

## SSTUWA welcomes TAFE fee freeze as a positive first step



The State School Teachers' Union has welcomed the State Government's decision to freeze TAFE fees, but warned more action was necessary to restore the system.

The government has announced it will honour an election commitment that TAFE fees will not increase in its first term of government.

SSTUWA president Pat Byrne said the move was a step in the right direction.

"The four-year freeze on fees is a positive step to make TAFE more affordable and accessible at a time when the state's economy needs trained and skilled staff in a diverse range of jobs," she said.

"The former Barnett government effectively gutted the TAFE system, with fees in some courses increasing by more than 600% over two years and huge funding cuts to the training budget.

"This led to enrolments plummeting by over 11,000 between 2013 and 2016.

"We are pleased the McGowan government has taken a first step to address this situation, but more needs to be done."

Ms Byrne said the union was calling for course fees to be reduced to encourage more students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to attend TAFE.

"TAFE needs to be accessible to all, but with the enormous fee increases we've seen over the last few years, it remains out of reach for many," she said.

"While the SSTUWA recognises the State Government is confronting an extremely challenging budget situation, we believe reducing TAFE fees is crucial to the state's economic future."

Ms Byrne said the union would lobby the government to reduce fees over the longer term.