



MEDIA RELEASE

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Students clean as TAFE cuts bite: O'Farrell must act now to reverse damage

Students are spending more time cleaning and stocking storerooms and less time learning under TAFE budget cuts which have slashed support staff numbers, according to the NSW Public Service Association.

The PSA supports the launch of a Bill today aimed at reversing TAFE budget cuts, losses of more than 800 jobs and fee increases of up to 9.5%.

General Secretary Anne Gardiner said the proposed cuts would not deliver better education outcomes for students and risks dismantling TAFE NSW's gold standard of vocational education.

"The State government's attack on TAFE funding and jobs will increase skills shortages in areas vital to the economy and impact on the long-term economic wellbeing of NSW," Ms Gardiner said today.

"The O'Farrell government cannot claim it wants a 'smart and skilled' workforce then introduce cuts that will pull apart the best system we have to deliver vocational education.

"Our members tell us that cutbacks are already reducing students' access to learning support services, including lack of IT and technical support and maintenance of classrooms and laboratories.

"There have also been cuts in student support roles designed to assist vulnerable and disadvantaged students gain TAFE qualifications, such as disability support staff, library staff and jobs providing counselling and student welfare support.

"In addition to hundreds of job cuts, more staff will be forced into insecure part-time and casual work positions.

"The full extent of the damage to TAFE will unfold over coming years but what's certain is the damage will be difficult, if not impossible, to reverse.

"The NSW government should reverse budget and job cuts to TAFE NSW and stop placing obstacles in the way of students who want the skills needed for better job opportunities," Ms Gardiner said.