Stepping up pressure over increases in TAFE fees



The State School Teachers' Union is stepping up pressure on the major political parties to reduce TAFE fees, by targeting voters in the Wanneroo area with a new billboard.

The billboard, which is on Gnangara road in Landsdale, asks voters to back the party that backs TAFE.

SSTUWA president Pat Byrne said the TAFE system had been seriously undermined by budget cuts, skyrocketing fees and plummeting student enrolments.

"Funding for the training sector has been cut by $120 million this financial year, and fees have gone up by more than 600% for some courses over three years," she said.

"The current State Government has undermined a system that is vital to the training of a highly skilled workforce, which underpins the economy in WA."

Ms Byrne said Joondalup TAFE (previously known as West Coast Institute of Training) had $1.3 million cut from its budget in 2015.

She said the campus, like others around the state, had been hit hard by budget cuts and increasing course fees, which was having a negative effect on student numbers.

"Enrolments at Joondalup TAFE dropped by almost 200 students between 2014 and 15, and we expect when the Minister releases the figures for 2016, enrolments will have dropped again," she said.

"It's critically important for young people in the Wanneroo area to have access to affordable training, so that they can gain meaningful employment.

"It's also important for those in this area who have lost their jobs in the mining industry to have the option to retrain, so they can find a job in another industry.

"If TAFE isn't affordable for all, then we will see the unemployment and under-employment levels in the Wanneroo area rise."

Ms Byrne encouraged voters to inform themselves about the training and education policies of the major parties, and to vote for the party they believed most supported the TAFE system.

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