1800 education jobs to go

It is not believable that classroom teaching will be unaffected.

**Sally Edsall**  
Administration Officer  
(Media and Communications)

The O'Farrell Government is to slash $1.7 billion from public schools and TAFE colleges in NSW.

On September 11 Premier Barry O'Farrell announced the Department of Education and Communities (DEC) would reduce its staff numbers by about 1800 over the next four years.

State and regional offices will see a reduction of about 600 positions. TAFE will lose about 800 positions, including teaching positions. About 400 school administrative staff positions will be lost.

According to the DEC, teachers in schools will be quarantined from these reductions, but the announcement also refers to savings to be made by “reduced operating budgets” across the education portfolio. It is not believable that classroom teaching will be unaffected.

TAFE fees for government supported places will increase by about 9.5 per cent and the student concession fees will increase from $53 to $100 from January 1, 2013. Fine arts courses in non-jobs growth areas will be charged at commercial rates. Apprenticeship programs are affected.

Federation President Maurie Mulheron said the announcement revealed the Government’s true agenda in introducing its Local Schools, Local Decisions policy: “That is ripping resources out of public education, using weasel words like ‘local decision-making’, ‘realignment’ and ‘efficiencies’.

“This government is a disgrace. It has no commitment to supporting quality public education,” Mr Mulheron said.

“The Government has been misleading the community by repeatedly stating that its Local Schools, Local Decisions policy is not about cutting funding to public education. The truth has now been revealed.”

While teachers in classrooms will apparently be left alone for now, this is not the case for teachers providing essential support in curriculum and other areas, or TAFE teachers.

In addition, staff providing essential support in schools, including ‘front-office’ staff, will be removed. Parents should be angered that it will be more difficult for basic administrative work, including answering the phone at schools, to be achieved, as it appears almost every school will suffer cuts in this area.

The Government had previously announced cuts to cleaning of public schools.

In spite of statements by the Premier in the media just the day before, justifying foreshadowed cuts to private schools, the announcements maintain state government funding to private schools while cutting funding to public education by $1.7 billion.

The most appalling aspect is the cynicism of the NSW Government — announcing massive cuts to state education funding when the Federal Government has moved forward with the Gonski recommendations for a new and fairer resourcing model.