Federal Government must crackdown on rogue private operators to restore confidence in VET



AEU

Today's decision by the Victorian Government to terminate the contracts of 18 private Vocational Education and Training (VET) providers, shows how far behind the Federal Government is in stopping the flow of taxpayer dollars to dodgy private operators, the AEU said today.

AEU Federal TAFE Secretary Pat Forward said all governments needed to invest in TAFEs and crackdown on private providers to restore confidence in the sector.

"The Victorian Government has done the right thing in terminating these contracts but this is just the start of what needs to be done to clean up the sector," Ms Forward said.

"Many of these 18 operators are still registered to deliver training with the national regulator, the Australian Skills Quality Authority.

"That means they are eligible for the taxpayer-funded VET FEE-HELP scheme, which is delivering billions of dollars to private providers.

"The Coalition actually cut $8 million from ASQA in this year's Budget, showing it has no commitment to cracking down on the profiteers who are ripping off the VET FEE-HELP system.

"VET FEE-HELP needs to be suspended while a full inquiry is held.

"Victoria led the way in the destructive privatisation of its VET sector, and is now realising the damage that has been done, and how badly confidence in the sector has been damaged.

"To restore confidence we need to ensure that 70 per cent of all funding is guaranteed to TAFEs to ensure they retain their role at the heart of the VET system.

“TAFEs should not be competing with private operators that can cut corners in search of a profit.

“But the Federal Government appears set on continuing with the privatisation agenda, hoping that yet another round of regulation can stop dodgy operators.

“Nationally, more than $2.4 billion (around 46 per cent) of government funding is now allocated contestably. More than $1.5 billion of this funding goes directly to private for-profit providers; an increase of 222 per cent since 2005.

“This does not include VET FEE-HELP funding, of which over 80 per cent is going to private providers.

“Privatisation has done nothing to increase quality or access to VET. Instead it has led to plummeting confidence in the sector, students being ripped off and private operators raking in big profits at taxpayer expense.”

Authorised by Sally Dennis, General Secretary, The State School Teachers' Union of W.A.
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