



New South Wales Teachers Federation  
a branch of the Australian Education Union

AEU NSW Teachers Federation Branch ABN 86 600 150 697

Locked Bag N° 3010, Darlinghurst NSW 1300 • 02 9217 2100 • [www.nswtf.org.au](http://www.nswtf.org.au)  
NSW PRESIDENT: Maurie Mulheron • NSW GENERAL SECRETARY: John Dixon



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## NSW Teachers Federation Media Release

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### **PRISON TEACHERS APPALLED AS BAIRD GOVERNMENT SLASHES GAOL EDUCATION.**

*1 December, 2016.*

Hard on the heels of savage cuts to gaol education programs which will see 138 qualified teachers lose their jobs in the NSW prison system, Corrective Services Minister David Elliott is now flagging more jobs and courses will be cut early next year.

“We are appalled that the Baird Government and Minister Elliott are now preparing to slash courses designed to rehabilitate prisoners and give them job skills,” said NSW Teachers Federation Assistant General Secretary, Maxine Sharkey.

“Education is recognised as a major element in the rehabilitation of prisoners but that hasn’t stopped David Elliott from taking the axe to a range of trade courses in a cost cutting exercise that will make sure our gaols are full for years to come,” she said.

The courses earmarked for closure include:

- First Aid
- Construction industry White Card
- Fork Lift operator training
- Electrical Test & Tag restricted licence course
- Food safety and Hygiene
- Chainsaws operations and Working at heights
- Safe use of Chemicals



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There will also be reductions in other prison industry-based qualifications and traineeships in areas such as:

Food services & Hospitality skills  
Carpentry skills  
Laundry Skills  
Warehouse operations  
Painting and Decorating

The Government has indicated it will close or restrict the courses in many gaols across the state in 2017 despite Minister Elliott's announcement that 2017 will be the first year of his "new model" which aims to increase Vocational Education and Training in gaols.

"Many teachers are already taking redundancy and will leave on Christmas Eve," Ms Sharkey said.

"We are predicting chaos in the prison system as this poorly thought out cost-cutting policy is implemented."

Ms Sharkey said the decision to slash gaol education, cutting some courses altogether and outsourcing others, is being delivered with undue haste and causing so much confusion that it is impossible to see how any education services will be delivered to prisoners for several months.

"These disgraceful cutbacks will slash vocational education and training hours by more than half at some prisons. This is on top of an indicative cut of over 50% to delivery of Literacy and Numeracy programs," Ms Sharkey said.

She said the Minister's claims that provision of education would be maintained and outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy will be doubled are not possible.

The Teachers Federation will continue to campaign to demand high quality adult education and vocational training is accessible to all NSW prisoners.

Media comment Maxine Sharkey 0418428623

Media contact John Hill 0412197079



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