

**Australian Education Union**

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Friday 12 July 2019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Concerns for TAFE SA following MOU sell out

The Australian Education Union (SA Branch) has raised serious concerns over today's announcement by Minister Gardner regarding the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between TAFE SA and the Independent Tertiary Education Council of Australia (ITECA).

The agreement opens the door to private providers taking up residence at TAFE sites, directing policy and cherry picking the delivery of profitable courses.

ITECA is open about actively pursuing its reform agenda by increasing its private provider members' share of the vocational education and training sector.

Australian Education Union South Australian President Howard Spreadbury is wary of how TAFE SA and ITECA will work together under this new agreement.

"The two organisations are in direct competition within the same market. Minister Gardner's statement confirms he will allow private providers to further erode TAFE's market share, compromise its independence and allow ITECA to push its own agenda," said Mr Spreadbury.

Instead the AEU is calling for the Marshall Liberal Government to recognise the value of TAFE SA and to return appropriate investment levels, suggesting this would be a more effective way to make it more competitive and sustainable in the long term.

"TAFE SA is the largest provider of vocational education and training in the state and must be valued for its place within the community. TAFE SA provides quality education that is accessible to all, offering pathways for many who may otherwise miss out on opportunities."

The AEU asserts that TAFE SA is already responsive to the needs of employers and works with industry groups to deliver quality training to build a skilled and sustainable workforce for South Australia.

There are concerns about how TAFE SA facilities may be used in the future. It may end up being more 'competitive' for TAFE SA under its new management to lease out its facilities rather than provide courses for students.

"It is like having a 'fire sale' after the place has been gutted. Instead of supporting and investing in TAFE SA, the Marshall Government is surrendering its responsibility and handing it over to private providers who are driven by profit," said Mr Spreadbury.

"Letting private providers access taxpayer-funded facilities and set up in direct competition on TAFE SA's own doorstep has the potential to undermine TAFE program delivery."

ENDS

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