

From:
To: [Committee, EE \(REPS\)](#)
Subject: submission: Inquiry into the Perceptions and Status of Vocational Education and Training
Date: Wednesday, 4 January 2023 10:32:16 PM

Much on the subject seems to be a bit like young adult fiction. Authors that write books about a subject that they are incapable of comprehending. Much of the academic work comes from University professors not T.A.F.E. educators because they don't publish long boring philosophical musings about the subject. It's also used as an opportunity for self-aggrandizement by the university educated that distorts decision maker understanding. As someone that faces insurmountable barriers to attaining qualifications in either field I feel most qualified to answer to this inquiry.

Colleges in particular bear the bulk of the blame for students that hold poor perceptions of the trade schools due to various factors. University attendance and completion are used as metrics in follow up studies used to rank school and teacher quality. The teachers themselves are university educated. They indirectly receive benefit from promoting university education in terms of wages, prestige and continued employability. This is why schools are the worst suited environments for careers counseling.

The expectations of parents regarding the particular world view they wish their children to have. The necessity of this in order to be socially compatible with the counter-revolutionary *Haute Couture*. The artist known as Grimes recently had an interesting exhibition on the *Communist Manifesto* that drew the audience to reflect on how the richest man in the world might understand it. Ron Hitler-Barassi of T.I.S.M. also recently made a similar point.¹ The contradiction of the great self-injurious mission of many parents and middle-class colleges is to bolster the ranks of the counter-revolutionaries against their own interests.

Teenagers do not come into contact with highly skilled tradespeople or observe their work. Most people will infrequently come into contact with a low skilled trades person such as a qualified electrician, plumber or automobile mechanic. The job, as it is understood, is very rudimentary work such as replacing a light fitting, unclogging a toilet or changing oil. If you have ever smelt the toolbox of a plumber that works at a sewerage treatment plant -and been told that they don't even notice the smell anymore- it is even more revolting. Assuming this shortage of information is prevalent, students make their choices out of ignorance. Students are less likely to be deterred from primary school teaching that includes similar job hazards such as tying wet shoelaces. The scope of professions and potential for career advancement is poorly communicated.

A notable mention regarding career progression is the Elevator Technician. It is the highest level of career progression that an Electrician can attain. An electrician must work their way through rudimentary tasks to commissioning industrial and commercial systems, fire, security and automation roles before being capable of programming the scheduling and security systems integrated into modern elevator systems. The more competitive large employers only select from students that have straight As in calculus. Plumbers perform a variety of roles with exotic gasworks such as hospital medical gas systems being the most advanced work. Many Australian websites aimed at attracting talent are obviously 'professionally' written by H.R. university graduates focusing heavily on sanitation work. Everytime I clog the office toilet I thank God that I am not a plumber. Here's a good tell, "The role requires physical strength to handle heavy equipment and machinery."² An informed and well written lead,

"The plumbing industry can suffer from the assumption that a day on the job is all about unblocking drains and clogged toilets.

On the contrary, today's plumbers know that these jobs make up a tiny proportion of the work they do and the skills they offer.

In fact, there are countless other jobs for plumbers extending to a wide range of industries. It's a thriving trade that offers different and rewarding work every day and will do so for years to come."³

There is an overemphasis on workplace safety in the T.A.F.E. brochures.⁴ They need better leads and descriptions of the job roles. These pages are intended to primarily attract young students that have not thoroughly considered the trade. Looking at the course list, You will be exposed to asbestos, fall off a building, fall off a building, do something dangerous, do something dangerous, be exposed to hazardous materials, do something dangerous, do something dangerous, handle tools and plumbing materials that is also dangerous, cut sheet metal, fall off a roof and provide First Aid. So you've lost students that were considering a trade. At least in the anachronistically named plumbing trade, there is need for a little rebranding as fluid conveyance specialists (only some of it is poo!) If it needs to move through a pipe then it's plumbing.

Now compare that to a university degree such as General Practice or teaching. The only form of career progression or variety possible is moving to a bigger city. Doing the same thing day in day out, writing repeats, obeying practice guidelines that you'll never write, ticking off marking templates, having no real freedom or choice in how service is delivered. Also handling poo. For reasons previously mentioned, rectal exams and stool samples are never in the brochure for university courses but always dominate the plumbing courses. In this course you will learn how to inflate colons and feel and look for disease inside old men's anuses. Not in the brochure. Digging ditches by hand in the rain or wading through industrial waste? That's environmental science.

The information is sub-par and lacks a broad scope. Young people falsely see themselves as having endless possibilities and a limitless set of doors open to them. A glutton of choices. A powerful inhibitor of their behavior is the sense that they could make choices or plans that close many doors or lock them into a particular course that is difficult to change. I speak of the fence sitters not those already decided. They diminutively imagine themselves old, having lived a full life, "Each day he prayed for a change, something different over which he might stumble, but even Salusa Secundus had been a pebble, every aspect known. Nothing changed; nothing could be changed....," and recoil from it. Even the Army's promotional recruitment material is unusually lacklustre at the moment. Drills, Drills, Drills. So many Drills.⁵

6

By the time students have finished college the sorting hat has pretty much decided which role they can play. Unfortunately most jobs are just a grind and barring a massive capital injection into their lives most are doomed to massive debt, an unrewarding career, two kids and a sexless marriage.

If there was anything I could suggest in regards to TAFE it is that many of the courses require students to coordinate their own professional placements. While this is fantastic for the intellectually challenged son of a tradesman that can just have his father tick off the competencies so that he's fully certified to overcharge for replacing toilet flange seals and avoid commissioning plants, this is not an option for others. The 4 year apprenticeship doesn't need to be intensive and they can just stick to the routine residential tasks and fudge the hours. The pacific apprenticeship scheme has effectively lowered it to a 2 year course but still 4 years domestically. a few years ago the labor exploitation reached such heights that an entire year of mechanic apprentices wern't being trained at all in Victoria and it was only absolute corruption that prompted any regulatory action. You can be injured on the job and poorly compensated for the loss of your entire life's wages. There are sham contacting arrangements where apprentices work for an employer but are cleverly subcontracted to avoid liability. I would suggest simpler shorter less intensive courses to attract people to the professions such as a two day course to replace a switch, GPO and a tap washer professionally. It's not like it's harder than performing CPR, obtaining an RSA, driving a forklift or riding a motorbike where someone can die if you mess it up.

1. A.B.C. (21 Jun 2022) TISM on The Kid LAROI, Shane Warne and the 'truth' about Midnight Oil. Double J. <https://www.abc.net.au/doublej/music-reads/features/tism-interview-double-j-regurgitator-ron-humphrey-good-things/13938524>
2. Randstad Pty Limited. Working as a Plumber. <https://www.randstad.com.au/job-profiles/plumber/>
3. Builders Academy Australia. Successful Career Progression in Plumbing. <https://buildersacademy.edu.au/successful-career-progression-plumbing/>
4. T.A.F.E. Queensland. Certificate II in Plumbing Services. <https://tafeqld.edu.au/course/17/17693/certificate-ii-in-plumbing-services>
5. Defence Jobs Australia. (18 Aug 2021) Army: Commando <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8mbSwp5vhQc>
6. Army - Commando. <https://army.defencejobs.gov.au/jobs/commando>

Robert Heron