SSTUWA welcomes cheaper TAFE fees but warns not enough



The State School Teachers' Union (SSTUWA) has welcomed the McGowan Government's reduction in TAFE fees but has warned more needs to be done.

The union acknowledges today's announcement as an encouraging first step but urges the state government to cut more fees in order to restore TAFE following years of sustained attacks by state and federal coalition governments.

SSTUWA President Pat Byrne said slashing a limited number of TAFE fees is a welcome first step but it is not enough.

"Much more needs to be done after years of outright hostility to TAFE from coalition governments at both a state and federal level," Ms Byrne said.

"The former Barnett Government came close to destroying TAFE with massive increases in course fees, endless reorganisations of TAFE and imposition of staggering levels of red tape, which have left lecturers and staff facing huge workloads and having to spend less time actually educating students.

"Not to mention the thousands of potential TAFE students who have not been able to go to TAFE because they simply cannot afford it.

"We welcome this step by the McGowan Government to address the issues TAFE faces, and we hope the sector will now face an influx of new students.

"The state government needs to ensure the workforce is able to cope and must address the workload issues created by the Barnett Government's endless cuts, many of which were overseen by current WA Liberal Leader Liza Harvey in her role as Minister for Training.

"Sadly, the legacy of the Barnett Government for education was terrible. A litany of cuts and added workload which has left schools and TAFE struggling.

"We now need the McGowan Government to continue what it has started and create a legacy of its own. One that rebuilds a fully funded, properly staffed and resourced public education centre at both the school and TAFE level.

“No leader goes into the history books for creating surpluses, they get remembered for having a positive and lasting impact on the community around them.

“Recent actions around safety in schools, increased bandwidth for schools, additional finance for school maintenance and now TAFE fees are encouraging moves from the McGowan Government.

“The SSTUWA stands ready to help develop policies which will further enhance the quality of public education.

“Given the clear hostility at both a state and federal level from the Coalition to state education we hope the McGowan Government builds on the work so far and makes a clear commitment to fully funded public education,” SSTUWA President Pat Byrne said.

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