

The Secretary
Standing Committee on Education and Training

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re – Inquiry into vocational education in schools.

Tyndale Parent Controlled Christian School has approximately 950 students enrolled from kindergarten to Year 12. Being situated at Blacktown in Western Sydney, we draw our students from a modest socio-economic area. One of our main objectives is to provide affordable Christian education for those parents who desire it for their children. We therefore strive to keep our fees as affordable as possible. Our school community is therefore directly impacted by the high fees that independent school families must pay to access courses delivered by the Vocational Education sector. A major concern is the inequity in education and training for youth in the vocational education sector as a result of a lack of government funding for Voc Ed in independent schools.

All students, regardless of the school they attend should have the same access to TAFE courses. Currently they are subsidised only partially through the A.I.S.. Under the present system it is commonplace for students in independent schools to pay up to \$2000 a year to access courses that students in the public system receive for free. It follows that if the Government is seriously committed to the success of New Apprenticeships and other vocational opportunities, it should allow enough funding for all students to access TAFE at no cost.

Our school is active in providing vocational education courses and is committed to funding staff development to support this program. However, it is impossible to provide onsite courses to meet the requirements of every student. Therefore we see access to the TAFE system as an important element in providing a well rounded subject choice for our students. This is particularly the case for students who are less academically inclined. The high fees for TAFE delivered courses seriously restricts the opportunities for these students.

Yours sincerely,
Mr Geoff Stevenson.
Vice Chairman,
Tyndale Parent Controlled Christian School,
Blacktown, NSW.