

Submission to the Federal Enquiry

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I. The current managerialism system does not work. It never worked and it is never going to work. And this is why.

Originally TAFE was founded in 1974 with the Kangan report. The Kangan report stated all important TAFE values and outlined the trends of its future development. These are:

- 1) To provide an opportunity for each individual, who "wishes within the limits of his capacity, to develop his ability to the best advantage of himself and the community, including industry and commerce" (Kangan & ACOTAFE, 1974, p.9).
- 2) To provide "unrestricted access to post school education through government maintained or administered institutions"(Kangan & ACOTAFE, 1974, p.20) to all adult Australians, who are willing to learn, regardless of their age, gender, race, past academic achievements etc.
- 3) To give special attention to groups, "identified as being particularly disadvantaged and requiring specific assistance, such as women, Aborigines, those who resided outside metropolitan areas and the disabled"(Goozee, 2001, p.26).
- 4) To implement the proposed changes, via strong Commonwealth funding for new buildings, staff development, libraries, curriculum development and research (Goozee, 2001, p.27).

You can read all the 414 pages of the Kangan report and you will not find any of the terminology, used by today's governments, both Commonwealth and State, talking about "competition between private and government training organisations", "increased productivity of the training sector", "pay-per-service educational model" and so forth. All of those "modern" notions of corporate culture started to slowly infect the TAFE sector from the late 80's and early 90's. It was then, when the control over section budgets were gradually shifted from education professionals to TAFE appointed bureaucrats, such as program managers and directors.

This gave rise to a new 'corporate' culture of education. TAFEs gradually began to operate on a business model. This new culture was totally foreign to the TAFE's initial conception. There are several major inherent problems when education is run as a business. The biggest one is that this model does not give any incentive to the RTOs to maintain high educational standards for their students. The business model is driven almost entirely by the desire to make a maximum profit for the shortest possible period of time.

So the reason why we see diminishing results in ALL of the areas listed above is because the TAFE's adopted a 'managerialism' model, which is foreign to the original ideas, of the TAFE founding fathers.

II. What is wrong with the managerialism model?

- 1) Shift of values from trusteeship to entrepreneurship (Robertson 2000).
- 2) Emergence of a new managerial discourse with 'new icons such as outcomes and missions, and new rituals to enshrine them including corporate planning, performance evaluation and new fiscal accountability arrangements (Sinclair 1996, p 234).
- 3) General policy shift from education outcomes to profit outcomes.
- 4) Managers put in charge of professional communities, while at the same time managers do not possess any credentials in the field they are attempting to manage.
- 5) Corporatism has nothing to do with learning.
- 6) Increased paperwork load in expense for teaching. The workload of ASL1 and ASL2 lecturers increased dramatically in recent years.
- 7) Lack of professional recognition. It is becoming increasingly more and more difficult with each year to progress towards ASL1 and ASL2 level.
- 8) Corporatism is an ideological instrument, used to cut funding for proper education.
- 9) Ultimately the managerial reform is being driven by the industry and it is a form of political ideology, committed to privatisation and cost cutting.
- 10) Corporate managerialism introduces unfamiliar values to TAFE.
- 11) The corporatisation of public education is inappropriate.
- 12) There is no demonstrable evidence that better educational and socio-economical outcomes have been achieved as a result of this approach.
- 13) There has been a significant increase of workloads and increasing levels of stress and uncertainty among lecturers.
- 14) Managerialism reform lacks pedagogical legitimacy.
- 15) The communication in the managerialist model is always 'from the top down' and never the other way round. Lecturers at TAFE are often much better content specialist than managers, yet 'de facto' they are told what to do by incompetent managers.
- 16) Generally, there is no accountability for manager's decisions.
- 17) Most TAFE sections can be run successfully without managers. The proposed model, which have been tried out successfully in recent years is called Professional Learning Communities (PLC).
- 18) There is now less time for informal sharing of lecturer's experience. This problem could be avoided with the introduction of PLC.
- 19) Managers are given enhanced powers of surveillance and control to ensure teachers' compliance and increased productivity. There is to be a reduction of security of employment for many teachers. The teachers' task is to become increasingly narrowed. Individual teachers will be encouraged to compete with each other for the rewards of such compliance. The traditions of cooperation and collegiality will be hard to sustain (Merson 2001, p 84).
- 20) The psychological consequences of new managerialism including reduced staff morale, reduced job security, less professionalism and less career development (Solondz 1995, p 219).

- 21) Massive work overload, loss of spontaneity and/or reflective time, and increased levels of stress, ambiguity and ambivalence of teachers Mentor et al (1997, p 136)
- 22) The following three points (22, 23 and 24) are according to Smyth (2001, p 10). 'The corrosion of the culture and character of teaching, with the shift to individual responsibility for delivering outcomes;
- 23) The intensification in leadership and management away from supporting the work of teaching, to pursuing corporate visions; and
- 24) The dislocation of teachers' pedagogic and professional identities as educative space is eroded, with teachers having to lead increasingly divided lives, continually moving between the corporate makeover of their work and agonising decisions about what they regard as being the essence of good professional judgement'.
- 25) Fundamental 'leaching away of trust'. (Smyth 2001, p 30)
- 26) ... re-institute hierarchies, diminish co-operation, foster competitive individualism between schools, and in the end divert schools away from their educative agenda by requiring them to be entrepreneurial and more like businesses (Smyth 2001, p 32).
- 27) No longer content merely to argue for the application of business principles to the organisation of schooling, the forces of corporate culture have adopted a much more radical agenda. Central to this agenda is the attempt to transform public education from a public good, benefiting all students, to a private good designed to expand the profits of investors, educate students as consumers and train young people for the low-paying jobs of the new global marketplace (Giroux 2000, p 85).
- 28) Lecturers are acutely aware of the systemic level of control over their work. They perceive the style of management as top-down, prescriptive and manipulative (O'Brien, P., & Down, B. 2002).
- 29) A lot of lecturers are afraid for their positions, which prevents them from being spontaneous and all round better educators.
- 30) Sinclair (1996, p 229) sums it up well when she says, 'the debate about the 'what' and 'why' of education has been superseded by a fixation on the 'how'".

III. What should be done?

- 1) The current managerialism system should be replaced with Professional Learning Communities. In a nutshell these are communities of professional lecturers (who are at the same time learners themselves) and who regularly collaborate to make decisions about running their everyday tasks, to enhance their teaching practices and to moderate their standards of delivery. Tchervenkov (2012).
- 2) A minimum amount of money (for example \$5000/per section/per semester) should be given to the Professional Learning Communities for self-governing and for meeting urgent expenses.
- 3) Technical support staff should be made responsible to the Professional Learning Communities, not to program managers.
- 4) Provision of fully-funded, government-supported places in a TAFE institute for any student.

- 5) Increase TAFE's hourly funding rate to the national average.
- 6) Reintroduction of the \$55 dollar concession fee for all concession-card holders in all courses.
- 7) Full-fee student places for international students under Federal Government humanitarian or critical skill shortage programs but not at the cost of unmet domestic demand.
- 8) Private RTOs should not be eligible for the same or higher hourly funding rate as TAFEs unless:
 - a. They demonstrate a comparable investment in the social and student welfare functions required of TAFE institutes
 - b. Employ teaching and training staff with at least the same qualification levels and under at least the same employment conditions as offered by TAFEs.
- 9) Greater regulatory control to ensure all VET training is provided by an appropriately qualified and registered workforce. A teaching diploma should be the minimum qualification for anyone delivering government-funded training. A Certificate IV in Training and Assessment is not a teaching qualification.
- 10) All teaching and training staff delivering government-funded training must be registered, as they are in schools. The State Government should commit to a well-resourced, high quality VET sector with TAFE institutes at its core. The alternative – an underfunded public VET system competing with poorly regulated private providers delivering quick, low-cost qualifications — will not solve skills shortages, boost national productivity, improve work and life prospects for the disadvantaged or promote lifelong learning (Bluett & Henderson, 2012).

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