Low graduation rate of for-profit training college shows crisis in vocational education



The extremely low graduation rate of for-profit training provider Evocca, exposed in media reports this morning, shows the dangerous consequences of privatising vocational training, the AEU said today.

AEU Federal TAFE Secretary Pat Forward said that for-profit training providers were not being held accountable for the huge levels of government subsidy they received.

“Evocca’s low graduation rates show that far too many students are not completing courses, either because the training is of low quality, or because they should never have been enrolled in the course,” Ms Forward said.

Ms Forward said that Evocca was a major provider of training which had received $262 million in Federal Government VET FEE HELP payments to provide training over the last two years.

“Taxpayers are subsidising these for-profit providers yet there is no guarantee that they are delivering training of an appropriate standard.”

“Privatisation of the sector has led to a rise in low-quality operators who are making big profits from the public purse, and reducing the quality of training being provided to young Australians.”

“Private providers are not required to provide a minimum number of hours, and are able to sub-contract their training to unregistered third parties.”

“That means students are burdening themselves with FEE HELP debts, which can be over $10,000, and getting nothing in return.”

“We are also concerned at reports that Evocca is marketing itself to disadvantaged students who may never be able to complete the course they are signed up for.”

“Last year’s annual report by the Australian Skills Quality Authority – the regulator of the sector – found that 75 per cent of private Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) initially failed to meet minimum standards relating to training and assessment.

“This is an indictment on the system and raises huge questions about the quality of training being provided. Private providers are not competing with TAFEs on quality; they are cutting costs and marketing themselves aggressively to potential students.

“The Federal Government must clean up loopholes in the system which allow RTOs to subcontract delivery of training to secondary providers, many of whom are not even registered with the appropriate bodies.

“Government funding to private RTOS must be capped until certainty and quality are restored to the system and state governments must restore funding to TAFE to ensure we maintain a strong public vocational education system which remains accessible to all Australians.”

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