

To the committee,

As much as I support the bill and a win for the commoners I'm not sure what problem it solves. VET courses lack appropriate equipment to teach the skills required.

Take for instance textile design and manufacture. A Shima Seiki machine costs as little as \$50k. Incredibly cheap as far as industrial equipment goes. Sign up for a textiles course and you're lucky to get access to an over locker that would be cheaper than the cost of the course. In both instances self-taught and TAFE taught students are still largely limited to off-the-shelf imported fabric. Economically speaking it's cheaper to hand out free overlappers than to pay for textiles courses and would provide greater opportunity for developing technical proficiency than classroom time limited access. It doesn't seem sane that textile manufacturing and design is not even on the radar given the previously \$4bn wool export industry five years ago has dropped to \$2.8b recently, \$1.65 billion cotton exports and Australia currently imports 1.42 billion units of clothing annually at a value of about \$10b.

Similarly high school woodshop class was worthless and taught me nothing. I would have learnt more and it would have been cheaper to send me home for a week with a new tenon saw and some clamps. I am fairly sure that the teacher did not know how to use a tenon saw. Various erroneous justifications like it is safer to use a blunt rusty saw. There were no clamps. There were blunt rusty saws. There were no angle guides. There was a smooth sanding belt. What I ended up with was discouraging. It's like teaching handwriting without a stylus.

Auditing minimum tool standards and access as a component of VET training organizations requires consideration. Unlike classical education that only requires a pencil and a workbook trade education requires tools making it much easier to rapidly identify dodgy providers.

It's not just the VET courses but also university education with tasks like, an engineering course that purports to teach how to build a reliable circuit but provides no access to tools or materials. It's uncertain what exactly is being taught. This seems like obvious grounds for loss of accreditation upon audit but it is not. The risk is that by not providing direct instruction of technical processes it can become practical to hire educators to instruct students to perform tasks that they themselves don't know how to perform.

In the Gulag system of competency that applies to education providers the minimum standards for VET providers should emphasize tool use and tool accessibility for students outside of formal classroom hours to hone technical proficiency. The system works well if the purpose of the courses is to fulfill an arbitrary administrative requirement to inherit a family owned business.

I have a disability that education providers consider incompatible with formal education. I'm not a nepo baby. Problems with the Australian education industry are not unique to Australia.¹
² From recognizing and understanding the patterns I know that I'm not going to be selected for the golden boy treatment that includes the actual training.³ ⁴ What I would pay for education does not guarantee the full training.

In short it seems more like a subsidy for education providers struggling to offer relevant quality options across the spectrum of students.

1. Framework Knitters and Shima provide expert training (2019) Knitting Industry - Keeping You In The Loop. Available at: <https://www.knittingindustry.com/framework->

[knitters-and-shima-provide-expert-training/](#) (Accessed: 23 November 2024).

2. SHUO, ZOU. (2022) Boundaries set for Vocational Students' internships, [Chinadaily.com.cn](#). Available at: <https://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202201/26/WS61f09ae3a310cdd39bc8343d.html> (Accessed: 23 November 2024).
3. Ainley, J., Macaskill, G., & Thomson, S. (2022). Within and Between School Variation in Achievement on the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in Australia: PISA Australia Technical Paper. Australian Council for Educational Research. <https://research.acer.edu.au/ozpisa/54>
4. Apprentice hung from noose and poked with drill during bullying campaign, Victorian Court told (2024) The Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/article/2024/jul/22/celsius-ballarat-apprentice-bullying-victoria-court> (Accessed: 23 November 2024).

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