

**SENATOR THE HON DOUG CAMERON
SHADOW MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS
SHADOW MINISTER FOR SKILLS, TAFE AND APPRENTICESHIPS
SENATOR FOR NEW SOUTH WALES**

GOVERNMENT'S VET REVIEW DESCENDS INTO FARCE

The Government must explain how it expects interested parties to provide comprehensive submissions over the Christmas break to the first review of vocational education and training (VET) in more than 40 years.

The farcical decision to cut off submissions on January 25 for the review announced this week further highlights this Government's appalling attitude to VET.

This decision, along with the lack of consultation on the terms of reference, demonstrates this is not a genuine review but a continuation of the Coalition's neglect of the VET sector.

The Government has contracted former New Zealand conservative minister Steven Joyce to undertake the review despite him leaving a \$3 billion black hole in that country's VET system.

Mr Joyce decimated regional training centres in New Zealand while funnelling money into private for-profit providers.

Given Mr Joyce's track record, it's clear this review will result in more attacks on TAFE and/or more pork barrelling to the Government's private sector mates.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison also needs to explain why he cannot entrust the embattled Skills and Vocational Education Minister Michaelia Cash to oversee the review, instead conducting it under the auspices of his own office.

Shadow Skills, TAFE and Vocational Education Minister, Doug Cameron, said the last thing Australia's flailing VET system needs right now is a razor gang from across the ditch.

Under the Coalition, there are 140,000 fewer apprenticeships, student enrolments in TAFE have plummeted by 24.5 per cent and \$24 million has been wasted on the now abandoned apprenticeship IT system.

A recent report tabled in the South Australian Parliament shows Australia's VET system is underfunded, fragmented, devalued, and has no effective governance.

The Liberals mismanagement of the VET system has also seen Australia fall to the bottom of OECD international leader charts when it comes to our capacity to engage in global value chains.

"The Coalition has had five years to fix the VET system but it is only on the eve of a Budget and impending election that they announce a review to justify their intended pork barrelling," Senator Cameron said.

"Regardless of this shonky inquiry, Labor will undertake a proper, comprehensive review into TAFE, VET and the entire post-secondary education system as announced in February."

A Shorten Labor Government will waive upfront fees for 100,000 students to attend TAFE and conduct a once in a generation national inquiry into the post-secondary education system within the first 100 days of being elected.

Federal Labor will also provide \$100 million to the Building TAFE for the Future Fund to commence a program of revitalising campuses across Australia.

Labor is committed to ensuring at least two thirds of all government funding for vocational education will go to TAFE. The balance will go to not-for-profit community providers and only the best private providers with demonstrable links to specific industry requirements.

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Authorised by Noah Carroll, ALP, Canberra.

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