

Australian Greens' Additional Comments

1.1 The years of exploitation within the VET sector are a textbook example of privatisation gone wrong. Public money should never have been given to for-profit providers and the Australian Greens will continue to support TAFEs across Australia.

1.2 The Australian Greens support reforming the Vocational Education and Training sector in light of systemic corruption and rorting within the industry. The Australian Greens make the following additional comments.

1.3 Students who were let down by the privatisation of the VET sector, and the resultant widespread rorting, should not be left financially worse off. Students who were enrolled into courses that were worthless, effectively did not exist or that they could never have been expected to complete should have their debts to the Commonwealth forgiven.

1.4 The Australian Greens are pleased to see that the committee report has come to support the establishment of an Ombudsman for the VET sector.

1.5 TAFEs are, and should always be, the backbone of the VET sector. Recognising that, and the important role that they will play in the wake of these reforms being made to the for-profit sector, TAFEs should be given greater flexibility to provide ongoing education to students whose courses are no longer available due to colleges closing and providers going out of business. A 12 month exemption from the VET Student Loans Eligible Course List and new fee caps would allow TAFEs to provide education to students who would otherwise be left in the lurch while supporting the transition to the new VET Student Loans scheme.

1.6 Arts courses, which produce graduates ready to work in Australia's creative industries, should be supported into the future. The Australian Greens note with concern that very few creative and artistic courses are in the Minister's draft VET Student Loans Eligible Course List. The Australian Greens ask that the list be amended, before the VET Student Loans Bill 2016 is enacted, to include more arts courses.

Recommendations

1.7 That the VET Student Loans Eligible Course List be amended, before the VET Student Loans Bill 2016 is enacted, to include a greater number of artistic and creative industry courses.

1.8 That TAFEs be exempted from the need to comply with the VET Student Loans Eligible Course List and fee limits for a period of 12 months.

1.9 That students who were enrolled into sham courses on false pretences have their debts forgiven by the Commonwealth.

1.10 That public money be used to support public education and TAFEs and not for-profit providers and colleges.

Senator Sarah Hanson-Young