

Vocational learning opportunities reduced for many under funding model

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Data presented to a recent roundtable shows why government funding of the vocational education and training sector is best directed towards TAFE.

Communities that were meant to benefit from the marketisation of government funding for the sector — where TAFE has had to compete against other providers — have actually lost out, Dr Don Zoellner (Charles Darwin University) told the event, hosted by Federation.

In spite of promises, marketisation is not serving the most socio-economically disadvantaged, Dr Zoellner said. In NSW (2013-2017), the two most disadvantaged quintiles lost 2300 students, while there was an increase of 2700 in the most advantaged.

He also showcased how non-city residents have significantly lost out on vocational education opportunities since marketisation of the sector.

Private providers have generally set up in the cities.



Headquarters of registered training organisations in NSW*

Sydney	1009	88.4%
Inner regional	114	10%
Outer regional	19	1.7%
Remote or very remote	0	0%

*Includes TAFE, non-profit and for-profit providers

Dr Zoellner noted 892 (91.8 per cent) of for-profit registered training organisations in NSW are located in Sydney, 80 (8.2 per cent) in inner regional locations and 10 (1 per cent) in outer regional locations.

He also showed National Centre for Vocational Education Research data illustrating the number of government-funded vocational education students has dropped in all regions, but the drop in the participation rate in outer regional, remote and very remote jurisdictions is staggering.

Drop in government-funded students in NSW (2004-2017)

Major cities	16,1000	5.7 %
Inner regional	11,200	9.3%

Outer regional	41,000	51.5%
Remote	4800	55.8%
Very remote	3000	18.8%

"When you introduce markets you essentially withdraw from regional and remote training," Dr Zoellner said.

— Kerri Carr