

## To the Senate Education and Employment References Committee Inquiry into technical and further education in Australia

### Terms of Reference

*a) iv. The delivery of services and programs to support regions, communities and disadvantaged individuals to access education, training and skills and, through them, a pathway to further education and employment;*

As a parent of a child with an intellectual disability, I was faced with the difficult task of 'what next' when my daughter completed Year 12 education. Finding employment for my daughter was, and still is, very difficult. TAFE has been a very valuable source for providing practical education and a way of helping my daughter keep in touch with the 'real' world. It has helped her build her skills and gain more confidence to hopefully obtain work in the near future. As a parent, I am concerned and confused about why the Government is trying to introduce budget cuts to TAFE. It seems to me that these cuts would only restrict access to TAFE education to those who need it most.

*d) What factors affect the affordability and accessibility of TAFE to students and business*

My daughter was unable to attend our local TAFE as the suitable courses she required had been cut due to lack of funding. However, the courses were offered at another TAFE further away from where we live and we have overcome the difficulties in transporting her to this TAFE. Now, these courses are experiencing changes due to Government funding cuts and my daughter has had to enrol in different courses until some sort of clarity of Government funding becomes available. Ideally, it would be great if she could attend the local TAFE and gain the necessary skills she needs to be able to access employment opportunities within our local businesses.

*e) Different mechanisms used by state governments to allocate funding*

Allocation of funding for students with disabilities by Governments should be looked at closely, finding the areas where specific skills shortages can be identified. Thought should also be given to support positions for students with special needs. Governments need to realise that to cut funding to areas such as practical education for students with learning difficulties leaves these students even more vulnerable than ever and even further from achieving their goals of employment and a future where they can support themselves and not have to rely on support from Governments. The idea of education is that it should be for everyone, not just for those who can afford it most.