AEU welcomes Labor's TAFE funding guarantee

The Australian Education Union (AEU) welcomes Labor's commitment to guarantee at least 70 per cent of all public funding for vocational education to TAFE.

AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe said that Labor's commitment acknowledged TAFE's crucial role in helping Australia address its persistently high youth unemployment rate and its national skills gap.

"Labor's commitment to guarantee at least 70 per cent of all public funding for vocational education to TAFE, if it wins government at the next election, acknowledges TAFE's central role in addressing systemic inequality, the critical skills crisis and persistent high youth unemployment in Australia," she said.

"With a national skills gap and 200,000 fewer apprentices than when the Federal Coalition came to government, TAFE is more important than ever."

Ms Haythorpe said this was underlined by new National Centre for Vocational Education Research figures, which show total apprentice and trainee commencements decreasing by 23 per cent compared to the same time last year.

"TAFE has always been fundamentally important as Australia's public provider of vocational education, and it must be the primary choice of government to help rebuild the economy and provide people with the skills needed for their future," she said.

"The AEU calls on Prime Minister Scott Morrison to guarantee at least 70 per cent of total government funding to TAFE, to provide social and economic opportunities for our nation post-COVID.

"Generations of Australians have successfully gained high-quality qualifications through TAFE.

"TAFE is trusted by the community, as demonstrated by a 2020 national survey in which 94 per cent of Australians said they wanted to see more federal funding for TAFE.

"TAFE has changed the lives of millions of Australians by offering a clear pathway from school to work.

"Today, it stands ready to help millions more young people and older workers seeking to retrain, reskill and rebuild with TAFE by offering an unmatched range of nationally accredited qualifications and experienced teachers.

"However, TAFE must be supported to do so by government.

"We will engage in campaign actions in the lead up to the next federal election to ensure that TAFE is at the centre of funding and policy commitments for the next federal government of Australia. It's time to #RebuildwithTAFE."

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