

TAFE reimaged as a flexible vocational education provider, responsive to local needs

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Groups cognisant of the critical role TAFE plays in the strength of local communities discussed concepts to rejuvenate and modernise the public educator provider at a roundtable hosted by Federation.

The stakeholders are keen to see a new policy framework introduced that secures the TAFE system as the anchor of the vocational education sector, and involves local communities, regions and industries.

Over 30 years, the TAFE system has suffered from damaging government policies at both state and national levels, but the roundtable participants were enthusiastic about the prospect of fortunes shifting in TAFE's favour.

Dr Don Zoellner (Charles Darwin University) made the point that different policy choices would result in different outcomes.

The meeting noted Labor's pledges to conduct a national inquiry into post-secondary education, and guarantee at least two-thirds of vocational education and training funding by state and federal governments would be provided to TAFE.



Presenters called for a TAFE system that is flexible enough to meet the needs of each community.

Professor Leesa Wheelahan (University of Toronto) proposed a model where TAFE campuses work with local partners to meet their community's needs.

Shelley Mallett (Brotherhood of St Laurence Research and Policy Centre director) also favoured a TAFE system that responds to local circumstances. She advocates for a system that give students greater voice and agency.

Professor John Buchanan (University of Sydney) advised more organisations to be involved in the decision-making processes associated with TAFE's future.

Guests included federal shadow minister for skills and apprenticeships Senator Doug Cameron, state shadow minister for TAFE and skills Prue Car and TAFE management.

Morrison BUDGET offers nothing to revitalise TAFE

The Federal Government's April Budget proposes nothing that will revitalise the TAFE sector — federal Treasurer Josh Frydenberg did not even utter the word TAFE in his Budget speech.

Federation President Maurie Mulheron said: "If Morrison and Frydenberg think this is a fair go for young Australians seeking training, then its time for them to go."

Federal Labor is committed to ensuring at least two thirds of all government funding for vocational education will go to TAFE.

For more on this subject [click here](#).

— Kerri Carr