

10 February 2016

The Hon John Barilaro MP
Minister for Skills
GPO Box 341
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Minister

The TAFE Community Alliance has welcomed your action to-date in addressing some of the issues arising from the considerable increases in TAFE fees, and the concerns of disadvantaged groups denied access to TAFE pathways and Outreach courses.

As you have acknowledged, 2015 was a difficult year for many TAFE students, exacerbated by the introduction of the new fee structure and the Education Business System (EBS). The EBS was unable to enrol many students and correctly record results. As a consequence, many TAFE students were either unable to find out the costs of their courses in a timely fashion or to enrol at the commencement of their course. This has led to further problems.

1. Many students have been denied access to further enrolments, or will be in the future, as a result of unpaid or part paid fees from 2015. This may have resulted from their being unaware of the fees required at the time of enrolment, or because their fees were being paid by community partners in the case of Outreach courses. In some cases students made payment to community partners and then TAFE invoiced the partner. This arrangement experienced difficulties when students did not complete courses or were unable to complete payments, leaving a shortfall.

These students now have an enrolment block to further study in TAFE as a result of unpaid fees. We ask that you consider a fee amnesty for students caught up by such problems?

2. TAFE teachers have been told they are not to enrol any students this year without a Unique Student Identifier (USI). Many disadvantaged students have been unable to gain a USI through no fault of their own, but often due to problems with formal identifications. The lack of a USI should not prevent a person from undertaking a course at TAFE. We ask that you address this issue and ensure that the USI is not used as a barrier to students.

We look forward to working with you further around accessible course fees in TAFE NSW, and would like to set up a further meeting with you to discuss these issues and others relating to the continued successful operation of TAFE NSW.

Yours sincerely



Linda Simon

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