

## Federation to build Stop TAFE Cuts campaign

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Federation resolved at Annual Conference to build the national Stop TAFE Cuts campaign and to build cross-party political support to commit to a 70 per cent funding guarantee for TAFE.

“We will resource it well and make this the national issue that we have made Gonski,” Federation President Maurie Mulheron told delegates today (Monday).

This follows an announcement in May this year by the Federal ALP to guarantee that at least two-thirds of public funding will go directly to TAFE under a future ALP federal government. “Between the two major parties, there is now a major difference for the first time in many years,” Mr Mulheron said.

Federation will now build capacity in its activist base with a major recruitment drive and provide intensive community-based training for TAFE activists, he said.

In several states, TAFE enrolment share has now plummeted to 30 per cent. Nationally, TAFE enrolment share is now only 50 per cent. In several states, 80 per cent of VET-in-schools programmes are being conducted by for-profit providers. NSW has largely been “kept from the worst of what has happened in other states”, due to hard work and strategic campaigning by Federation and other activists, Mr Mulheron said.



This year’s Federal budget will result in a funding cut to the vocational education and training sector by 9.7 per cent in real terms from 2016-17 to 2017-18 and across the forward estimate years by 2.1 per cent in real terms from 2017-18 to 2020-2021, Australian Education Union (AEU) Deputy Federal Secretary Pat Forward told Federation Annual Conference today.

TAFE is in crisis, with funding has fallen by 42 per cent since 1997 and will be further cut by nearly 10 per cent over the next year, she told delegates at the conference. “TAFE has been in a hell of a lot of trouble and remains in a hell of a lot of trouble,” she said.

The whole sector is “damaged”, with enrolments falling by 16 per cent last year, she told conference.

Federation resolved to continue to build the Stop TAFE Cuts campaign with the AEU and Unions NSW through 2017 and into 2018. The campaign will set out to expose the damaging effects of private provision and the impact of private for-profit providers.

It will also seek to build and maintain alliances with community and industry organisations and employers and provide TAFE campaign updates, with key staff in high schools included. The campaign will also aim to rebuild the teaching profession in TAFE and defend and maintain TAFE’s role as the leading provider of TAFE-delivered vocational education and training (TVET) courses in public schools.

Ms Forward said key activities for the Stop TAFE Cuts campaign over the next year will include public debate about the importance and significance of TAFE and public vocational education, plus roundtables in Sydney and Melbourne.

The AEU also hold its TAFE conference in October this year. Public policy will be further developed in vocational education and alliances expanded with educational bodies such as the John Cain Foundation and

the Whitlam Institute.

Ms Forward said TAFE funding has fallen by 42 per cent since 1997 and by 24 per cent since 2008. The main impacts on TAFE have been the loss of market share and the status of a minority provider in two states and are close to a minority nationally 30 per cent in Queensland, 35 per cent in Victoria and only 50 per cent nationally.

In terms of Corrective Services, Federation Annual Conference also condemned the NSW government for its outsourcing of education provision in NSW prisons. Last year, 138 teachers in prisons lost their jobs due to privatisation of teaching in NSW prisons, Mr Mulheron told the conference. "We are still alive though," said Mr Mulheron. "Twenty teachers still work in the system and remain in the sector. We will take this campaign to the next state election and hold this government to account to rebuild public provisions in gaols."

Federation resolved to continue to campaign to ensure that access to public education is restored across the NSW prison system.