



6 June 2017

To All Federal Members of Parliament

Dear Member of Parliament

Rebuild TAFE: restore TAFE funding

In the lead-up to National TAFE Day on 13 June, the TAFE Community Alliance asks you to consider how you might help to rebuild TAFE and restore TAFE funding.

It is important that public funding is redirected to restore the national TAFE system as a trusted TAFE provider. The continuing financial collapse of private training colleges must force the Federal Government to abandon its failed experiment in privatising vocational education and training (VET). Again we ask you to consider whether VET should be focused on a quality educational experience for students or as a business focused on making a profit for its shareholders? The latter has been the outcome of a competitive training market.

As you would be aware, private VET colleges continue to collapse leaving students stranded and without jobs. The latest large college to cease operating was Careers Australia, leaving some 15,000 students stranded. It and other private colleges such as Acquire Learning have been found to be undertaking aggressive marketing practices leading to misrepresentation of their courses and costs. On many occasions these marketing practices targeted the most vulnerable in our society.

It is time that Simon Birmingham, as Minister for Education, acted to prevent further deep erosion of public confidence in VET provision. Restricting access by some private colleges to VET student loans will not restore confidence by itself. The Government must make a commitment to properly funding TAFE as the public provider so that it can rebuild its quality delivery of VET courses across Australia along with student support services.

The litany of rorts and rip-offs by countless VET providers since 2015 – 387 or more have been removed from the list able to receive government payments under the VET Student Loan Scheme – is testimony to massive market failure. The public purse has been plundered and pillaged for three years. Hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars have been pocketed by some of the private training providers.

In the lead-up to the Federal elections in 2016, the TAFE Community Alliance urged that all political parties commit to:

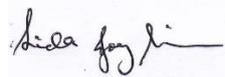
- A quality publicly funded, affordable and accessible TAFE system for the future economy and society.
- Abandon the current failed VET market funding models and commit to funding the direct and indirect costs of TAFE as the public VET provider.
- Correct the serious and growing imbalance in funding to VET relative to schools and higher education, and restore funding to VET in line with student enrolments, including increased funding to foundation studies, literacy and numeracy and English language education as national priorities.

- A performance audit by the Australian National Audit Office into Commonwealth expenditure in VET, especially in relation to its policy effectiveness, administrative efficiency and whether it has delivered value for money to the Australian taxpayer.

To the serious detriment of the young people of Australia, these changes have not been put into place. An announcement on National TAFE Day that sought to implement a performance audit and make a commitment to rebuilding TAFE and restoring funding, would be welcomed by most Australians.

Please contact Linda Simon lindasimon2@bigpond.com or Jozefa Sobski jsobski@ozemail.com.au to discuss these issues further.

Yours sincerely



Linda Simon

On behalf of the TAFE Community Alliance