# VetiS in a state of flux over funding, administration issues

Uncertainty surrounds the future of vocational education and training in schools (VETiS -not to be confused with the private provider also using the same name) as about $17 million in funding has only been guaranteed for 2015.

As part of the targeted initiatives of the student centred-funding model, the promised VETiS funding was finally declared to schools on 4 December last year, leading to more budget changes for principals and schools.

An amount of $16.97 million was allocated by treasury for VETiS but only for this year.

This figure only covers Year 11 and 12 students only studying vocational education training (VET) subjects.

While student numbers and funding will be reconciled after February's census has been completed, serious concerns have been raised about the lack of guaranteed and continual funding for a state wide initiative that has seen significant growth in student participation over the past few years and is continuing to grow.

With declining budgets, schools are being "encouraged" to use cheaper alternatives to provide VET in schools through auspicing arrangements with private providers. However, schools need to thoroughly investigate the private providers they engage with.

Schools, students and parents need to be aware of the findings of the 2014 VETiS Strategic Audit which concluded that "Auspice/partnership delivery arrangements for VETiS were found to pose the highest risk to RTOs (Registered Training Organisations), VET qualifications, schools, students and ultimately workplaces."

As recently as February 2015 about 10,000 certificates were recalled from private providers in Victoria whose courses were not delivered correctly, leaving thousands of students with useless certificates, wasted time and money.

In November last year the Senate ordered an inquiry into the operation, regulation and funding of private VET providers.

Greens Party Senator Lee Rhiannon said it was sensible to evaluate the operation of current VET funding arrangements to determine whether the system was working.

"This inquiry is urgently needed as governments across Australia are ripping hundreds of millions of dollars out of TAFE funding - leading to hundreds of job losses and massive fee increases for students," she said.

"At the same time, state and federal governments are collectively delivering more than $1.3 billion in public funding to private education providers.

"The operation and practices of a number of these providers have been called into question following allegations of the rorting of public funds and underhanded marketing tactics that prey on vulnerable students.

"This needs to be investigated."

VETiS teachers and coordinators are encouraged to view two important documents:

- VETiS Strategic Industry Audit Report 2014
- Preparing Secondary Students for Work

They are also urged to monitor the workload and funds associated with delivering VETiS.

If there are any issues members are advised to speak with their local union representative in the first instance, before calling Member Assist on (08) 9210 6060 / 1800 106 683 or contacting their District Organiser.

The SSTUWA established a VETiS working party in 2014 and those interested in becoming a member should contact the Union.

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