



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
NSW PRESIDENT: Maurie Mulheron • NSW GENERAL SECRETARY: John Dixon

NSW TEACHERS FEDERATION MEDIA RELEASE

Urgent action needed on TAFE funding to save rural communities

11 October 2017

Rural communities such as Cootamundra and Young have suffered since the introduction of the Smart and Skilled funding policy by the NSW National Party, as their local TAFE has been depleted to the point it can no longer provide for the young people of the area.

Since the policy's introduction, the Riverina region has lost more than 100 permanent and casual teaching positions, which has significantly reduced the number of courses on offer.

"When young people have to leave town to undertake courses that are no longer available locally, many of them never come back, and it is the beginning of the rural decline for our communities," Federation Deputy Secretary Maxine Sharkey said.

"Cutting funding to TAFE in rural and regional NSW is affecting local communities, and urgent action is needed to reverse this trend."

Australian Business Council CEO Jennifer Westacott told the National Press Club on 11 October that an effective vocational education sector was essential to the future of Australia's economy, and "not one more cent" could be taken out of vocational education.

"We cannot let TAFE simply wither on the vine or die the death of a thousand cuts," Ms Westacott said.

In the wake of the comments, and the BCA proposal for a revitalised vocational education sector, Ms Sharkey and NSW TAFE Teachers Association President Annette Bennett are visiting Cootamundra to talk with teachers and locals about the importance of guaranteed funding for TAFE in Cootamundra and Young.

"The impact of the funding cuts to TAFE under Smart and Skilled is most evident in rural communities," Ms Sharkey said, "and the rest of Australia needs to pay close attention, and take action to ensure TAFE remains a viable, accessible and affordable provider for all."



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MEDIA ALERT

Maxine Sharkey, NSW Teachers Federation Deputy Secretary (Post Schools), and
Annette Bennett, NSW TAFE Teachers Association President, will be at:

Cootamundra TAFE College
Mackay Street, Cootamundra
11am, 12 October

MEDIA CONTACT: ROB LONG 0459 147 658