

**Item No: C0513 Item 13**

**Subject: NOTICE OF MOTION: COUNCIL SUPPORT FOR TAFE COMMUNITY ALLIANCE**

**File Ref: 4674/33049.13**

**From Councillor Melissa Brooks**

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**MOTION:**

**THAT:**

- 1. the General Manager write to the NSW Minister for Education to call for:**
    - a) the full restoration of TAFE funding in NSW;**
    - b) the abandonment of plans to replace TAFE teachers with lower paid, less qualified tutors and assessors in the proposed Enterprise Agreement; and**
    - c) TAFE assets to remain in public hands.**
  - 2. Council supports the promotion of future events and meetings of the Community TAFE Alliance through Council publications and online channels where appropriate; and**
  - 3. Council notes that:**
    - a) TAFE Arts programs, and the students and teachers in those programs make a significant contribution to Marrickville's cultural life and creative economy which the area is well known for;**
    - b) TAFE is well known for providing an affordable and well supported entry point into further education;**
    - c) TAFE has been a vital entry point for further education and employment support for people with a disability; and**
    - d) the loss of specialised support provided by multicultural officers is of serious concern to migrant and NESB communities in Marrickville.**
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**Background**

At the April meeting of Council's Access Committee, committee members raised and expressed concerns about cuts to TAFE in NSW and about the impact on Marrickville residents, particularly people with a disability, and on the community as a whole through the impact on arts programs and multicultural support programs. Committee members asked that Council consider the issue and support the Community TAFE alliance and their campaign to defend TAFE funding, courses and staff.

Changes affecting TAFE and TAFE students and teachers include:

- a 9.5% fee increase has been imposed on TAFE students. This will disproportionately affect disadvantaged students who rely on TAFE for accessible, high-quality skills training;
- an end to funding art education in TAFE, leaving 4,000 students without access to finishing their courses unless they can pay fees of \$5,500 to \$8,800 per year.; and
- only those students enrolled in Diploma or higher courses are eligible for VET Fee Help which in turn leads to graduates who are entering relatively low paid industries doing so with large debts.

**Manager, Community Development Comments:**

From July, 2013 government funding to TAFE, public and independent schools will be capped for the next four years and/or face a funding reduction of \$1.7 billion. About 800 TAFE jobs are being cut and fees will be increasing by 9.5 per cent from next year.

Many TAFE students come from the most socially and economically disadvantaged areas and this training provides a second chance for them to gain qualifications when they have none. As well, 6 per cent of students in vocational training are Aboriginal, compared with only 1.3 per cent in universities, while TAFE caters for double the proportion of students with a disability than universities, and more than four times the proportion of students from a non-English speaking background than universities do.

The impact of these funding cuts for those on low incomes will make it harder to get TAFE training and to special needs services in TAFE institutes will mean changes to courses, less financial support and less money to allocate to in-class assistants for disabled students.

In April the Addison Road Community Centre held a TAFE Community Alliance meeting attended by approximately 75 community workers and members from around the inner west and southern Sydney.

The State government's funding cuts and new funding model that affect TAFE provision in NSW were discussed, along with what our communities stand to lose and how TAFE can be maintained as the major public Vocational Education and Training (VET) provider. Three young women spoke about how their TAFE opportunity has transformed their lives. Below is the resolution that was passed unanimously at the end of the forum:

*"We the TAFE Community Alliance are appalled by the O'Farrell government's destruction of NSW TAFE and we call for full restoration of TAFE funding and the abandonment of 'Smart and Skilled' and plans to replace teachers with lower paid less qualified tutors and assessors in the proposed Enterprise Agreement."*

One of the participants at this meeting attends the Access Committee and raised her concerns about the impact of TAFE cuts on the opportunities for disadvantaged residents to gain qualifications that will help them realise a better quality of life. In particular her focus was on the impact on support for special needs learners.

**Resource Implications:**

Nil.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Nil.