

TAFE award talks to be informed by member opinions

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TAFE members will be surveyed in workplaces on a range of industrial and professional issues as Federation begins planning for the next enterprise bargaining agreement, Annual Conference determined on Monday.

The union will also research the impact of contestable funding on the TAFE system — including permanent and temporary staffing levels, the loss of qualified teaching positions, the collapse in student numbers, course cuts and existing ratios — in preparation for the negotiations with NSW TAFE.

“The next agreement will provide an opportunity to galvanise the TAFE teaching workforce around a number of fundamental matters including teaching qualifications, careers pathways, permanency, professional learning, change consultation, staffing ratios and workload,” Annual Conference delegates declare in the TAFE decision.

They note that “since coming under the Fair Work Act, TAFE has suffered the worst of both state and federal restrictions in bargaining”.

“TAFE management has demonstrated an unwillingness to take into account the increasingly complex nature of teachers’ work when negotiating enterprise agreements and has sought to suppress the salaries of TAFE teachers to reflect the contestable funding model,” the TAFE resolution continues.

The Annual Conference decision on salaries asserts: “Federation has an absolute commitment to real growth in salaries and to protect and improve the working conditions of all teachers.”

The current TAFE agreement expires in February 2020.

— Kerri Carr

