



Committee Secretariat
National Enquiry into TAFE
Parliament House
Canberra, Australia

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To the Committee,

The Australasian College of Medical Sciences and Research (**ACMSR**) is a professional industry body whose members consist of eminent medical scientists, University lecturers, VET(TAFE) educators, pathologists, medical technical officers/technicians, mortuary technicians and pathology collectors/phlebotomists in NSW.

We have strong relationships with the Australian Association of Clinical Biochemists (AACB), the Australian College of Microbiology (ASM), the NSW Histotechnology Group, the TAFE Science Teachers Network and the Australasian and New Zealand Forensic Science Society (ANZFSS). Collectively our members cover all of the above personnel working in public hospitals, private diagnostic pathology laboratories, research institutes/organisations, forensic services, Universities and VET institutions.

We have an affiliated Branch of the ACMSR in Taiwan and in 2013 we hope to have a Branch in Shanghai.

Research in our industry has shown that by 2016 there will be a 50% shortage of trained personnel in the area of medical laboratory science – due mainly to an ageing population, greater medical and geriatric need for diagnostics laboratory tests and the inability for the Universities to attract and maintain students studying for medical laboratory science.

TAFENSW (and its predecessors) have graduated over ten thousand (10,000) medical technical officers/technicians **since 1970**. In fact, in NSW, we have the greatest proportion of appropriately employed TO/technicians in Australia due in part historically and also through the advent of the National Training Packages. The



'Diploma of Laboratory Technology (Specialising in Pathology Techniques)

was developed by TAFENSW and is now part of the national Training Package Structure. No private provider/RTO has ever shown any interest to carry out such a course as the infrastructure/maintenance of simulation laboratories is challenging and little profit can be made. Even the University community attests to that fact.

Furthermore some 37% (at its peak) of graduates of the Diploma Course have had/have the opportunity to continue their studies (and add to their training and industry) higher academic qualifications to PhD level. Our members can validate this claim.

The Mortuary Theatre courses were introduced by TAFENSW in 1989. In that time we have seen appropriate qualifications/validation been given to a section (Forensic) of the industry which the general public would rather know it's there but not publicly speaks about it. Only TAFENSW offers the opportunity to **all** prospective students in this area; the other states either do not offer these (Mortuary Theatre) courses in the public domain anymore or they are offered at greatly inflated fees. In the other States, such courses have been abandoned for a variety of reasons.

The ACMSR has seen that since TAFENSW offered the 'phlebotomist' courses (from 2005), the quality, dedication and opportunities learned by the graduates during the 26 week courses have far outweighed those given by the private RTOs/Institutions, who occupy their students for a shorter period (2 Day courses) and at greater costs.

The ACMSR was a contributor in October, 2011 to the '*Vocational Education and Training Reform: Smart and Skilled*' and it was reported there by all participants including private RTO/providers that TAFENSW was and is the principal provider in NSW and should not be affected.

The ACMSR is appreciative that Governments must work within economic challenges/constraints; but to attack and withdraw funds in the form of extreme



cutbacks from an ICONIC institution that has served and still serves the people of NSW (albeit with extreme difficulties) would be DISASTROUS to so many industries including ours.

The ACMSR has observed regrettably what has happened to the medical laboratory/pathology industry in the other states when the public provider of training has chosen to abandon the smaller (in numbers) but just as important courses.

TAFENSW has the infrastructure for the medical laboratory/pathology courses and others (albeit a little run down) but once removed, it will never be reinstated. The industry will be forced to go overseas to alleviate the shortfall in personnel.

Surely this can't be good for the premier state of NSW nor for Australia.

The ACMSR respectfully requests the Committee to reconsider the planned enormous cuts to TAFE (and possibly to NSW) with a view to the continuance of the fine work undertaken for so long to the medical laboratory/diagnostic /pathology industry.

Should you wish any further information, I shall be most happy and willing to oblige.

Yours respectfully,

26/3/2013

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