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Submission  
To

**The Committee Secretary**  
**House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and**  
**Employment**

Inquiry into the role of the Technical and Further Education  
system and its operation

Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

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[submission to be kept private]  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since NSW technical training became TAFE in the 1970s, according to their own history site, 'Individual opportunity and social improvement became catch-cries and important philosophies' [https://www.tafensw.edu.au/about/our\\_history.htm](https://www.tafensw.edu.au/about/our_history.htm)

This submission comes from a group of concerned TAFE teachers – across all teaching disciplines – who all are concerned about the future for their clients.

All agree that change is needed. The concern all share is that, despite TAFE having carried out extensive research acknowledging the special needs of areas such as Language Literacy & Numeracy, indigenous and multi cultural responsibilities; that future decisions – using their 'smart and skilled' blueprint – will be an opportunity for the government to exploit in terms of budget requirements.

In other words, economic times will lead changes as opposed to real industry needs. To do this is to fail in our responsibility to our clients – the students.

Also we are mystified as to how the Government is ignoring its own advice; previous research recommending the reinstatement of TAFE as opposed to moving to the RTO open model.

## ADDRESSING THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

- **The role played by TAFE in the DEVELOPMENT OF SKILLS in the Australian economy**

A look at this history of TAFE document - [https://www.tafensw.edu.au/about/our\\_history.htm](https://www.tafensw.edu.au/about/our_history.htm) – shows from the outset of the start of this country – the link between the development of relevant skills for Australia in response to world economic and technological changes.

In the Riverina regional setting the TAFE is the centre of education for those people who are in the majority; who don't go straight to university.

For example: the art department has always had a high proportion of people who are exempt from full fees, people who are mature age who because of health issues have not been able to find long term employment or those who wish to transform themselves and start their education again – they may have hated school and so left and got a job but want a 'career' and so come back and do more training or in the case of art start their pathway towards a higher qualification that could lead them to a career in education of art therapy or arts administration or museum studies etc

That's what TAFENSW is destroying for many of the people it should be serving – TAFE is where people start again – as the former Head Teacher, Albury Arts Department quoted '... art is a portal to other areas and higher qualifications and specialist areas...' Current planning and funding models do not recognise this fact. Also, the decision re Art did not recognise that 'art' is embedded in other areas. [refer appendix 1]

We draw your attention to the following IBSA reports that not only have nominated visual arts as a growth area .. but support this claim that the financial viability of a department such as Art cannot be measured based on 'how many jobs' a specific course lead to; is not a reliable measure of output based on occupation:

Creative Industries Economic Analysis Final report Prepared for Enterprise Connect and the Creative Industries Innovation Centre (CIIC) 2009  
[http://www.ibsa.org.au/Portals/ibsa.org.au/docs/News%20Related/Economic%20Analysis\\_Creative%20Industries.pdf](http://www.ibsa.org.au/Portals/ibsa.org.au/docs/News%20Related/Economic%20Analysis_Creative%20Industries.pdf)

IBSA's Environment Scan (Escan) 2012 – Printing and Graphic Arts Industry  
<http://www.ibsa.org.au/Portals/ibsa.org.au/docs/Research%20&%20Discussion%20Papers/Escan/Escan2012/IBSA%20Escan%202012%20-%20Printing%20&%20Graphic%20Arts.pdf>

IBSA's Environment Scan (Escan) 2012 – Cultural and Creative Industry  
<http://www.ibsa.org.au/Portals/ibsa.org.au/docs/Research%20&%20Discussion%20Papers/Escan/Escan2012/IBSA%20Escan%202012%20-%20Cultural%20&%20Creative%20Industries.pdf>

IBSA – Training Package Continuous Improvement Plan 2011-2012 -  
<http://www.ibsa.org.au/Portals/ibsa.org.au/docs/Project%20Related/TP%20Continuous%20Improvement%20Plan%202011-12.pdf>

- **The role played by TAFE in the DEVELOPMENT OF OPPORTUNITIES for Australians to improve themselves and increase their life and employment prospects**

As outlined in the above term of reference; the art department has always had a high proportion of people who are exempt from full fees, people who are mature age who because of health issues have not been able to find long term employment or those who wish to transform themselves and start their education again – they may have hated school and so left and got a job but want a ‘career’ and so come back and do more training or in the case of art start their pathway towards a higher qualification that could lead them to a career in education of art therapy or arts administration or museum studies etc

Students on exemptions who have not done Cert IV cannot afford \$4,500; under the current funding model Cert IV and Diploma being excluded from the VET concession fee.

Language Literacy and Numeracy – no clear guidelines in any papers to date as to how funding for those students with special needs will work – it appears to be a 1 size fits all. [in lock-step class situations, a literacy teacher support can work; however; this does not work in ALL situations – given the variety of student cohort that traditionally access TAFE studies.

Cuts to Social Inclusion Funding – students with individual learning needs who previously accessed a 2 x 3 hour Business training course in 2011; which was reduced to 1 x 3 hours in 2012; to now being cancelled due to no funding. This course had 2 teachers working with a variety of special needs – physical, mental etc. In 2013 these students are now forced to attend flexi classes where the 1 teacher deals with 12-15 students and CANNOT hope to give them the support they need.

Hence, course completion is not a realistic option in the time frames expected from the new future funding models.

That’s what TAFENSW is destroying for many of the people it should be serving – TAFE is where people start again – as the former Head Teacher, Albury Arts Department quoted ‘... art is a portal to other areas and higher qualifications and specialist areas...’ Current planning and funding models do not recognise this fact.

- **The role played by TAFE in 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**

Again, we refer to the above Art Department example and that of LLN; multi-cultural and those who come with no funding – our pastoral care responsibilities.

Art – we have had many people shattered by one thing or another who start to get back some degree of self esteem and confidence in our classes, who can do quite well at areas such as ‘art’ and who can also get the support to help with literacy and writing and grow in self-confidence to finish a certificate and then a diploma and then an advanced diploma.

Language Literacy and Numeracy – no clear guidelines in any papers to date as to how funding for those students with special needs will work – it appears to be a 1 size fits all. [in lock-step class situations, a literacy teacher support can work; however; this does not work in ALL situations – given the variety of student cohort that traditionally access TAFE studies].

What about those who come with no funding? – what about the young mother wanting to return to the workforce voluntarily and not eligible for funding? What about the person wanting a career change or promotion but still needs to work for a living – and not getting workplace support? – they cannot afford the future fees expected; the high likelihood that such strong achievers will ALREADY have a CERTIFICATE III or higher in the area they have been working in.

That’s how TAFE teachers get their sense of satisfaction when we see how our students can grow and develop.

This may sound very motherhoody but it’s the truth!! It’s really shocking that this government has cut funding in such key areas .. it is so short-sighted and frightening to think where those kids who we could foster will be now.

- **The role played by TAFE in the OPERATION OF A COMPETITIVE TRAINING MARKET;**

Limited access to day to day funding due to funding cuts and restructure – The Head Teacher for both Wagga Wagga and Albury Visual Art is based at Wagga. This person is in charge of the budget the 2 full-time staff at Albury have to email when they want to put in an SAP order. There is a presumption of a budget but the Albury people have only been given a vague generic amount and there is nothing in Buddy system against Albury/295.

Expectation that staff attend training in their own time; no teacher replacement – with the majority of teachers now timetabled over a 5-day week; key training opportunities are regularly denied rank and file teaching staff. How do they remain current?

Pressure to combine classes in regional areas because of limited numbers; this is acceptable on SOME occasions with flexi delivery and students who are able to be independent learners. However, with trade areas and other issues; it is often a safety issue – teachers have already expressed this concern at campus level; and continue to get pressure to combine class levels.

Funding sources not properly researched – there have been several instances this past 18 months where Marketing and other senior management personnel have tried to ‘double dip’ when seeing funding opportunities. Fortunately, the steadfastness and awareness of the trade teachers concerned in resisting such measures proved right; their attempts would have been outright fraud! Had they carried out the instruction to have students ‘just sign this form’ they could/would have been held accountable!

Literacy support embedded in some Cert 2 courses [eg Carpentry] – while this sounds wonderful in they are acknowledging this cohort; the current paperwork does not specify clearly that such units in this trade course must be delivered by a Foundation Studies teacher.

Continual shaving of delivery hours – the pressure to continually offer students less hours to complete units; the use of ‘holistic’ assessment – good in theory; but regularly impractical when given the calibre of the student and the paperwork trail needed to abide by all ASQA reporting requirements.

Teacher:student ratio numbers continue to be blurry – documents may refer to a particular policy; but said policy relating to student numbers cannot be found!

- **The role played by TAFE in those JURISDICTIONS IN WHICH STATE GOVERNMENTS HAVE ANNOUNCED FUNDING decisions which may impact on their operation and viability**

Refer to the above terms of reference and issues relating to:

- Funding sources not properly researched – risk of fraud
- Continual shaving of delivery hours to save \$\$\$
- Standard of delivery when class numbers and delivery methods blurry
- Combined classes – safety and quality of delivery issues
- Resource funding cuts – not able to provide state of the art delivery



## APPENDIX 1



SOURCE: [http://www.zazzle.com.au/earth\\_without\\_art\\_is\\_just\\_eh\\_poster-228462706154828541](http://www.zazzle.com.au/earth_without_art_is_just_eh_poster-228462706154828541)