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## **Inquiry into Technical and Further Education in Australia by the Senate Education Employment References Committee**

### **a) Role played by TAFE.**

The method that was used in the seventies was that there was total integration between the secondary schools (Technical) and TAFE. With the demise of large Government run organisations and Technical Schools this arrangement stopped.

We also lost that other linkage to trades within the schools as a result having no technical schools in the new era. The trade teacher was expected to not only teach a trade subject but also some academic teaching as well thus eliminating the person that had the trade knowledge from the equation and instead, having a person that may have only very rudimentary knowledge and skill in the trade area.

The above was what used to happen..... today there seems to be little or no interaction as in the past, thus gaining any student with a trade interest little to no opportunity to be exposed to that trade in a meaningful way prior to making a career choice.

In recent times I had the opportunity to see the classroom activity in a secondary school where the students were using hacksaws and files. Out of the 20-odd students engaged in this activity – in sight of their teacher – none of those students were using the equipment in the correct manner. This to me, demonstrates how lax the teaching process has become and how disengaged the students are.

This flies in the face of the fact that there are many purposeful activities (i.e. RACV Energy Breakthrough) available to schools today to give students and the schools opportunities to give their students hands on, practical activities that the schools identify for those students that have a bent for practical activity as opposed to academic.

### **b) The effects of a competitive training market on TAFE**

If it means the number of students doing a particular course that is popular but does not have the social need as compared to engine reconditioning - because without engine reconditioning, society would be disadvantaged in the fluency and cost of keeping all motor driven machines and vehicles operative. This has a

great disadvantage in keeping all automotive trades viable within the TAFE system as they become 'thin market's.

- c) What public funding is adequate to ensure TAFEs remain in a strong and sustainable position to carry out their aims

As the Asian market is moving to become more reliant on vehicles, the cost to continue running these 'thin market' courses could be off-set by engaging the Asian market in the training needs of the automotive industry that they are transitioning into – both in long and short term courses. Thus taking the reliance away from total government support.

More innovation in the process of gaining access to equipment and machinery thru joint ventures with industry.

- d) What factors affect the affordability and accessibility of TAFE to students and business
  - Lack of innovation in training methods
  - More engagement with individual businesses and their staff to eliminate students having to travel to metropolitan campuses
  - Businesses cannot afford to lose apprentices for large block periods of time. In previous times, apprentices did their schooling at TAFE at night – on their own time.
- e) Different mechanisms used by state governments to allocate funding
  - Funding should be relative to the services needed by society i.e. necessity rather than popularity
  - It should be quality not quantity
- f) The application and effect of additional charges to TAFE students
  - High course costs drive students away. Many of these students do not have an excess of money to throw around – especially by time country students travel to Melbourne and pay board for the week.

#### **Additional Information for consideration**

Since the early 90s, the Engine Reconditioning Association of Victoria have worked diligently as a committee to maintain the quality of the training package i.e. competencies that are used to train their apprentices by various TAFEs – but mainly Kangan. The apprentices that historically have attended Kangan for Engine Reconditioning training have come from Northern Territory, South Australia, Tasmania and of course, Victoria.

In 2011 the Engine Reconditioners Association of Victoria (ERAV) was approached by Auto Skills Australia (ASA) to again assist in the rewriting of the competencies used in the training of these apprentices. An ERAV

member worked with ASA for some 3 and a bit weeks over many long days, including work on weekends, to achieve the result desired by ASA – i.e. if the competencies were completed by the desired date by ASA, these new competencies would be implemented by Kangan and all other RTOs training engine reconditioning apprentices in 2013.

*\*\*\* REFER to attached email from ASA which sets out a timeline from 2011 to current.*

Suffice to say, this process is ongoing with all participants – Kangan, ASA and all regulatory authorities that govern the process of ratifying these competencies – playing a childish blame game. And all the while, the current and prospective ongoing apprentices are suffering as a result and being trained using a hotch potch of competencies some of which don't even fit with our industry.

This summary is only a very small snapshot of the time and money that has been wasted; highlighting the fact that when the competencies were first written I was led to believe that somebody was being paid upwards of \$1000 an hour to edit these competencies only to be told in 2013 that the competencies had to be streamlined. After all this money had been spent!

In 2011 course number was AUR30605 and it has been changed again to an unknown number.

If one was to go to [www.training.gov.au](http://www.training.gov.au) and spend some time, you could compare the competencies form AUR 30605 to the AUR 31312 to see the robustness of content that has now been applied to these competencies but has still not been implemented.