

TAFE FOR ALL VICTORIANS

THE GREENS' PLAN TO STOP THE PRIVATISATION OF OUR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION & TRAINING SYSTEM



Everyone deserves a high quality education, no matter where they live or their economic circumstances. Recent Labor and Liberal governments have decimated our once strong public TAFE system. The Greens will restore and properly fund TAFE as the leading provider of low cost, high quality vocational education and training in Victoria.

TAFE is an essential part of our public education system. It provides quality, affordable and accessible training for all. TAFE enables people of all ages and educational backgrounds get the skills they need to secure a decent job, and ensures businesses and organisations have workers with the right skills.

Over the past 10 years, the Labor and Liberal Governments have decimated the TAFE sector. Labor opened the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system to private providers. This privatisation means public TAFEs are forced to compete with dodgy private providers who cut corners at the expense of students. The Liberals then slashed funding to TAFE. Together these actions meant funding to TAFE has dropped dramatically, resulting in courses being cut, campuses closing, educators losing their jobs, enrolments going down, and poorer quality education for students.

OUR PLAN

The Greens will put students, teachers and the public interest before private profits by stopping the privatisation for our training system.

We will:

- **Guarantee a minimum of 70% of government vocational education and training funding for TAFE institutions.**

We support TAFE teachers in their ongoing efforts to secure fairer working conditions, including fair pay and job security, so they can focus on providing excellent student education.

We also support raising the minimum qualifications for all VET teachers, minimum classroom time for students, and greater regulatory oversight of private providers to ensure they achieve high standards and all students get a quality education.

By restoring funding to TAFE we will ensure that everyone has the chance to get quality, affordable education and the skills they need to get a decent job and to have a good life.

A SYSTEM ON THE BRINK

In 2008, the Victorian Labor Government agreed with the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) to give private VET providers greater access to public funding. They forced public TAFEs to compete with private training organisations for government VET subsidies.

This led to a boom in private training courses and a budget cost blow out. The newly elected Liberal Government then slashed subsidies to VET courses, including cutting nearly \$300 million from the TAFE sector.

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In 2009, TAFEs share of publicly funded hours in Victoria was almost 78%. By 2015 it had collapsed to less than 36%, and was 42% in 2016. The number of publicly funded training hours in TAFE declined by almost 29% from 2009 to 2016, while it rose in private providers by almost 333%. Funding per hour of delivery plummeted by almost 25% in that time. The result of Labor and Liberal policies was a massive funding shift from public TAFEs to private providers, and TAFEs were expected to deliver courses with less funding.

TAFEs in Victoria are now the lowest funded of any state in Australia. Both the Labor and Liberal Governments are responsible for the decimation of TAFE. Their combined policies resulted in TAFE campus closures and mergers, hundreds of courses cut, a range of cuts to student services, and an estimated 3,000 TAFE teachers lost their jobs.

Course fees have also increased, putting pressure on students who are doing it tough as they struggle with the everyday cost of basics such as food and transport, and are concerned about accumulating more and more debt.

While the Labor government's recent announcement of a number of free TAFE courses is a welcome initiative, it does not fix the fundamental problem Labor created in the first place when it opened up public funding to flow to private providers.

Many of the private VET providers have proven to be dodgy, providing sub-standard education and few student services, while they pocket profits from public expenditure. In recent years there has been efforts to weed out the worst offenders, however, concerns remain about the quality of the educational experience under private providers.

A predominately private VET sector cannot provide the broad, affordable and accessible education and training needs of the future.

With funding for TAFE at such low levels, the public VET sector is on the brink. We must act now to save it.

STUDENTS NOT PROFITS

The Greens have always been strong advocates for the public TAFE system and public education. We will continue to fight for a strong and affordable public TAFE system regardless of who is in government.

We will stand up for 70% guaranteed funding for TAFE. We believe TAFEs are best placed to provide a quality educational experience for students.

The Greens also support raising the minimum qualifications for all VET teachers, minimum classroom time for students, and greater regulatory oversight of private providers to ensure they achieve high standards and students get a quality education.

We recognise that chronic underfunding of the TAFE sector has increased workloads on teachers. Recent EBA negotiations have made improvements and we need to ensure these and other changes are implemented into the future. When teachers have secure, well-paid employment, they can focus on education and better student outcomes.