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TAFE Unable to Meet Demand in Western Australia

Thousands of people are being turned away from TAFE in WA each year due to a lack of funding and resources, a new survey of staff reveals.

Released today, the survey shows student demand is above the national average with 65 per cent of teachers and managers reporting an increase in the last two years.

But 56 per cent of teachers and managers said they had to turn away students. The number one area where students were turned away in WA was engineering and related technologies.

The results of the survey were released at today's WA launch of a new campaign for better funding for TAFE. The launch at Thornlie TAFE was conducted by AEU Federal TAFE Secretary Pat Forward and State School Teachers' Union of WA Senior Vice-President Pat Burke.

Ms Forward said the results showed TAFEs were being starved of the resources required to tackle skill shortages in WA and meet future workforce demand in critical areas such as mining and energy production.

"Thousands of people in WA are missing out on the quality education and training only TAFE can deliver because of a lack of investment," Ms Forward said.

"You would think the Federal Government and the Western Australian Government would understand how critical it is to be able to deliver the skilled workforce that industry needs."

Ms Forward said new research conducted by the Centre for the Economics of Education and Training (CEET) at Monash University showed TAFE funding per student hour in Western Australia had fallen by 20 per cent since 2003.

"The research shows we need to spend an additional \$200 million a year until 2020 to meet new targets set by COAG for increasing the proportion of the population with higher level qualifications," she said.

"TAFE has a long and proud history of delivering high quality training and education to Australians. It is time to invest more in TAFE to ensure it can continue to play this vital role."

The survey report is available at:

<http://www.aeufederal.org.au/Tafe/TAFESurvey/WA.pdf>

The CEET report is available at:

<http://www.aeufederal.org.au/Publications/2010/CEETreport2010.pdf>

More information:

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