Campaign launched to save TAFE system

The State School Teachers' Union has today officially launched a new campaign in an attempt to save the TAFE system.

TAFE is currently under threat due to the government significantly cutting its funding, which has led to skyrocketing course fees, staff cuts and course closures.

The SSTUWA said the cuts had also led to a big fall in student numbers, as fewer young people could afford to go to TAFE.

"Over the last three years, the government has cut funding to TAFE by almost 20%, or $110 million dollars," said SSTUWA Vice President Samantha Schofield.

"This has led to fees increasing in some courses by more than 600% in two years, putting technical and further education out of reach for many young West Australians.

"The figures show student numbers dropped by 7,000 in 2014 and we estimate they have dropped by another 7,000 this year."

Miss Schofield said it was nonsensical for the government to be making TAFE harder to access at a time when the mining boom was winding down and there was a need for young people to acquire new skills for other industries.

"The cuts to TAFE are bad for students, employers, the community and the economy," she said.

"Businesses have come to depend on TAFE providing quality training and skills to young people to assist them in becoming employable.

"But instead of supporting businesses and students, the government is attacking TAFE and jeopardising the futures of thousands of young West Australians at a time when youth unemployment has already risen above 10%."

Miss Schofield said the union had launched the TAFE Works campaign, which included YouTube videos, online and radio advertising in a bid to convince the government that the TAFE system was worth saving.

"We believe it's not too late to save TAFE, and we are calling on the Training Minister Liza Harvey to reinstate the funding for TAFE so that course fees can be restored to their previous levels," she said.

"And if the Minister doesn't have the power or the will to do it, then we call on the Premier to step in and put this right."

More details on the campaign can be found at: www.tafeworks.com.au

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