



Committee Secretary
House of Representatives Standing Committee on
Education and Employment
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
AUSTRALIA

Submission Number: 20
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Dear Secretary

RE: Inquiry into the role of Technical and Further Education (TAFE) system and its operation

The Queensland Fitness, Sport and Recreation Skills Alliance (the Skills Alliance) is a not-for-profit Industry Skills Body (ISB) that leads and influences workforce development in Queensland's fitness, sport and recreation industries.

Our aim is to assist industry to achieve workforce development related outcomes by serving as a forum for industry stakeholders to identify issues and associated solutions to industry workforce development challenges, and by undertaking workforce development related projects and offering enterprise and sector/industry level products, services and advice.

In relation to the terms of reference of the Parliamentary Committee's Inquiry into the role of TAFE and its operation, Skills Alliance would like to make the following comments:

Skills Alliance contends that an effective and efficient market needs the features of both large government (public) providers and small private providers to adequately address the diverse needs of industry (employers, employees, and students). The features that are particularly important to a fully functioning market include:

- Having full service providers across all of our industry sectors and all qualification levels
- Having providers that maintain a benchmark for quality, with embedded and long standing quality of teaching and learning
- Being able to provide universal access across regions and cohorts
- Having the capacity to service expensive programs, learning resources and technology on specialist areas and their markets

While some private providers may exhibit some of the above features, Skills Alliance believes that only TAFE can provide the above features and characteristics in a consistent and controllable manner.

In addition, there are some important ongoing functions of TAFE that will be difficult to replace in the private sector. Government (TAFE) providers are enduring and provide the community and government with institutions that have a low risk of failure. This is critical where TAFE Institutes are seen to be part of the social and economic capability of a particular region.

TAFE, as the public provider, has a role in addressing thin markets in particular locations where specific skilling needs may not be addressed otherwise.

As an industry where training and activities for some sectors (e.g. outdoor recreation sector) is characterised by high costs, and high risks, in most instances TAFE has been a valued provider of training. However, in order for TAFE to be a real player in the training market, it must be price competitive and offer flexible and industry specific delivery of training. In many instances this is not the case and has the ability to impact the local market considerably.

TAFE provides the ability to deliver responsively on Government priorities, particularly rapid responses to localised skill shortages and retrenchments. Skills Alliance has worked with TAFE to implement and deliver on Commonwealth and State government policies and priorities. The resultant positive outcomes for industry have created very long standing legacies.

Skills Alliance recognises the role TAFE has played in supporting social objectives e.g. increasing participation of disadvantaged groups. Skills Alliance believes TAFE is ideally placed to deliver integrated arrangements with schools and higher education providers, and to develop links with schools and universities to provide a 'lifelong' learning pathways

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the *Inquiry into the role of Technical and Further Education (TAFE) system and its operation*.

Yours sincerely

Sighted and signed 17 April 2013

Judy Higgins
General Manager