

Cuts to adult re-entry contradict government's own goals

The state government's proposed discontinuation of adult education in public schools flies in the face of its own targets for social cohesion, education and employment in this state, says the SA Council of Social Service.

"By eliminating the chance of anyone over 21 gaining their Year 12 Certificate of Education (SACE), and the chance of a Tertiary Entrance Ranking (TER) allowing them to pursue the higher education of their choice, this government is undercutting opportunities for thousands of South Australians," said SACOSS Executive Director Ross Womersley.

"SACOSS is particularly concerned at the impact on disadvantaged and low-income South Australians who will not be able to afford TAFE fees (which have increased in this state budget), and those in rural and remote areas who currently can enrol through the Open Access College adult re-entry program." Womersley said.

"TAFE, VET, and University study are different. Stating that adults who want to finish their high school education will now attend TAFE for re-education, as Kevin Foley did on State Budget day, is ill-informed and cuts across all concepts of access and opportunity." said Womersley.

"For many students a school environment is far less daunting than a TAFE or University, especially if they have been away from the education system, and most likely under emotional and/or financial duress, for some years." said Womersley.

"These are critical issues of access and equity, which will directly translate to a workforce without the knowledge and skills that they themselves want — mature-age students are recognised as being highly motivated — and that this state needs." Womersley said.

"The Council of Australian Governments (CoAG) target is for 90 per cent of 20- to 24-year-olds to have a Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate by 2015."

"The Rann government itself states that it 'places a premium on knowledge and education at all levels' in order to achieve social cohesion and economic competitiveness". (*South Australia's Strategic Plan* Objective 6).

"Thinker in Residence Baroness Susan Greenfield has stressed, in specific relation to South Australia's Strategic Plan, that our society is shifting from the manufacturing industry into the knowledge economy."

"SACOSS fails to see how these proposed changes will help achieve the Rann government's own laudable goals of social cohesion, prosperity, and an economically competitive state."

**SACOSS supports the Rally on Wednesday 13 October to protest these cuts:
4.30pm Parliament House, North Terrace, Adelaide**