TAFE institutions should be funded directly rather than telling TAFE what qualifications it will offer. Directly funding programs and not directly funding TAFE simply reproduces the current low cost, low quality funding model. We need to rebuild



capacity in TAFE after many years of marketisation, funding cuts and the provision of public money for private-for-profit providers. TAFE needs the capacity to work with its industries and communities and to understand what will best suit their needs. This includes working with the adult and community education sector and with the welfare sector as well as with industry bodies and local employers. We need a new model of qualifications that opens up opportunities for students rather than narrows them as does the current competency-based training model of curriculum. TAFE should be trusted

to develop these qualifications in partnership with its local community, while at the same time ensuring national portability. Qualifications need to support students to enter and progress in the labour market, undertake further studies at a higher level, and support social inclusion and citizenship. Finally, if TAFE is to be rebuilt, there must be new investment in TAFE and investment in TAFE teachers and education support workers. This is how TAFE can support social justice in Australia. ●

Professor Leesa Wheelahan leads the Pathways to Education and Work research group within the Centre for the Study of Canadian and International Higher Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto. Her co-researchers are Professor Gavin Moodie, Professor Ruth Childs, Dr Eric Lavigne, and PhD students Leping Mou, Fatima Samji, Lindsay Coppens, Ashley Rostamian.

Twitter handle @leesaw2 and @OISE_CIHE

¹ See: https://worldsofeducation.org/en/woe_homepage/woe_detail/16056/tvet-capabilities-and-social-justice-by-leesa-wheelahan

² See: https://issuu.com/educationinternational/docs/2018_eire-search_tvet_australia_prel



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VET reform must start with TAFE funding boost

At the very end of November last year, Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced a review of VET as a way of hiding years of cuts to the sector in the lead up to the federal election.

With an extremely tight turnaround time of less than four months before an early budget in April, the review seems to have been scheduled to allow as little participation from those working and studying in the sector as possible.

The AEU was quick to attack the review. The first review of Australia's VET sector in forty years needs to be comprehensive and measured. Rushing a half-baked VET review through over Christmas to report in March is a sign of a government that is panicking to have something to say about vocational education in the lead up to the federal election.

Nevertheless, the AEU made a comprehensive submission to the inquiry and expressed in the strongest possible terms our substantial concerns regarding the very short timeframe available for consultation and consideration of submissions.

The first review of vocational education to take place in over four decades should have been carefully considered and thorough, in order to propose a coherent future direction for the sector. It should most definitely not be rushed through on a politically expedient timetable, after years of inaction that allows for little deep analysis of the issues facing the sector.

The AEU submission expressed grave concern at the appointment of the inquiry's chair, Steven Joyce, who was previously New Zealand's Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment. Under his tenure funding for public vocational education in New Zealand was all but destroyed – a lack of increases to cover inflation meant that funding was reduced by \$3 billion nationally over a decade and regional polytechnics suffered cuts of more than 20% over four years, with some individual institutions having their funding more than halved.

At the same time as public regional polytechnics were gutted by Mr Joyce's 'reforms', privately owned training centres saw their funding increased by tens of millions of dollars. As the proliferation of private for private and rent-seeking Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) are at the root of many of the Australian sector's current woes, it is beyond us how an inquiry chair, with such a track record of showing favour to private providers, while destroying investment in public provision, can make a truly impartial assessment of the evidence to determine how to best support the vocational education sector.

The AEU took the opportunity to make the following points from its submission at a meeting with Mr Joyce in February.

The importance of public TAFE provision and how to repair the damage

The transformative benefits of properly funded and comprehensively delivered TAFE and vocational education are widely acknowledged, and vocational education is universally recognised as a driver of increased societal and economic participation, particularly for people who have been previously marginalised in the labour market. TAFE is the bedrock of Australia's vocational education sector and TAFE institutions have a history of providing high quality technical, further and general education at a level of quality and consistency that the relatively recently conceived private vocational education sector has been unable to match.

Despite the clear and undisputed societal and economic benefits that a robustly funded and administered public TAFE and vocational education sector provides, there has been a concerted and continual drive from successive federal governments over the last decade to marketise vocational education and deprioritise TAFE. This deliberate recalibration has resulted in the extremely rapid proliferation of opportunistic private training providers and the unrestrained



growth in the for profit sector, primarily at the expense of Australia's previously world leading publicly funded and delivered TAFE and vocational education system.

Research by Leesa Wheelahan has clearly demonstrated the seismic changes that have occurred in the way that vocational education is resourced and delivered in Australia since 2009. In 2016, there were over 4,600 active registered training providers, but only 96 of these providers have more than 100 full time students. It is plainly evident that quality cannot possibly be maintained at a system level when that system is populated by thousands of tiny individual private providers, some of whom have participated in recruitment and enrolment practices that have been described as 'skirting the edge of legality'.

This almost complete surrender of the provision of vocational education to the market has resulted in a massive decline of TAFE as the pre-eminent provider of vocational education in Australia. In 2009, TAFE institutions taught 81% of all publicly funded full time equivalent students in Australia. Five years later, in 2014, this figure had reduced to 56%. Over the same five year period private, for-profit providers increased their share of publicly funded full time equivalent students from just under 15% to 40%, and increased their total student numbers by almost 286%.

The damage inflicted on the sector over the last decade as a result of the chronic underfunding of publicly delivered TAFE and vocational education, and continued attempts to shift the sector irretrievably towards privatisation have severely eroded the viability of many public TAFE institutions and undermined public confidence in the system.

We need a proper review to restore TAFE

Rather than this hastily convened review, it is critically important that the vocational education sector receives the benefit of a comprehensive review that ensures that public funds for vocational education are restored to adequate levels and then put to the best use possible – for the restoration of high quality qualification based TAFE provision, rather than being skimmed off as profit by private providers offering quick, often low quality courses in already oversubscribed areas of study. That’s why the AEU welcomes Labor’s National Inquiry into Post-Secondary Education.

The vocational education workforce, and in particular the TAFE teaching workforce, has been under attack for at least two decades. Teaching preparation and skills have been devalued with the continued and narrow focus on Competency Based Training (CBT), and the high level qualifications previously required to teach TAFE have been relaxed and in some cases almost abandoned entirely. Teachers' workloads have increased to unsustainable levels as public employers have sought to make ends meet in the wake of depleted funding and resourcing by cutting hours of instruction, and by work intensification as private providers relentlessly pursue higher profits. Rampant casualisation has resulted in a highly mobile workforce that not only lacks security, but is rarely offered the opportunities for professional development and advancement that secure employment provides.

In addition to the huge numbers of staff leaving the sector and the substantial loss of talent and experience that entails, the sector has long had a substantial problem with casualisation,

which further compounds the problem. There is a lack of clarity sector wide about the minimum standards of competence required to teach, and some teachers and trainers in the non-TAFE sector appear to not have any qualifications at all.

Stop TAFE Cuts!

The AEU's long held position, as outlined in our TAFE Manifesto and our Stop TAFE Cuts! Campaign, is that no public funding should be directed towards private, for-profit providers of vocational education. The public funding of TAFE must be urgently restored. As a first step towards the rebuilding the TAFE system, the AEU is pursuing a guarantee from government that 70% of all government spending on vocational education will be delivered directly to TAFEs. In response to our campaign the ALP has promised to guarantee two thirds of government spending will go to TAFE.

When the societal value, and consequent productive economic value of vocational education is not prioritised, and is replaced with the drive towards profit, the inevitable outcome is a decline in standards.

Australia needs a high quality, well-resourced and trusted TAFE sector. Public vocational education is every person's right, and TAFE holds a particularly important role in the lives of people throughout their working lives. Successive cuts, underfunding and the student loans debacle have damaged the sector, undermined the teaching workforce, and slashed funding and support where it is needed most. ●

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TAFE as an anchor for social and economic renewal

From VET to Vocational Education – Are we thinking about saving TAFE or are we thinking about something more fundamental?

THAT was the question posed by Professor John Buchanan of the University of Sydney at this year's AEU Federal Conference in February. The AEU leadership team invited Buchanan to put forward ideas for how we can think about a more positive future for TAFE and his presentation drew on the research he has undertaken over the past 10 years.

Buchanan told conference that we need to re-frame the way we think and talk about vocational education. 'Currently TAFE is suffering because it is operating in a policy environment where the terms of the debate are being set by others who are hostile to it... we have to redefine these terms of the debate' he said.

To avoid 'playing at the edges' Buchanan determined three stages. First thinking about the problems in the current system, then thinking about posing different types of questions to shift the terms of the debate before finally considering our next steps.

As Buchanan pointed out, the problems facing the system are profound. The system is failing on its own terms. According to the COAG targets that were set almost a decade ago, the system is either going backwards or falling short of where it should be. The issues regarding quality are well documented and the system is becoming increasingly irrelevant with the training

not leading to the jobs it is supposed to deliver.

'Currently the system is based around a vision of maximising returns to human capital so that we can have infinitely flexible labour.

Yet this is a very narrow vision for vocational education... as opposed to nurturing people who live lives they have a reason to value. The aim should be to have flourishing, productive citizens not infinitely flexible labour.'

Getting the questions right

Buchanan asked conference to consider the reference point for vocational education. 'At the moment it is built around dismembered units of competency that have been derived from current jobs'. Buchanan explained it as 'a very unhelpful way to think about education. We need to start



with the individual, not jobs as they currently are and we have to look at building capacities so that individuals can adapt to changing circumstances.

Building capacity is not a generic quality. An adaptive and effective worker in the care sector or customer service is going to be very different to an adaptive worker in engineering.'

Buchanan told conference that he is doing a lot of work with data scientists to work out what these job clusters or 'vocational streams' could be by researching the commonalities in the trajectories of workers in the labour market.

What are the options for vocational education?

'Too often it is assumed that we need to go back to what the previous system was – one based on curriculum and fixed technical colleges, or we simply prop up the current one' he said. Referencing work he has undertaken with Leesa Wheelahan and the work of Gavin Moody, Buchanan identified four options:

- Ground Hog Day; described as 'essentially muddling through'
- Universities as the primary way forward (if you don't go to university you are picked up by a labour market program, as happens in Sweden)
- TAFEs and universities providing an integrated offering (dual sector institutions).
- TAFEs and universities having parallel but different offerings.

Buchanan believes option four is the most exciting option. It allows TAFE the space to be a whole separate domain rather than a substandard offering. He cited the example of Germany where it is possible to rise through the trade stream and arrive at PhD level. 'The Germans have a very advanced notion of master craftspeople and it gives a sense of how it is possible to have a whole separate domain built on high excellence.'

What is the role of TAFE?

The last question is the most contentious. Should we think about TAFE as a registered training organisation with community service obligations? Or is it an anchor for quality in the system. Buchanan suggested that looking forward we have to think of it as an anchor that can provide quality in the same way as universities in higher education.

'We have a limited number of universities that provide a focal point for quality and have very strict accreditation requirements. We need a similar idea for TAFE so that vocational education can gain a respect in the community as institutions that deliver quality.'

Buchanan finished by identifying some next steps. Firstly, he believes 'we should be looking at stabilising TAFE as a prelude to renewal of vocational education....we need a vision for the vocational education of the Australian population.'

Secondly, he addressed qualifications rationalisation, 'we need to look beyond administrative rationalisation and look at foundations for more relevance and respect.'

Thirdly he advocated for a Kangan style consensus-building commission. 'In the 1970's technical education was at a crisis point and the Whitlam Government commissioned the Kangan Review... not just as resetting the vision for technical education but for further education for the citizens at large.'

Finally, he asked delegates to think about intermediary structures that can support vocational education and bring in all players that are interested. 'The Gillard and Rudd Governments had the Australian Workforce

Productivity Agency (AWPA) or Skills Australia which brokered all the players in the system to have an ongoing debate about what should be happening to skills. This was one of the best parts of the education reform movement. Unfortunately, it was dismantled as soon as Abbot was elected.'

Buchanan called on conference to not be constrained by previous thinking. 'We shouldn't just go back and re-create, we should raise the ambition. We should take tertiary education to the next level in the way that Whitlam and Hawke took health to the next level.'

Bringing the story together, Buchanan concluded by asking conference to accept that the 'Emperor has no clothes. The system is broken. We have a choice before us. We can have crisis management of a broken system or we can talk about the renewal of vocational education.'

*'For a quality vocational education system
there needs to be an anchor,
without one the system is adrift.'*

The term 'VET' is a recent moniker, coined in the mid-1980s. 'We need to capture a broader vision of vocational development so we should talk in terms of renewal. We need to think hard about what this means for TAFE. There is an assumption that TAFE is the 'public provider' and it should get community service obligation payments. This inevitably makes TAFE a marginal player. For a quality vocational education system there needs to be an anchor, without one the system is adrift. As well as talking about more public funding, we should talk about a vision of TAFE as an anchor that provides discipline across the system for quality.'

Buchanan summed up with a challenge for the AEU 'For the past thirty years the debate on vocational education has been defined in a very narrow and unhelpful way. It's vital that the AEU throws up the big questions and takes a lead on redefining the terms of the debate.' ●



TAFE saved my life

There are many pathways to university study, but Sue Leech's story is different to most – she started her academic life behind bars.

“Going into prison you feel like your life is over.” Leech told this year’s AEU Federal Conference. ‘You feel like you have no future and there is nothing you can do to change course.’

LOCKED up on remand for eleven and a half months waiting for her case to go through the courts, she began her studies in the prison education programme which is designed to improve education opportunities on release.

With a background in corporate administration she started helping the other women in the prison with basic computing and business studies skills. It was there that a lecturer from TAFE SA's Port Adelaide campus encouraged her to consider studying some of the women's studies courses – all of which are TAFE accredited and include an industry recognised certificate.

TAFE SA offers a Certificate II in Vocational Preparation for women and Certificates III and IV in Women's advocacy. They are designed to give women the skills, self-confidence and knowledge required to deal with career, education and life changes. The courses offer an opportunity for women to train and re-train by commencing with access courses that develop confidence and foundation skills. The

courses develop literacy and numeracy, computing, self-development and work-related competencies and have a strong track record for effective outcomes with many students going on to tertiary education and career success. Nothing illustrates the success of this program more than Leech's story.

‘I found a purpose. With the lecturers’ support my attitude towards myself changed’ Sue told delegates. ‘I decided not to be just another statistic, just another offender, a number in a book. I wanted to change.’

In prison, Leech only had two and a half hours every Tuesday for lectures, but by the time she was released she had completed three courses and had an appetite for more study. However, she had concerns about being overwhelmed by college life and study, and above all, the way other students might react if she turned up at the local Port Adelaide campus and announced she had just got out of prison.

Again she credits the personal support and



encouragement of her TAFE teachers to getting her through the first few months and beyond.

Leech was still on home detention having only been released two weeks earlier, when she started her first subject 'Women and the Law'. As the teachers went around the classroom gauging the experience of the students, Leech realised she was confident enough to tell her story. She recounted that there was no judgement in the classroom from teachers or students. 'Everyone was there for the same purpose: to learn from each other, gain confidence, learn new skills and better themselves.'

As her confidence and skills grew, she felt that she had a future and saw an opportunity to break the cycle of re-offending. She completed her certificate II and graduated in October last year. While completing her certificate III she enrolled in a tertiary enabling program through Charles Darwin University online to prepare her for university. As *The Australian TAFE Teacher* goes to print, Sue will be starting her Bachelor of IT.

'I couldn't have got this far on my own. There was so much support from TAFE Lecturers and students, but particularly lecturers who were there for me, they sat down and talked to me and supported me. I would honestly say that TAFE saved my life.'

Despite success stories such as Sue's, Port Adelaide campus was one of the seven TAFE's recently closed down as part of the Liberal Government's efforts to further their privatisation agenda. 'Cutting TAFE is ridiculous. There is no TAFE in the Port Adelaide area now. People are told to travel into the city, but when I got out of prison, Port Adelaide was a safe place for me. It would have been too daunting for me to travel and be surrounded by so many people,' she said.

Leech explained that a key reason that women re-offend is the lack of support that is available to them when they leave prison. She feels strongly that it was only through the opportunity to study in Port Adelaide and the support, mentoring and push she received from TAFE SA that she was able to break that cycle.

Leech wants to see all women find support and improve their own prospects. Her goal is to complete her IT degree and specialise in mobile application development. She aims to leverage her lived experience to develop applications that can be used in prisons to empower women when they are released and make the adjustment to life on the outside easier.

'TAFE allowed me to know that I could do something with my life. I know the way to do it is to start inside so that the support is there to get through those first few weeks. I'm hoping



what I do will allow women to do that.'

By sharing her experiences so honestly, Leech hoped people would realise that prisoners aren't bad people and that TAFE can play a vital role in rebuilding lives.

'It is rare that anyone who has gone to prison has done something really bad. It's just bad choices that they made in stages of their life. They need to have a future. They need to have a chance. Without TAFE, without the public education system, we would not have that chance and I would not be where I am today – knowing that I have a future'. ●



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Authorised by Susan Hopgood, Federal Secretary, Australian Education Union, 120 Clarendon Street, Southbank, 3006

New style of unionism for hairstylists



The Australian Workers Union is harnessing the frustrations of hairdressers across the country to grow Hair Stylists Australia – a new union which aims to raise the standard of the industry and help hairdressers get the safety, support and respect they deserve.

WHILE most stylists gain their qualifications at TAFE as part of an apprenticeship, similar to many other trades, currently there is no minimum mandatory national qualification. Melanie Coombes, a hairdresser of ten years, is the national organiser and believes this is one of the reasons that there is a lack of respect for the industry.

'People don't realise hairdressing is more than just playing with products and cutting hair... we do maths, geometry, ratios, chemistry and anatomy. We should be respected' Coombes said.

Hair Stylists Australia was launched last year and has heard countless stories from around the country of stylists who have been bullied or harassed, underpaid, not given breaks and work in unsafe conditions.

'Over my career I've had issues with being underpaid and exploited through low pay and no breaks. The AWU was there for me and made me realise that I wasn't the only one being disrespected, it's right across the whole industry – which is 90% women. The need to bring back respect for the industry is why this sister union was set up' Coombes said.

By uniting, hairstylists are ready to stand up and protect conditions and wages.

'We're the lowest paid industry in Australia and now they are thinking of taking away our penalty rates on weekends.' Coombes said.

The new union is already taking on Hair and Beauty Australia (HABA) Australia's largest Hair and Beauty Industry association. HABA has put in an application to the Fair Work Commission for a reduction in penalty rates across the industry, including weekend rates.

The Australian Workers Union argue a cut in penalty rates would mean a cut of \$85 a week to

people working in Australia's lowest paid industry. Hairstylists rely on this extra money in their pay packets and don't always have the choice not to work weekends. 'These rates cover our busiest times, when we have the most clients' Coombes said.

Hair Stylists Australia is opposing this application at the Fair Work Commission and organised a 'Rally for Respect' in March outside the offices of the Fair Work Commission and HABA in Sydney to make sure their voice and message were heard. 'When we come together we can be really loud!

Everyone has the right to join a union. Australian worker rights are protected under the Fair Work Act and these rights apply to casual workers too.

'The more people in the HSA army – the faster we can make change' Coombes said.

By joining the union, members will get access to information on pay, hours leave and everything in between. Membership is growing from strength to strength despite the challenges of organising members across many small businesses.

To counter this, Hairstylists Australia has been successfully signing up members on Facebook and is looking to sign up 'ambassadors' that can help spread the word.

The union is open to hair stylists, beauti-

cians, apprentices, senior stylists, colourists, sole traders, hair assistants and hair receptionists.

One of the key issue for the union is to raise awareness that casual workers can join.

Everyone has the right to join a union. Australian worker rights are protected under the Fair Work Act and these rights apply to casual workers too.

As well as being one of the lowest paid trades in Australia, a recent report by the Fair Work Ombudsman showed superannuation underpayments were rife across the hairdressing industry. On top of that, 45 per cent of businesses in the sector were not abiding by workplace rules.

Hairstylists Australia wants a Hair Industry Task Force to be established to audit all businesses registered as hair salons to ensure they are complying with workplace relations law and provide proper regulation and oversight.

Coombes is quick to point out that while there are problems, it's not all doom and gloom.

'There are employers that are doing the right thing and we want to promote those ethical salons, which we do on our website. If we can educate the public then we can push the unethical chop shops out of our industry, demand respect and change the industry for good' Coombes said.

The AEU strongly supports Hair Stylists Australia and encourages members to ensure students studying hairdressing or related courses are informed about the union. ●

For more information on Hair Stylists Australia see www.hairstylistsaustralia.com.au or <https://www.facebook.com/pg/hairstylistsaustralia/> or Instagram @hairstylistsaustralia

TVET GERM

– an unhealthy acronym

Following on from the first critique in the last edition of the TAFE Teacher describing the negative impact of the implementing the Global Education Reform Movement (GERM) in schools, this second article examines the impact of introducing private markets into the non-university, post-secondary school education and training sector in the state-like jurisdictions of four countries.¹



THEY share advanced market democracies and a common political pedigree steeped in the Westminster tradition of parliament. This is an attempt to determine if there is *prima facie* evidence that the logic of the market transcends national boundaries and contexts and produces similar outcomes in its impact upon the public provision of post-school alternatives to university. For simplicity, reference to each nation's apprenticeship and non-university education sector will use the internationally recognised term Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to describe results observed in the Northern Territory of Australia, British Columbia in Canada, Scotland and England from the United Kingdom.

Each jurisdiction experienced a massive increase in technical skills training post-World War Two and progressively implemented their own version of a TVET GERM as part of a dominant national policy momentum towards new public management in the 1980s and 1990s.

The resulting policy changes have had a major impact upon their publicly-owned and previously fully-funded colleges. The elected ministers and cabinets have also rotated through a number of governance mechanisms to fund and regulate their TVET sector but generally have separated financial support for apprentices and trainees from more generalised training and related labour market programs. The international migration and easy adoption of these common organisational characteristics that facilitate market operations suggests a shared underlying logic is at work.

In the mid-1950s there were more than 80 Scottish TVET colleges and centres under the control of local authorities, many established in pursuit of access and equity for residents.

The first major step towards the TVET GERM occurred in 1993 when the United Kingdom Parliament removed the colleges from local control and forced amalgamations to create 43 competing corporate bodies. After assuming local Scottish Parliamentary rule in 1999, the new government noted that 34 of the colleges had an operating deficit and that the financial health of the further education sector had progressively worsened since 1993. The Scottish Government persisted with their TVET GERM implementation and by 2015 had reduced funding to the sector by 18% in real terms since 2010 in addition to a 77% decrease in capital allocations. This resulted in a 9.3% reduction in staff numbers 2011-2014 and, in the face of increased private provision, regionalisation/centralisation reduced the numbers of

colleges to just 20 by 2015. Due to government funding decisions to prioritise youth in order to increase completion rates, the number of part-time students fell by 48 per cent and there was a 41 per cent reduction in the number of students aged 25 or older between 2008/09 and 2013/14. Apprenticeship funding allocated between 2008 and 2015 by the Scottish Government through Skills Development Scotland, a ministerially-owned company, demonstrated a real cut to apprentice and trainee funding of £30 million over seven years that were marked by increased private provision in the government-funded apprenticeship and traineeship training market.

Constitutionally, education is a provincial responsibility in Canada to the extent that the federal government does not even have a department for education or training. British Columbia established a series of regionally based publicly-funded universities and colleges that demonstrate considerable overlap in qualifications delivered and fierce local public protection against moves to force amalgamations and closures. The BC Government's priority since 2000 has been to strengthen the private post-secondary sector and facilitate to student choice through the use of student loans and time-limited contracts rather than recurrent public funding for general training. Total government funding has decreased by about 4% between 2006 and 2017 and has been accompanied by virtual micromanagement of the public providers by the Ministry of Advanced Education in order to encourage the growth of the loosely regulated private sector consisting of about 300 organisations. Apprenticeship training is funded and

regulated by the ministerially-appointed directors of the Industry Training Authority. This company uses public monies, under the explicit direction of the minister, to ensure a competitive training market consisting of both public and private providers of apprenticeship training in designated occupations. Funding allocated through the company has decreased in real terms by about 13% between 2007 and 2016. Apprenticeship completion rates are below 50% in British Columbia which uses high-stakes external testing to determine eligibility for being granted a qualification.

The public TVET colleges of the United Kingdom have been increasingly corporatised, policy continually centralised, training progressively further privatised while the whole TVET system has repeatedly been exhorted to act in more marketised ways because further education is dominated by quasi-markets and competition engineered and controlled by the state. The shifting of resources away from the publicly-owned further education and sixth-form colleges to private providers and for-profit companies is nothing short of extraordinary. In 2007/08 the total allocation to these public colleges was £199.5 million (in 2016 £Sterling). In the 2016/17 academic year the recurrent allocation to the public colleges sector had dropped to £69.1 million. This represents a reduction of almost two-thirds in real terms over a nine year period.

This is in spite of ample evidence that privatisation and marketisation of TVET have failed to produce better outcomes and in some cases have produced worse results in the form of qualifications that have no value in the labour





market and a reduction in the status and value of apprenticeships. In addition, both the Sainsbury Review and English government agencies agree that the marketplace for TVET (i.e., further education) qualifications overseen by central regulation has failed to deliver simplicity and consistency, 'and may in some instances have lead to a race to the bottom in terms of rigour and quality'. Regardless, the British Government continues to push for a continuation of this broad policy direction. In announcing yet another review of post-18 education and funding, Prime Minister Theresa May described one of four terms of reference as a requirement to report on 'how we can incentivise choice and competition' in order to provide value for money and the skills England needs, thus making the TVET GERM a default policy setting.

As Australia's smallest and most recently self-governing state-type jurisdiction, the Northern Territory (NT) has always reflected national policy priorities in TVET. For example, the five semi-autonomous public colleges of the 1980s were progressively reduced to two dual-sector bodies – an Indigenous-controlled institute and a university. This mirrors the national reduction of 88 TVET institutes in 1998 to just 40 in 2017 accompanied by a reduction in private providers from 2,143 in 2010 to 1,476 in 2017 in response to the massive decrease of students in the sector. The NT public TVET providers have lost market share in the face of increased contestability with Northern Territory Government payments to private providers doubling while the sector's total funding has decreased in real terms between 2007 and 2016

and the cost per hour of training has decreased by one-third. This also aligns with the national trends where the latest 2014-15 data shows that VET spending dropped to almost 4 percent below 2005 levels and VET enrolments took the sharpest dive in ten years of more than 10 percent in 12 months. The Productivity Commission's annual report on government services in 2017 notes that 'open market schemes to reinvigorate vocational training have backfired disastrously, with governments spending to train fewer students. The proportion of adults completing vocational qualifications on the public purse fell by almost one-third in five years'.

The default bi-partisan Australian government policy position supporting the further extension of privatisation and marketisation of skills training blindly ignored the warning signs that have emerged on the impact on quality this version of TVET GERM was having in Australia. Some of these concerns were further exposed in the report, *A review of issues relating to unduly short training*, which noted that poor providers were forcing high quality trainers out of the market by offering unrealistically short courses and using marginally qualified trainers. In describing the impact of the 2013 introduction of the contestable TVET market in New South Wales, a Parliamentary Committee found that 'student enrolments including Aboriginal students and students with disabilities are steadily declining since the introduction of the Smart and Skilled policy' and in the period 2012-2015 'TAFE lost almost one-third of its teacher workforce'. And in spite of determining that the more open and competitive training market was not working

for regional, rural and remote communities, the committee recommended a continuation of the TVET GERM in that state.

In spite of oft-stated policy intentions, there is no indication that the open competitive market offers improved choice and options for disadvantaged persons. Similar groups have been repeatedly identified in each of these countries and their status remains little changed over many decades. Arguably women, youth, the disabled, Indigenous groups and those suffering multiple disadvantages end up worse off when left to the vagaries of the marketplace when compared to the ability of public colleges to offer choice and access in all four jurisdictions. Similarly, qualification completion rates are deemed to be too low in each country as well.

All four of the marketised training systems also demonstrate the Pareto Principle. In general, 80 per cent of learners are enrolled in only 20 per cent of the extensive range of qualifications offered in the TVET marketplace. This suggests that instead of producing a responsive system of vocational training that meets local and individual needs, market-driven financial imperatives ensure that the range of occupations from which learners can choose is limited by the need to make a profit (or at least not lose money) on the part of the provider in spite of local skills shortages or investing in future skills building. The net effect TVET GERM has been to prioritise the choice of provider over the choice of qualification and occupation in each country.

The efficiencies that have been squeezed out of TVET in the form of reduced unit costs have come at a huge price in terms of destroying the public investment in physical assets and the skills and knowledge of a professional teaching workforce while simultaneously reducing the quality of the training provided. This pattern has been repeated in all four of this study's jurisdictions. It can be concluded that a *prima facie* case that it is the logic of the market, rather than poor administration or unique national circumstances, that has produced TVET's GERM. As with their impact of producing worse social, economic and educational outcomes in the school sector, the privatisation and marketisation of TVET has not lived up to the anticipated benefits after decades of bipartisan policy consistency in each of the post-school training systems described in this paper. ●

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



Call for 2019 nominations

Rosemary Richards Scholarship

Rosemary Richards was a proud feminist, unionist and educator. A trailblazing leader, she was committed to advancing gender equality across the AEU. In her memory, the Rosemary Richards Scholarship continues her legacy by building the capacity of women as activist and leaders.

This is an opportunity for an AEU woman member with an idea for an innovative project, research or study experience that will increase her skills and experience in the union's work at state/territory, national or international level. By extension, it should also support the AEU's women members.

The Scholarship is valued at \$10,000 and is intended to cover all project expenses including, but not limited to, travel, attendance at conferences, workplace visits, training and developmental opportunities, work-shadowing, research, project design and implementation.

All women AEU Branch or Associated Body members are strongly encouraged to apply. Contact your local Women's Officer for more information.

Application forms and **further information** is available on the AEU website: aeufederal.org.au/our-work/women/rosemary-richards-scholarship-2019

The **submission deadline** for application forms is 3 May 2019.



Around Australia

NEW SOUTH WALES

MAXINE SHARKEY

TAFFE NSW has a new managing director following the departure of Jon Black in September, before his contract had expired. The new managing director, Caralee McLeish comes from the fiscal and economic group in NSW Treasury. Prior to the change of managing director, TAFE NSW was experiencing significant difficulties working through the transformation from 10 institutes to ONE TAFE. The new managing director met with the NSW Teachers Federation (Federation) immediately upon taking up the position and understands that although the Federation supports the concept of a unified system for TAFE NSW, changes in implementation must occur. There has been a noticeable steadying of the pace of change since this meeting.

NSW TAFE teachers, like our counterparts in other states and territories, are struggling with demonstrating compliance with ASQA regulations. The Training and Education (TAE) changes were initially handled very poorly by TAFE, with some teachers having the qualification fee waived while others were required to pay. While the Department of Education offered release from face-to-face teaching for VET in school teachers, TAFE didn't offer the same opportunity. Many teachers decided this injustice was the final straw and, as a result, unfortunately resignations have risen.

The NSW state election was held on March 23 and this, combined with the impending federal election, has created great opportunities for our Stop TAFE Cuts campaign to gain momentum.

Stop TAFE Cuts activists once again held a stall at the Tamworth Country Music Festival in January (see pictures on page 30). This gave the union an opportunity to outline the TAFE funding crisis to Tamworth locals and people from across Australia. With the sound of country music buskers on Peel Street in the background, grandparents, parents, students and local

community members conveyed their anger at the effect of TAFE funding cuts on students and teachers.

The community expressed concern with the problem of ever-increasing TAFE student fees and debt. These increases are stopping many students from getting the skills and education they need to gain employment. Grandparents said they were worried about the future for their grandkids.

Stalls have been held at weekend markets across the state, while the Stop TAFE Cuts message was shared by members of Federation's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer Special Interest Group with tens of thousands of visitors to the Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras' Fair Day on 17 February.

The Federation also held a round-table in Newcastle of TAFE Teachers and local Members of Parliament. Local MPs were briefed on the negative impacts for students, teachers, industry and our local community, caused by the NSW Smart and Skilled contestable funding policy.

Campaigning will continue to the federal election and beyond, until TAFE is guaranteed a minimum of 70% government funding and governments re-invest in the TAFE teaching workforce. ●

VICTORIA

ELAINE GILLESPIE

IN October last year the new Victorian TAFE Teaching Staff Agreement for the 12 Standalone TAFE's in Victoria was certified, and TAFE teachers received their first pay increase in nearly six years.

The Agreement is now in full implementation across the state however this is not without a few problems. The main issue is the allocation of teaching duties in the new compulsory work plans that rely on the new definition of teaching.

The definition of teaching now captures the many different aspects of teaching in addition to rostered

teaching sessions and it also covers the additional support that teachers provide students: staying back in class, in breaks or before or after class whether for curriculum issues or pastoral care needs. Several institutes have chosen not to recognise that teachers do this work, while others have restricted it to a set number of hours rather than allowing the ability of teachers to provide this support as 'required'.

Where to count assessment, particularly practical assessment is the main issue. The Victorian TAFE Association (VTA) have developed a tool designed as guide to calculate the number of hours of teaching and supervision that takes place in a classroom as opposed to assessment. It has proved difficult to reach agreement as the ability to separate teaching, supervision and assessment into discrete portions of time in a class is impossible as they all take place simultaneously which is the requirement of competency-based training.

Unfortunately, the work plan template developed by the VTA exasperates this issue by omitting the word 'supervision' from teaching and using 'directed' instead of negotiated when referring to the allocation of duties. It is anticipated that these issues will need to be resolved through the dispute process.

Many TAFE students across Victoria are taking advantage of the free priority courses. These courses are designed to make TAFE education more accessible, to build a workforce in areas of need such as family violence prevention and support, disability and individual support. The free TAFE courses in Victoria are also designed to encourage students back into the TAFE sector after the destruction of the Vocational Education Sectors reputation brought about by the dodgy for-profit private providers delivering high cost low quality training.

However, with the increased number of students in these areas, there has been an increased need and expectation on these industries to provide student placements to complete the requirements of the courses. ●

QUEENSLAND

DAVID TERRAUDS

THE good news for TAFE Queensland is that market share has improved as private RTO's fail and/or exit the market. That said there is concern about the impact of the Federal Governments VET Student Loan scheme on diploma enrolments. An upcoming state government funding scheme is slated to reduce student cost across key priority qualifications.


In December 2018 citing workload concerns, Adult Migrant English Program Teachers at Logan voted for a work to rule directive from the union. The QTU issued the directive just before Christmas. The quantum of funding and the constantly shifting contract requirements created problems with compliance and recording mechanisms, two different auditing regimes, updating of professional skills and qualifications, implementation of new courses, and materials and assessment approaches which created a perfect workload storm for teachers in the migrant English area. While Teach Queensland has acted to fill the vacuum left between commonwealth demand and support, teachers on the ground have suffered unprecedented workload increases resulting in significant increase in unpaid overtime for many. Now, other teaching teams are following the Logan example and requesting ballots to work to rule.

The nominal expiry date of the TAFE Queensland Educators' Certified Agreement 2016 is 30 June 2019.

Following a survey of QTU members, workload has been identified as a key issue in enterprise bargaining this year. Letters have been exchanged and discussion commenced on 8 March in advance of formal negotiations.

The Log of Claims includes workload management, consultation, programming, gender employment equity, permanency, class sizes, professional issues, non-attendance time, salaries, etc.

Discussions continue regarding the establishment within the TAFE Queensland Award of the new classification of



Educational Team Leader. The role is a hybrid teaching /administration role much like a Head of department in schools. It will appear in the educator stream in the award not in the admin stream. ●

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

TONY SUTHERLAND

AEU TAFE members are set for a battle in their upcoming enterprise bargaining negotiations due to begin at the end of April. This follows on from the hard nose attitude of the state liberal government as it negotiates over school and preschool enterprise agreements.

The AEU surveyed its TAFE members who overwhelmingly stated that they want to fight to maintain current conditions and not trade away hard fought entitlements to meet the government's agenda of privatisation.

A number of forums were held in March to finalise the union's claim for the enterprise negotiations and to garner support from all staff to stand united.

The South Australian Government continues in its drive for efficiency gains by closing campuses and reducing access to students to choose and enhance their opportunities to gain meaningful education and training. Both Port Adelaide and Urrbrae are one step closer to closure with a number of the programs already leaving these sites.

In good news, the number of members who are now in secure employment keeps racking up thanks to the AEU's Secure Job campaign. This comes after the positive determination of the South Australian Employment Tribunal last July 2018. We have now seen more than 220 staff transferred to permanent contracts and the number continues to rise as we finalise the last of our eligible members.

Finally David Coltman, the vice chancellor of Swinburne University, has been appointed as the new CEO for TAFE SA. It will be interesting to see what he brings to TAFE SA which have been on a senior management merry-go-round over recent years. ●

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

GARY HEDGER

AMAJOR factor of our replacement agreement, which was overwhelmingly accepted by TAFE members, was obtaining a very clear conversion to permanency process for lecturers on fixed term contracts.

As a result we have seen a substantial number of lecturers converted to permanent contracts. In the first round any lecturer who had been employed on contract for longer than four years was automatically converted to permanent. The next round saw the lecturers that have been on contract for over two years but less than four years converted. We are now working with another group of lecturers, who by having their contracts extended, will now need to be converted to permanent.

The AEU is looking at supporting lecturing staff that have been on a mix of casual and contract employment and is currently devising a business case for these lecturers. At the same time, the very poorly conceived roll-out of the Student Management System, has caused chaos across colleges. In spite of enormous increases to staff workloads that have created a very noticeable collapse in morale in the colleges, senior management insist on reporting it as a great success. The AEU is starting the year managing the industrial issues that are being raised as a result. ●

ACT

KAREN NOBLE

CANBERRA Institute of Technology (CIT) has been bargaining with the AEU throughout 2018 and an in-principle agreement has been reached dependent on a few clauses. The starting position from CIT was atrocious to put it politely. One proposal was to broaden the span of hours to Monday to Sunday from 8am to 10pm. We ended up with an agreement

that looks reasonable and it should go to a vote soon. We are recommending that members accept the offer. Our focus will then turn to enforcement of the agreement. Members have lost their patience with the drawn-out process. The pay rises and increases to superannuation are in line with the rest of the ACT Public Service with backpay dating to October 2017.

Many members have tried to comply to the Training and Education (TAE) upgrade but time is running out for CIT. While it supports the upgrade, teachers are not being offered a reduction in workload. Consequently, there are many teachers who have not been able to start it.

CIT has also insisted teachers who do not necessarily need TAE (due to holding other higher-level adult education qualifications) still have to do it although it is not an ASQA regulation.

Over the last 12 months there has been a reduction in the number department heads, which has led to increased workload for those teachers left and reduced teacher support. This particularly affects new employees who are often casual. There have also been constant changes to online processes without teachers being consulted or informed. This increases workload and stress for teachers.

Class sizes are very large in many parts of CIT with classrooms overflowing and unsafe. Teachers are expected to deal with it. Teachers are working very hard and doing a great job even with all these demands and constraints. ●

TASMANIA

SIMON BAILEY

WE ARE currently in the midst of EBA negotiations and whilst some process has been made it was done at a snail's pace due to the TasTAFE negotiators lack of understanding of our agreement and the work which our teachers carry out on a day to day basis.

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. If you are not teaching then any other task performed must relate to your role as a teacher.
- 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. This change is to reduce the workload issue that some teachers face.
- New planning clause which will require TasTAFE to provide a yearly plan to each team before the start of a year
- New Personal Development clause to ensure staff are allocated time for PD activities, the clause also defines a PD.
- Wage rise of 3% per annum to ensure teaching staff are paid in step with fellow teachers who are employed in the TAFE sector throughout Australia.
- Review of promoted positions including AST2

The Government had unilaterally determined a 2% wage offer WITHOUT even seeing our log of claims, let alone having a negotiation meeting. This is viewed as not bargaining in good faith, as well as being disrespectful to members.

In a show of unity and disgust all public sector union members have joined together in holding state-wide stop work action as well as applying work bans. In the past month the government has finally shown that they are willing to budge from the 2% wage cap.

By the time this article goes to print TasTAFE would have been through an ASQA re-registration audit. ●

A practical path to education support

MICHELLE PURDY

MANDY McNamara was inspired to switch careers from environmental science to teaching assistant after spending five years volunteering at her daughter's playgroup.

Studying locally at TasTAFE she recently completed her Certificate III as a blended program, which comprised of a monthly workshop on campus, an online learning program and a substantial work placement.

But, it was the opportunity to gain first-hand experience in a grade 4 class at Somerset Primary School that left a profound impression on McNamara and cemented her commitment.

Speaking at McNamara's graduation, Amanda Lloyd, Assistant Principal at Somerset Primary said, "the job of the teacher Assistant is vital in schools and it's now a specialised role that, I know, is challenging physically, mentally, socially and emotionally to those who undertake it."

Lloyd went on to praise the quality of candidates that come through the TAFE system. "Prior to the partnership with TAFE and the certificate III qualification, teacher assistants were called teacher aides and were often mums whose children were in the school. All this changed under the partnership with TasTAFE. Teacher Assistants working through TAFE now access exactly what is needed when they arrive in schools. The theory and learning undertaken at TAFE supports the practical requirements needed in the workplace.

Lloyd credits the teachers for the success of the course, which is reflected in high retention and completion rates. "The team of teachers at



TAFE are very thorough. The diligence they've put into planning the courses, means they're meeting the needs of TAFE students, but most importantly, they're meeting the needs of the students in our schools and their teachers.

"Accessing quality professional Teacher Assistants is now a pleasure. Knowing schools can contact TAFE asking for quality Teaching Assistants is reassuring

"The positive experience of the TAFE students learning in schools on prac is of great benefit to the whole educational community. I know my school values working with the TAFE students developing partnerships that hopefully will last into the future" Lloyd said.

StopTAFE Cuts supporters at Huskisson Markets NSW



SCOTT MORRISON'S FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS DESTROYING TAFE

The Liberal-National Government has cut over **\$3 billion** from TAFE, apprenticeships and vocational education. This has resulted in:

- Over 10,000 jobs cut since 2013
- Courses cut while fees **INCREASE**
- Closure of TAFE campuses and more are at risk of closure

We cannot allow the Scott Morrison Government to continue to destroy TAFE. We need you to enrol and vote. Your TAFE depends on it. To rebuild TAFE and keep it strong political parties must guarantee a minimum of 70% Government VET funding goes to TAFE.

ENROL TO VOTE

WWW.AEC.GOV.AU/ENROL

CAMPAIGN FOR TAFE WWW.STOPTAFECUTS.COM.AU

**STOP
TAFE
CUTS!**
.com.au

A close-up portrait of a man with a beard and mustache, wearing sunglasses on his head, looking slightly to the side.

**BY VOTING I MAKE
CHANGE FOR THE
BETTER. FOR MY KIDS,
MY COMMUNITY AND
MY PEOPLE. WE CAN
CHANGE THE RULES.**

Wayne
Darwin local, Larrakia man

**VOTING IS
DEADLY**



ENROL TO VOTE

www.aec.gov.au/indigenous