

**AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF
GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**

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**TAFE: MORRISON NEEDS TO PUT HIS MONEY WHERE HIS
MOUTH IS**

[Prime Minister Morrison is trumpeting economic recovery plans based on a \\$1.2 billion wage subsidy for apprentices and skilled migration proposals.](#)

With immigration stalled and high levels of underemployment and unemployment, Mr Morrison's expansion of the apprentice wage subsidy scheme will take to \$5.2 billion the amount spent on apprentices since the pandemic took hold a year ago.

In three separate instalments since March last year, the government has already committed \$4 billion towards subsidising the wages of up to 280,000 apprentices and trainees.

The last instalment was in the October budget, when another \$1.2 billion was committed to pay half the wages of 100,000 apprentices for a year, capped at \$7000 a quarter.

Morrison is however, merely playing catchup and pouring money into an inefficient, corrupt and failing privatised system of profiteering tertiary institutions. The growth of this sector has paralleled the gutting of the Australian manufacturing sector by the Hawke/Keating Labor and later Howard and Abbott Coalition governments since the 1980s.

Morrison is merely recognising the inevitable: Australia is facing a skills crisis. And it is more than time that both Federal and State governments put their money where it is needed – in our public TAFE sector.

The AEU is correct when its President, Correna Haythorpe says that the Federation Government must 'Rebuild with TAFE' if a positive future is going to be created for all young tradespeople. The following is an excerpt from the AEU Press Release of 17 February 2021.

The Australian Education Union (AEU) is calling on governments across the country to make TAFE their first priority as Australia looks to rebuild from the COVID-19 pandemic and tackle the country's skills crisis.

The AEU launched the 'Rebuild with TAFE' campaign in Canberra today and used the launch to call on governments to properly fund TAFE and maximise the system's potential to assist with the economic re-build, re-skill and upskill workers, address the apprentice shortage, reduce youth unemployment and provide career pathways for all Australians.

AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe said the TAFE system is a hugely valuable asset that is being neglected by the Federal Government and many state governments.

"We're launching the Rebuild with TAFE campaign because we're sick of governments and politicians putting TAFE last and letting a critical part of Australia's economy and education sector waste away."

The Federal Government has cut \$3 billion in funding from vocational education since 2013 and pursued a relentless privatisation agenda, increasing the amount of low quality private training providers at great cost to TAFE.

"All over Australia TAFE institutes are struggling with the impact of these funding cuts and poor policy decisions resulting in the loss of jobs and the cutting of courses. This is disastrous for the communities they support and must be addressed urgently."

Australia is facing many challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic and as the public provider of vocational education TAFE is best placed to address those challenges if it is properly funded and supported.

"Australia currently has a shortage of 200,000 apprentices while at the same time we also have plenty of Australians who are out of work. Rebuilding with TAFE will help our unemployed to re-train, upskill or get an apprenticeship and gain meaningful employment.

"The National Cabinet itself has determined that skills is one of the six key priorities for the government, yet the Federal Government won't properly fund the public provider of vocational education. That doesn't make any sense."

TAFE is responsible for \$92.5 billion per year in annual economic benefit to Australia, 16 times more than the annual cost to maintain the provider, but these longstanding and ongoing benefits would be permanently lost if governments fail to rebuild with TAFE.

A 2020 national survey found that 94 per cent of Australians want to see more federal funding for TAFE and research has consistently found that Australians see TAFE as a vital part of Australia's education sector that can provide career, social and economic opportunities for people from a wide range of backgrounds.

Proper funding for TAFE will increase available courses, increase the number of campuses, and ensure high quality vocational education that will improve the lives of millions of Australians.

“Australians trust and support TAFE and know the system can help re-build our economy, but we need our governments and politicians to show that same support by investing in TAFE to rebuild Australia socially and economically.

“TAFE touches so many aspects of our society and economy from the arts and fashion, to construction, health and early childhood education, to opportunities for young people in rural and regional areas, and we cannot afford to lose it.

“As we head to the next federal election, all political parties must commit to rebuilding with TAFE and we’ll be campaigning to make sure they understand how important this issue is to our communities.”

<https://www.aeuvic.asn.au/federal-govt-must-%E2%80%98rebuild-tafe%E2%80%99-create-positive-future-all>

17 February 2021

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