Queenslanders to pay the price of Newman’s TAFE closures

The fears of thousands of Queenslanders have today been realised after the Queensland Liberal National Government signalled the closure of 13 TAFE campuses, and confirmed many others remain under threat.

Thirteen TAFE campuses have been earmarked for closure with more than 30 facing the same fate.

Federal Minister for Skills, Senator Chris Evans, condemned the closures and said thousands of Queenslanders will miss out on training – especially mature students returning to the workforce, regional students and those from low SES and disadvantaged backgrounds.

“TAFEs are on the frontline when it comes to giving Queenslanders the skills they need to get a job and are essential in delivering training in our regions and to disadvantaged students,” Senator Evans said.

“The Liberal National Government’s decision seriously undermines the national training effort and will see many students denied the opportunity to gain the skills and training needed in our modern economy.

“These cuts to TAFE will mean fewer learning opportunities and higher prices for students and fewer skilled workers for businesses.

“Queensland Government members will have a hard job explaining to the community why they’re in favour of closing facilities and taking away the chance to get a vocational education or learn a trade.”

Senator Evans also questioned the timing of the Queensland announcements.

“These closures were first flagged on Melbourne Cup Day and the timing of today’s announcement – at the end of the last sitting week of a full parliamentary year – is similarly questionable,” Senator Evans said.

“These are serious decisions with serious consequences for thousands of Queenslanders and the Newman Government is slipping them through on the quiet.”
“It is time for the Queensland Liberal Government to come clean on the full extent of these closures which are being made with Tony Abbott's blessing.

“It makes no sense to slash the investment in skills and training when we have employers crying out for skilled workers across the economy.”

The Commonwealth is yet to see a proposal to merge 12 TAFE campuses with the Central Queensland University.

“Given the Newman Government’s intention to slash funding for TAFEs, I will need to be convinced that this is a viable proposal that guarantees the long-term provision of vocational courses to regional students,” Senator Evans said.

“The Queensland Liberal Government’s attack on TAFEs follows the Victorian Liberal Government’s decision to slash $350 million from its TAFE network and the NSW Liberal Government’s decision to axe hundreds of TAFE teachers and increase course fees.

“While the Newman Government is slashing funding, the Gillard Government is putting almost $1.5 billion into the Queensland training system over the next five years.”

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