

TAFE Community Briefing Paper

What are the problems facing TAFE?

- National Agreement that required states and territories to make VET funding competitive and establish an open training market. TAFE to compete for its money.
- Increased focus on the needs of industry (large industry) without recognising or funding the further and second chance education and access courses. Loss of courses in the Arts, Access, Outreach, General Education and so on despite ongoing needs. Reduction in support to apprentices and trainees.
- Government tenders being won by Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) that cut costs, hire poorly qualified staff and do not provide quality educational courses
- Private RTOs by their very nature run programs as a for-profit business. See all the media coverage on this.
- Cuts in funding to TAFE NSW – in the last State Budget a cut of over 7% in guaranteed government funding to TAFE, representing a further loss of \$122m since 2014
- Introduction of ‘Smart and Skilled’ NSW, which the Government claimed would avoid the ‘market’ problems experienced in other states has failed.
- Smart and Skilled has failed for a number of reasons:
 - The system has not been able to support the changes and funding allocated to both public and private providers appears to have been poorly allocated.
 - The Community Service Obligation funding intended for TAFE to meet its CS obligations, has failed and the severest cuts in TAFE have been in the access and equity areas
 - TAFE fees have increased by up to 7000% (Labor Party figures). Fees have increased for all students. Much of this is masked by the Government claims that students studying Diploma and above have access to VET Fee-Help. This has led to fees for these courses in many cases exceeding University fees. The Government claimed that the 2015 fees for TAFE were to provide for an extra 46,000 students. This has not occurred
 - The introduction at the same time of a new administrative system called EBS, has caused further problems. Many students have not been able to enrol. In fact, there are students now about to graduate who still have not been enrolled. The system is so difficult for students that many commence the enrolment process and do not finish it.
 - There has been a drop of at least 30% in student enrolments. Where have they gone? New system totally unreliable in producing enrolment numbers.
 - At least 2000 staff have left TAFE. Some of these are the most experienced.
 - TAFE Institutes are going through constant restructures and reforms to reduce staff numbers and lower costs. This has led to shortened courses which do not meet educational quality or industry standards. Student support reduced.
 - TAFE funding priorities have shifted from front-line educational programs to marketing and other non-educational priorities to attempt to remain competitive in the training market.

- The Government now plans to sell-off some 27 TAFE sites. What will this mean in terms of the accessibility of TAFE courses?

What can you do?

**Write to: The Hon John Barilaro
Minister for Skills
GPO Box 5341
Sydney 2001**

**Write to: The Hon Scott Ryan
Minister for Vocational Education and Skills
Parliament House
Canberra 2600**

Raise the issues relevant to state and Federal governments with the relevant Minister.

- 1. Organise to meet with your local State MP asking what they are doing to support TAFE NSW.**
- 2. Visit your local TAFE colleges. Ask questions about courses and programs. Find out what is going on in your local area.**
- 3. Challenge the competitive funding of TAFE NSW wherever possible. This might include making submissions to relevant government inquiries. Your small contribution makes a difference.**
- 4. Join and work with organisations such as the TAFE Community Alliance**
- 5. Find out what training your local small businesses are offering. What are the apprentices or trainees required to pay? Can they afford training? Skills are in peril of being totally lost to the nation.**

TAFE Community Alliance