

Subject: Inquiry into the role of Technical and Further Education system and its operation
Date: Thursday, 18 April 2013 3:43:57 PM

TE.

I wish to make a brief **submission to the Inquiry into the role of Technical and Further Education system and its operation**

I am a former senior officer in NSW TAFE having been Head of School of General Studies; Director (Schools); Group General Manager (Metropolitan Colleges); Institute Director(Southern Sydney) in the years 1984 to 1994.

I hope this Inquiry has surveyed the research into TAFE, for example from university Masters and PhD degrees and from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER). Also a review of the so called ' big data' from all government sources Australia wide. It would be expected that if governments have moved to make all the recent changes in TAFE, such as increasing funding to and competition from, other vocational providers, they will have sought to measure and monitor the implementation of these changes.

If this is not the case I submit that valid evidence based educational research should be undertaken as a matter of high priority.

It would have been of value to provide such information in seeking further submissions. As one press release and three weeks' timing including Easter and holidays, is limited information to encourage people to spend time researching for submissions. Also the call for submissions has not been well publicised.

the development of skills in the Australian economy;

I hope the mostly men who began their post school education in trades will be aware of your inquiry. Will they take the time to tell you of the value of trade training as the basis with TAFE business administration training, of managing their own business? Or as the base from which they did engineering or building degrees?

The development of opportunities for Australians to improve themselves and increase their life and employment prospects;

Since most submissions can be only anecdotal -

I wish to challenge the members of the inquiry to ask their friends and associates if they have done any courses in TAFE and if any of these were pre- requisites or opened unforeseen opportunities to undertake further study or gain new work or promotion opportunities. I am continually told when people become aware of my TAFE connections that 'I did my Matric in TAFE' or 'I started off in Secretarial Studies in TAFE and then went to'. Strangely unless given the opening

many seem reluctant to acknowledge their TAFE experience perhaps partly because TAFE was just the beginning of further more recent activities

This is overwhelmingly the case for those who did not progress through the full school system such as those from home backgrounds in which parents themselves were educationally disadvantaged. It is also the case that for some young people school has not met their interest or needs and the opportunity to work in the adult education environment of TAFE really does give them a 'second chance'.

the delivery of services and programs to support regions, communities and disadvantaged individuals to access training and skills and through them a pathway to employment;

I hope you will receive testimonial submission from those who have experienced and valued their TAFE experience, such as the many regional Aboriginal students who have entered successful learning and careers through TAFE. I suspect they may not have heard of this Inquiry or be inclined to take the time to respond.

Also the people from non English speaking backgrounds who have received dedicated teaching help from TAFE teachers.

the operation of a competitive training market

Some students could tell you of the wonderful courses they undertook in vocational areas other than TAFE. Will those students whose courses were cancelled or a total failure and they had then to be put into TAFE courses at government expense, tell you of their experience? This area is one which only evidence based research can give comprehensive information.

My primary submission is in relation to the **need for sound evidence based educational research into the issues listed for reference**. Anecdotal information alone is inappropriate as a basis for responsible decision making.

Judith Steanes