**A submission by the Education and Youth Affairs Policy Committee of the Victorian Branch of the Australian Labor Party to the ‘Australian Universities Accord *Discussion Paper’***

**April 2023**

**Dear Professor Mary O’Kane AO,**

**Chair of the Australian Universities Accord,**

On an ongoing basis the Education Policy Committee and particularly our Education Post-Compulsory Sub-Committee have contributed educational policies to the Victorian and Federal Australian Labor Party’s Election Platforms.

As part of our submission to this end I have attached from our Education Policy 2020 the two sections covering VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND LEARNING and HIGHER EDUCATION.

For your ease of reading, I have extracted clause 1 of the section HIGHER EDUCATION in the attachment at the bottom of this submission. In this attachment you will read our policy called to:

“**1. Establish a National Commission of Review (NCOR) to examine Australia’s Post Compulsory Education and Training systems.**” which predates the ACCORD.

In additions to the full VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING and HIGHER EDUCATION sections of our policy document we would like to respond to your specific guidance in the covering letter of the Discussion Paper and later include a series of dot points as part of our submission.

**Quotes attributable to Accord Panel Chair Professor Mary O’Kane AC:**

**“Australian higher education is very good by world standards. But we need it to do more to bridge a large part of the skills gap and to increase significantly the production of new knowledge in areas of national need.**

**“We want to hear big ideas. Think outside of the box, and beyond the immediate challenges and pressures to 30 years in the future. Ask yourself, what kind of system does Australia need in 2030, 2040 and 2050, and what can we do to get there together?**

**“Tell us how to enable the system to do this and to do it quickly. Be bold and lateral in your suggestions. Draw on international evidence and individual experiences.”**

Surprise, surprise the answer to the above is simple and earlier Australian universities achieved excellence….so what has caused the massive skills gap and what to commence to do?

1. Correct the imbalance between the commodification of education and the passion for the pursuit of learning and knowledge.
2. The ‘big ideas’, ‘outside the box’ you suggest could quickly be achieved… by doubling the funding commitment to HIGHER EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL LEARNING AND TRAINING…. look at the performance of education in Germany and China and for example in contrast to the United Kingdom where they joke, “… much of the UK (university) education is now best described as the most expensive streaming service in the world.” and look at Britain economic performance!
3. A ‘Big Idea’ to start with would be to incentivise Vice Chancellors and their Boards to encourage the generation of knowledge instead of having to be obsessed with climbing world ranking tables and attracting foreign students to manage their cash flows!

**Key Points:**

* The offering of affordable Humanities and Arts Courses must be restored to their rightful balance in university education.
* University governance must be guided by the creation and transfer of knowledge and not the generation of money through the commodification of the education.
* Universities must be adequately funded to enable research and teaching to flourish to the level experienced in most European and Asian universities.
* The integrity of Australian degree qualifications must not be eroded by cost-cutting screen learning.
* The pedological limits to screen-based learning must be assessed and applied.
* The exploitation and casualisation of workers must be called out.
* There must be less reliance on the ploy of ‘Permanence Residency’ to underpin the university sector’s viability.
* University managerial ‘slick’ practices must be called out and condemned.
* Through a National ‘TAFE’ Academy for in service training raise the status and salary levels of teachers/lecturers to attract to teaching the ‘best’ in their industries.
* The integration of meaningful student, educator and employer relationships for work experience and work placements needs to be funded and supported in regulatory and learning systems. The funding of degrees should not be politicised and the level of HECS debt Australian students face needs to be drastically reduced and more flexibility should be introduced to the repayment systems.
* The casualisation of educators and precarious employment has become dangerously widespread and problematic in teaching and research roles combined with a lack of tenured opportunities. Higher education employment needs to be secure and attractive in order to provide the quality of teaching and research students deserve whilst flexibilities for workers to enter and exit the sector and their flexibility within the system need to be revisited.
* Online learning needs to be an option across institutions and contexts and the requirement to be on site needs to be carefully calibrated and not fixed or prescribed. It should enhance quality learning, access and equity but preserve the integrity of the learning and social experiences which comes with being on site and in learning communities. Institutional diversity should, in a regulated way, respond to the students’ needs but online learning cannot be used to cheapen the learning experience or reduce equity even further. This needs to be monitored and quality assured.
* Wage theft in all its forms needs to be criminalised with higher penalties.
* Executives responsible for questionable institutional practices or with poor personal track records should not be appointed to public office.

Chris Curtis

(Secretary,

Education and Youth Affairs Policy Committee,

Victorian Branch of the Australian Labor Party)

**ATTACHMENT**

**HIGHER EDUCATION**

**1.** **Establish a National Commission of Review (NCOR) to examine Australia’s Post Compulsory Education and Training Systems.**

Policy Recommendation:To ensure university, sustainability, accountability and relevance to the community and industry into the future.

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| Objective | Strategies |
| 1. To create a National Commission of Review of Post Compulsory and Training Systems.  2. To ensure all Australians have affordable access to lifetime learning and self-improvement.  3. To ensure a public provider financial model is secured in legislation.  4. To secure genuine cooperative ownership of Australian universities.  5. To ensure high standards of governance and accountability are maintained in higher education institutions, in an administratively transparent and efficient manner. | * + - 1. Support the establish a National Commission of Review (NCOR) to examine in its entirety all aspects of Australia’s post-compulsory education and training systems.       2. Ensure the NCOR specifically appraises the introduction of a universal learning entitlement and a lifetime learning account.       3. Ensures the NCOR designs a coherent, sustainable model of financing public providers once it has fully investigated the marketisation and commodification of education in the post compulsory sector.       4. Ensures the NCOR vigorously evaluates the introduction of cooperative ownership and control of all Australian universities.  1. Direct the NCOR to reports its findings to the Federal Government within three years of Labor taking office. 2. Encourage the appointment of university vice chancellors and council board membership on their record of achieving excellence in pedagogy, research, nurturing staff and acknowledged student representation. 3. Limit the total salary of future vice chancellors in Australian universities to that of the Prime Minister of the day and 4. Ensure where Universities wish to become part of commercial activities they establish independent organizations. 5. Strengthen and uphold the legitimate role of student organisations in representing student interests and in providing valuable services, facilities, and amenities. 6. Ensure that University administrative processes are lean and efficient, and present the smallest possible resource load consistent with the above. |

**Victorian Education Policy 2021**

**(Extracts of only Higher Education and Vocational Education and Training)**

VISION

**The Purpose of Education**

Education remains Labor's number one priority. Education is a public good, not just a private benefit. It binds society together, aids prosperity, underpins social justice and develops individual potential.

**Principles**

Labor's vision for education is strongly underpinned by the values of excellence, access, wellbeing, community, democracy, professionalism, equity, sustainability and accountability.

**Excellence**

Labor is committed to investing in the Victorian people to enhance their intellectual, social, emotional and personal development, their lifelong learning, their participation in work and society and their creative abilities.

Labor is committed to ensuring every early learning centreand school gives all children the best possible education in which an excellent curriculum challenges, supports and prepares them for the future and helps them to develop a strong sense of self-worth, respect for self and others and the opportunity to experience success.

**Access**

Labor believes that all Victorians should have access to high quality education and training throughout their lives, in a safe, inclusive, secure and healthy teaching and learning environment, regardless of socio-economic status, gender, sexuality, race, culture, religion, ethnicity, age, abilities or location.

Labor believes that greater equity in educational achievement is a vital factor in strengthening social cohesion and promoting opportunity.

**Wellbeing**

Labor believes that the mental and physical wellbeing of children is fundamental to educational success.

**Community**

Labor believes that through the participation of all elements of the early childhood andschool community in decision making lives are enriched and the best possible educational outcomes promoted.

Labor believes that community participation in community kindergartens andneighbourhood schools is a vital component in broader community development.

Labor is committed to flexibility within the educationsystem to enable early learning centres and schools to make decisions to meet the diverse educational needs of all students.

**Democracy**

Labor recognises that parents, as their children’s first teachers, are equal and important partners in ensuing that children develop their full potential.

Labor is committed to community participation in the consideration of educational issues, decision-making and the physical and environmental condition of the school, with largely elected school councils that are representative of parents, students and teachers guiding the progress of the school in partnership with the school leadership.

Labor is committed to distributive leadership and industrial democracy in schools and training institutions.

Labor is committed to partnership with parents, students, principals, teachers, stakeholder organisations, non-government school systems, post-compulsory institutions, voluntary agencies, business and industry, research organisations and all levels of government, through representative forums, to provide a balanced education and training system.

**Professionalism**

Labor believes in the professionalism of teachers to deliver high-quality education to students at all levels of education.

Labor is committed to consulting with managers,teachers, principals and educators at all levels to provide them with the tools and support needed to produce the environment for our children and young people to be their best.

Labor is committed to fair workplaces with state-wide, consistent industrial conditions with no reliance on insecure work practices.

Labor is committed to promoting and elevating the status of the teaching profession as a highly desirable and respected occupation with commensurate pay and fair working conditions.

**Equity**

Labor is committed to the 1872 vision of a high quality, well-resourced, fully funded, free, compulsory and secular public education system accessible to all which guarantees consistency, reliability and quality across every school.

Labor is committed to ensuring that students in all **early learning centres and** schools have the same standards of education, teacher professionalism, learning opportunities, personal support and social integration in order to achieve the common purposes of our society.

**Sustainability**

Labor is committed to well-designed, good quality, attractive facilities and surrounds as important to educational motivation and achievement and safe working conditions for staff. Buildings need to be sustainable, multi-functional and adaptable.

**Accountability**

Labor believes that careful, inclusive, long term planning and appropriate resourcing are essential to a successful education system.

Labor believes that the community is entitled to open and transparent education and training systems and will ensure that they report annually to the community on the delivery of agreed curriculum, use of resources and their progress.

**Early Childhood Education**

Labor believes that every child, no matter where they live or what their circumstances may be, deserves to have the best possible start to life.

* Labor believes lifelong learning starts at birth and recognises that parents are a child’s first and most enduring educators.
* Labor believes the principal goal of early childhood education is personal and cognitive development of the child, which is achieved by a supportive and caring environment with a wide variety of experiences.
* Labor believes that play-based learning is vital for young children as it develops creativity, self-confidence and self-control.
* Labor recognises that a child’s early experiences have a significant impact on their learning, development and future prospects.
* Labor recognises that high quality early years education and care play an important role in a child’s development.

**School Education**

The purposes of education are that students:

1. develop a sense of themselves as active learners, with the abilities to think, to solve problems and to make sound educational, vocational and personal choices in life;
2. develop personal skills such as confidence, initiative, adaptability, self-discipline, resilience, respect, responsibility and honesty and interpersonal skills such as kindness, tolerance and cooperation;
3. develop their individual talents and abilities and strive for improvement and excellence so that they become active, well-balanced, knowledgeable citizens, able to participate fully in society; and
4. continue their learning as a life-long process whether in formal or informal settings.

**Post-School Education**

Importantly, vocational education has a dual purpose – an economic function that ensures industry has skilled workers and enabling individuals to achieve effective social participation through social and economic inclusion. High quality vocational education is even more important in an age of automation and artificial intelligence.

In the local sense, vocational education often provides social inclusion for cohorts that have been otherwise excluded from education and is often a source of educational re-engagement for many young people and adults. Vocational education has a vital role to play in ensuring all Victorians have skill sets to fully engage in the labour market and consequently achieve socially and economically fulfilling lives.

Industry needs TAFE to provide adaptable, competent and skilled human resources to meet their dynamic needs in an increasingly global marketplace. However, Victorians are unable to access the labour market if the qualifications they have gained in vocational education do not meet inherent industry requirements or they do not develop the requisite skill set. If visa or other conditions in training length or quality of instruction and work experience are not adequate, employers will vote with their feet. That is why we need an ongoing dialogue between TAFE teachers and industry.

Furthermore, the community can save considerable expenditure by focusing on social inclusion through high quality TAFE education attached to employment pathways that lead to employment outcomes, rather than through social exclusion and expenditure on juvenile and adult justice programs.

Labor looks to realign the social and economic value of vocational education with university-based education. It looks to drive deeper industry partnerships, vocational pathways that lead to meaningful employment outcomes, improve work experience and shift focus back on the vital social justice and equity elements of vocational education.

Labor will continue to develop Victoria’s high-quality post-compulsory education which promotes innovation and the pursuit of excellence, meets diverse educational goals and provides multiple pathways that are flexible enough to provide for lifelong learning.

It will monitor access and equity in the post-compulsory education system ensuring lifelong chances of success

**POST – COMPULSORY**

**VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**1. Ensure parity between VET and universities**

Policy Recommendation: To ensure all TAFE teachers, who hold a doctorate, are referred to as “Lecturers” and give them pay parity with University lecturers by 2023

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| Objectives | Strategies |
| 1. To recognise TAFE parity with universities, and support TAFEs’ key role in applied learning and innovation. | 1. By 2023, refer to all TAFE educators who hold a doctorate as lecturers. 2. Where appropriate, grant experienced TAFE educators access to the job title of “Professor” on the basis of their applied research, master teacher status or any other relevant need for recognition of their status and work within the profession. 3. Achieve pay parity between TAFE educators and university educators by 2023. 4. Base pay parity for VET educators on VET qualifications, not university-based qualifications. |

**2. Involve TAFE Teacher in training package development and implementation**

Policy Recommendation: To secure ongoing dialogue with TAFE teachers from publicly funded TAFE institutions in relation to training package development and implementation.

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| Objectives | Strategies |
| 1. To improve educator involvement in course and curriculum development in the VET sector | * + - 1. Involve frontline TAFE teachers currently engaged as teaching practitioners in course development.       2. Allow TAFE state-wide moderation and validation groups in each training package area to nominate a practitioner who will be actively involved in package development and implementation.       3. Include the development of state based micro-credentials. |

**3.** **VETiS and TAFE integration as part of the new common VCE (i.e. VCAL and VCE)**

Policy Recommendation: To remove the cost and recognition barriers so TAFE and VETiS clusters improve student choice and allow specialisations for equity groups (e.g. disability, illiteracy) during their schooling to ease the transition to TAFE/ higher education.

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| Objectives | Strategies |
| 1. To improve VET graduate pathways to higher education | 1. Ensure each VET provider can offer VETiS so TAFEs and VET clusters can offer targeted programs to maximise choice for secondary students. There is a shortage of specialisation and some VET clusters are overprescribed so if publicly funded TAFEs stop being funded on a post compulsory school basis, they could diversify choices and ease the transition into post-compulsory courses thereafter. RPL needs to recognise school-based qualifications too. 2. Ensure each university in Victoria keeps up to 5% of places in all courses available for TAFE/ VET graduates to apply. |

**4. Improved pathways to higher education**

Policy Recommendation: To make up to 5% of all places in all courses in each university in Victoria available to TAFE graduates to apply.

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| Objectives | Strategies |
| 1. To improve VET graduate pathways to higher education | 1. By 2023 ensure each university will keeps up to 5% of places in all courses available for TAFE/ VET graduates to apply. 2. Make places accessible in both undergraduate and post graduate courses. 3. link every TAFE course in Victoria with a university, with preference to students via this pathway. 4. Fund partnership officers to build and maintain these relationships. 5. Allow students to access places at universities other than their linked university. |

5. **Improve digital literacy for students and teachers**

Policy Recommendation: To ensure access to in class learning support from digital literacy experts for all TAFE teachers and students at all TAFE course levels

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| Objectives | Strategies |
| 1. To add digital literacy support to the key role Language, Literacy and Numeracy in class support to improve digital literacy skills of both teaching staff and students. | 1. Add digital literacy to the LLN support role. 2. Make DL support workers available for up to 25% of nominal hours for every course up to Advance Diploma level. 3. Make DL-in-class support available to both educators and learners. 4. Quarantine DL support from course funding imposts. |

**6. Expand role for work placement**

Policy Recommendation: To expand work placement hours and recognise it as a pathway to ongoing work.

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| Objectives | Strategies |
| 1. To improve VET pathways to employment through meaningful work placements and increase industry engagement in VET through stronger connections through work placements. | 1. Expand work to 25% of nominal course hours by 2025 for Certificate IV and above courses by 2025. 2. Expand all work placement to 10% of nominal course hours by 2025 for Certificate III and below courses by 2025. 3. Make learning/ disability support available for the duration of work placement in its entirety ( Inclusive TAFE for learners with a disability). 4. Start TAFE course provision in the late years of secondary schools in a subsidised or free form so the transitions are more seamless and integrated whilst offering greater flexibility and control in course design and help than is currently delivered in VETiS |

7. **Ensure TAFEs employ their students where possible and appropriate**

Policy Recommendation: To ensure that in an age of automation TAFEs are funded to provide extra support and employment opportunities for equity groups.

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| Objectives | Strategies |
| 1. To provide positive discrimination for equity groups such as females (young mothers, older women) or learners with a disability who face forms of discrimination in the open labour market. | 1. Ensure any positions within TAFEs that lend themselves to employing TAFE students could be made a workplace for students; e.g., canteens, cafes, gyms, offices, workshops, education support workers, cleaners, intake workers, integration aides, technical support, digital literacy support etc. 2. Open career pathways in TAFEs to maximise employability outcomes, especially for all equity groups and for those with multiple disadvantages. 3. Fund AFEs to start up and support worker-owned cooperatives to bring about lasting change for these employees. |

**8. Make publicly funded TAFEs a protected title**

Policy Recommendation: To ensure TAFEs stand only for publicly funded TAFEs.

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| Objectives | Strategies |
| 1. To protect the TAFE tradename. | 1. Reserve the name TAFE for publicly funded TAFEs. 2. Provide that any marketing materials for private RTOs that use “TAFE” are breaching trade practices on the basis of misinforming consumers. |

**9.Ensure pay parity for female TAFE teachers by 2023**

Policy Recommendation: To secure pay parity between male and female TAFE teachers by the end of 2023.

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| Objectives | Strategies |
| 1. To ensure that there is pay equality between male and female educators in the VET sector, irrespective of their trade or industry sector. | 1. Audit all TAFE teacher pay by the end of 2023 to identify areas in which there is not pay parity between male and female staff. This will identify over award payments made to male staff that are not being paid equally to female staff. 2. Conduct this audit on the basis of teacher qualifications and any other defining factor that may be used to pay male staff over award payments. 3. In areas in which there is a discrepancy between male and female staff using unjustified over award payments, ensure that all female staff are back paid for a maximum of two years where male staff have been paid more and provide any relevant accrued superannuation. 4. Conduct an annual audit at every TAFE from 2024 to ensure all female staff have pay parity with male staff for the same work undertaken. 5. If there is a sex-based pay discrepancy at the same institution two years in a row, make that institution pay all affected staff a penalty twice the value of the discrepancy and accrued superannuation. 6. Refer promotions to “relative to opportunity” subject matter experts to equal opportunity. |

**10. Improve sector capacity and integration by public sector means**

Policy Recommendation: To incentivise greater leverage of the public sector to increase employment and training, apprenticeships and work experience opportunities.

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| Objectives | Strategies |
| 1. To require collaboration within and across industries and the public sector, using public sector means to incentivise, fund and improve practical learning experiences and employment opportunities for all learners. | 1. Create the incentive for labour-hire organisations and employment agencies to contribute to training investment, particularly through the employment of apprentices and trainees. 2. Require organisations entering into significant contracts with government or tendering to provide local or state government services, privatised/corporatised entities to spend a prescribed percentage of their prospective payroll on training and the creation of entry-level training opportunities. 3. Expand work experience and employment opportunities for TAFE students, apprenticeships and traineeships in the public sector. 4. Improve workplace experience for all school, TAFE and University students in access, hours and quality. 5. Streamline its red tape, legal agreements and increase reporting requirements on equity and quality in the public sector and beyond 6. Monitor and ensure each industry trains according to high standards and has ample applied learning opportunities not just through simulation but “on the tools” and in actual workplaces/ sites. |

**11. Focus on ‘Face to Face’ learning whist evaluating the efficacy of ‘Online Learning’**.

Policy Recommendation**:** To allocate course funding to face-to-face delivery subject to the completion of a major review into the efficacy of ‘online’ learning as it applies to post-compulsory teaching and learning.

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| Objectives | Strategies |
| 1. To ensure the provision of a supported learning environment reflects the cohort of students that access VET.  2. To ensure social inclusion and social justice elements of VET are being applied.  3. To ensure that competency-based training is being delivered in classroom-based environments to ensure task performance requirements are being met. | 1. Ensure funding is based on face-to-face delivery of courses, based on class hours. 2. Ensure a minimum of 75% of nominal course hours are delivered face to face. 3. Ensure a maximum of 25% of any course are delivered by online or blended learning styles. 4. Ensure exceptions to this rule would be – 5. where it is pedagogically sound to do so; 6. reasonable adjustment. 7. regional centres and thin markets (However, students in these areas should not be unfairly disadvantaged because of their geographical location). 8. Instigate a major review into the efficacy of ‘online’ learning for post-compulsory teaching and learning with broad consultation with stakeholders. |

**12. Extend TAFEs into learning hubs**

Policy Recommendation: To make TAFE institutes more than vocational education providers: they should be seen as social hubs for the community, providing more than just training for jobs but life skills, which complement a student’s formal learning and education.

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| Objective | Strategies |
| 1. To ensure the Victorian TAFE system provides not only industry-specific training but also a broad range of life skills to graduates. | 1. Ensure that Victorian TAFEs provide a learning environment that provides vocational education and training, as well as a range of skills that are necessary for success in adult life. 2. Ensure that TAFE’s share of the training market is rediscovered, and that TAFE continues to receive additional funding compared to other providers of publicly funded training in recognition of TAFE’s universal service and broader community obligations. |

**13. Invest in the learning needs for the ‘Digital Revolution’.**

Policy Recommendation: To provide new and emerging technology-based programs, which complement innovation in emerging markets for manufactured products.

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| Objective | Strategies |
| 1. To continue to build world-class facilities for Victorian TAFEs so that Victorian students have the best possible learning environments with the best possible outcomes to meet the challenges of emerging technologies. | 1. Continue to invest in the most up-to-date and advanced facilities at Victorian TAFEs, with greater accessibility to ICT for both for students and staff, with adequate levels of technical support. 2. Focus on major new facilities providing for the increased specialisation within our TAFEs to meet the demands of the ‘digital revolution’. 3. Encourage and reward collaboration between autonomous TAFE institutions in the offering of shared programs and the use of facilities. 4. Ensure that TAFE institutions have modern machinery and workshops. |

14. To strengthen publicly funded Technical and Further Education Service (TAFE) providers and rebrand the larger TAFEs transitioning into higher education as polytechnics.

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| **Objectives** | **Strategies** |
| **1.** To rebrand larger transitioning TAFEs as polytechnics since this rand has global recognition, enabling Victoria to reposition itself as key provider of vocational education amongst diverse international markets for prospective students.  2. To reframe the role of vocational education to reflect that changes that are currently taking place in the sector.  3.To reorientate vocational education towards the future, rather than shackled to an aged brand.  4. To strengthen TAFE so as to separate this market place offering from Registered Training Organisations change the name to create a new narrative for vocational education that separates it from some of the issues that have arisen over the last decade.  5. To enable employers to easily identify graduates from publicly funded TAFEs/polytechnics vs RTOs. | 1. Strengthen the TAFE brand and rebrand larger TAFEs transitioning into higher education as polytechnics. 2. Ensure privately owned registered training organisations will not be permitted to use this brand identity. |

15. To develop industry endorsement of TAFE courses to ensure quality.

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| **Objectives** | **Strategies** |
| 1. To create a stronger separation between course offerings based on quality markers provided by industry peak bodies.  2.To enable industry to better identify graduates from quality courses that reflect current industry needs. This can be remedied by having a quality signifier on student qualifications – such as “Insert Name of Peak Body Endorsed”. Example “ACWA Endorsed Course”.  3.To improve vocational pathways to tertiary study. | 1. Ensure the new Skills Commissioner and industry advisory groups (IAGs) work to set industry standards that are linked to employment outcomes and incorporate meaningful work placements where possible. 2. Ensure (as a condition of public funding) that course providers meet these standards so they can receive industry-based endorsement which will separate them from other providers in the market place. 3. Encourage linkages with workplaces to ensure skills sets are applicable in the workplace. 4. Facilitate pathways to meaningful employment through quality work placements. 5. Ensure government funding is provided to only proven private providers that not only meet competency standards but also can demonstrate viable curriculums, assessment procedures and outcomes to auditors and prospective students. |

16. To investigate the development of industry-specific specialist certificates that reflect adaptable and dynamic industry skills.

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| **Objectives** | **Strategies** |
| 1. To increase vocational education sector responsiveness to rapid industry changes.  2. To reduce the amount of time it takes for a specialist workforce to respond to industry changes. | 1. Create skill sets that exist outside of the current Australian Qualifications Frameworks that reflect the needs of Victorian industry. 2. Develop specialist skill sets that reflect dynamic industry areas. 3. Create niche skill sets. 4. Create adaptable skill sets and capacities that are portable across sectors. 5. Specify that skill sets are determined by peak bodies, employers and industry leaders. 6. Restrict specialist certificates to students that already hold minimum qualifications such as Certificate IV or diploma level qualification, or minimum number of years industry experience. 7. Fund specialist certificates for workers with existing skill sets who are retrenched or returning to the workforce. 8. Ensure specialist certificates can only be delivered by TAFEs, polytechnics, industry-endorsed specialist providers and niche RTO providers. |

17. To predicate course funding on face-to-face delivery subject to the completion of a major review into the efficacy of ‘online’ learning as it applies to post-compulsory teaching and learning.

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| **Objectives** | **Strategies** |
| 1. To ensure the provision of a supported learning environment reflects the cohort of students that access VET.  2. To ensure social inclusion and social justice elements of VET are being applied.  3. To ensure that competency-based training is being delivered in classroom-based environments to ensure task performance requirements are being met. | 1. Ensure funding is based on face-to-face delivery of courses, based on class hours. 2. Ensure a minimum of 75% of nominal course hours are delivered face to face. 3. Ensure a maximum of 25% of any course are delivered by online or blended learning styles. 4. Ensure exceptions to this rule would be –   where it is pedagogically sound to do so;  reasonable adjustment;  regional centres and thin markets (However, students in these areas should not be unfairly disadvantaged because of their geographical location).   1. Instigate a major review into the efficacy of ‘online’ learning for post-compulsory teaching and learning with broad consultation with stakeholders. |

18. To legislate for Industry to make a 1% contribution to training and education based on turnover.

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| **Objectives** | **Strategies** |
| 1. To further commit industry as a financial stakeholder in training programs.  2. To shift the burden of education and training away from the individual and back to employers and industries that benefit from skill development.  3. To recognise that whilst education has positive social outcomes, business and industry also benefit from what is currently a private cost, rather than a shared community cost. | 1. Make industry a key financial partner in skill development. |

19.To create meaningful work placement for TAFE-based courses that creates employment pathways and employment outcomes.

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| **Objectives** | **Strategies** |
| 1. To improve TAFE graduates work-based skills.  2. To engage employers in creating meaningful employment pathways for TAFE graduates.  3. To improve employment outcomes for TAFE graduates, especially for women and disadvantaged | 1. Introduce a meaningful work placement for Certificate IV courses and below. 2. Introduce meaningful work placement for Diploma level and above vocational courses. 3. Underwrite the costs to TAFEs for the delivery of “work placement” module to enabling appropriate supervision of students in the work place, and ensure that the placement is linked directly to learning outcomes. 4. Focus on industry employment pathway partnerships with social enterprise organisations to address social justice and inclusion dimensions. The Sydenham Secondary School Model is suitable for secondary schools. The HEAT model is suitable for TAFE. 5. Link work placement linked to education and employment outcomes and ensure that it is not used to exploit vulnerable young people and adults. |

20. To promote professional development and foster cooperation and collaboration between and within TAFEs/polytechnics.

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| **Objectives** | **Strategies** |
| **1**. To guarantee professional development opportunities to all TAFE/polytechnic staff through personal research and collaboration.  2. To increase vocational education sector responsiveness to rapid industry changes.  3. To reduce the amount of time it takes for workforce to respond to industry needs. | 1. Allocate half a day a week for each staff member for research/discipline professional development as per the Finnish education system with appropriate funding provision. 2. Promote ‘round table’ meetings of the relevant disciplines within respective TAFEs/polytechnics throughout the state on a half-yearly basis. 3. Encourage the development of specialist skill sets reflecting changing industry needs. |

21. To direct the new Victorian Skills Commissioner to conduct a review into, ‘recognition of prior learning’ (RPL), ‘on site assessment’ and associated ‘competency-based training’ to assert that targeted certificate skill-levels are being attained.

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| **Objective** | **Strategies** |
| 1.To demonstrate to graduates, employers and the community that onsite assessment and associated competency based training are attaining the desired skill levels. | 1. Direct the new Victorian Skills Commissioner to conduct an independent review of recognition of prior learning, onsite assessment and competency-based training practices with the view of directing measures to eliminate any shortcomings in any of these practices. 2. Ensure the review includes random, independent theoretical and practical examinations of the student’s acquired competencies. |

22. To restore and modernise TAFE with appropriate funding guided by a reinstated and enhanced Industry Training Boards to represent all stakeholders engaged in the ‘digital revolution’.

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| **Objective** | **Strategies** |
| **1**. To support industry and the new innovative industries created and being created by the ‘digital revolution’. | 1. Ensure Industry Training Boards consist of representatives from industry, unions; TAFE, specialised services such as marketing; accounting and other specialists to ensure a wider range of supplementary skills are available for evolving industries. 2. Recognise emerging product and market trends, especially in manufacturing to assess market trends and hence the skills needed for Industries to remain relevant in markets. 3. Ensure that TAFE Institutes provide options for education that are broad and focus on areas of need for the Victorian economy, and reinstate the Victorian Skills Commission or the equivalent. 4. Transform and enable TAFEs to increased innovation to provide new and specialist provision of emerging market-based competencies. 5. Support the development and recognition of excellence in the TAFE teaching workforce by incorporating a professional development component in their contracts and tenure. 6. Invest heavily in professional development of TAFE personnel. 7. Continue with proven private providers that not only meet competency standards but also can demonstrate viable curriculums, assessment procedures and outcomes to auditors and prospective students. 8. Regarding new and emerging technologies, promote the use of digital resources in the development of applications in the context of enhancing understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ culture and language. |

23. To make TAFE institutes more than vocational education providers: they should be seen as social hubs for the community, providing more than just training for jobs but life skills, which complement a student’s formal learning and education.

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| **Objective** | **Strategies** |
| 1. To ensure the Victorian TAFE system provides not only industry-specific training but also a broad range of life skills to graduates. | 1. Ensure that Victorian TAFEs provide a learning environment that provides vocational education and training, as well as a range of skills that are necessary for success in adult life. 2. Ensure that TAFE’s share of the training market is rediscovered and that TAFE continues to receive additional funding compared to other providers of publicly funded training in recognition of TAFE’s universal service and broader community obligations. |

24. To see TAFE institutes as part of a holistic approach to competency-based learning as well as practical enhancers of academic based education to assist in business enterprises.

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| **Objective** | **Strategy** |
| **1**. To build seamless pathways between schools, ACE, TAFE and higher education. | 1. Build a post-compulsory education system that provides for articulation between all sectors with enhanced, streamlined and consistent recognition of past study and recognition of prior learning through collaboration within the system. 2. Ensure that the post-compulsory education sector output has world-class levels of competency in its chosen field. |

25. To provide new and emerging technology-based programs, which complement innovation in emerging markets for manufactured products.

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| **Objective** | **Strategies** |
| 1. To continue to build world-class facilities for Victorian TAFEs so that Victorian students have the best possible learning environments with the best possible outcomes to meet the challenges of emerging technologies. | 1. Continue to invest in the most up-to- date and advanced facilities at Victorian TAFEs, with greater accessibility to ICT for both for students and staff, with adequate levels of technical support. 2. Focus on major new facilities providing for the increased specialisation within our TAFEs to meet the demands of the ‘digital revolution’. 3. Encourage and reward collaboration between autonomous TAFE institutions in the offering of shared programs and the use of facilities. 4. Ensure that TAFE institutions have modern machinery and workshops. |

26. To strengthen the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQFT) controls.

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| **Objective** | **Strategies** |
| To strengthen AQTF outcomes based model’s requirements for accredited courses for Victoria and later nationally with not only a list of competencies but a detailed curriculum and a stated methodology of assessment for the intended learning outcomes. | 1. Require the registering/course accrediting body (R/CAB) in Victoria to review all courses on offer by TAFE and private providers to ensure that all such courses are not only defined by a list of competencies but must contain a detailed curriculum and a methodology for assessments that will underpin the Registered Training Organisations (RTO) declared intended learning outcomes. 2. Require the R/CAB to establish a standardised format for TAFEs and private providers to complete. 3. Require the R/CAB to promote the strengthening of the ‘competency outcomes-based model’ at the national level. |

**HIGHER EDUCATION**

**1.** **Establish a National Commission of Review (NCOR) to examine Australia’s Post Compulsory Education and Training Systems.**

Policy Recommendation:To ensure university, sustainability, accountability and relevance to the community and industry into the future.

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| Objective | Strategies |
| 1. To create a National Commission of Review of Post Compulsory and Training Systems.  2. To ensure all Australians have affordable access to lifetime learning and self-improvement.  3. To ensure a public provider financial model is secured in legislation.  4. To secure genuine cooperative ownership of Australian universities.  5. To ensure high standards of governance and accountability are maintained in higher education institutions, in an administratively transparent and efficient manner. | * + - 1. Support the establish a National Commission of Review (NCOR) to examine in its entirety all aspects of Australia’s post-compulsory education and training systems.       2. Ensure the NCOR specifically appraises the introduction of a universal learning entitlement and a lifetime learning account.       3. Ensures the NCOR designs a coherent, sustainable model of financing public providers once it has fully investigated the marketisation and commodification of education in the post compulsory sector.       4. Ensures the NCOR vigorously evaluates the introduction of cooperative ownership and control of all Australian universities.  1. Direct the NCOR to reports its findings to the Federal Government within three years of Labor taking office. 2. Encourage the appointment of university vice chancellors and council board membership on their record of achieving excellence in pedagogy, research, nurturing staff and acknowledged student representation. 3. Limit the total salary of future vice chancellors in Australian universities to that of the Prime Minister of the day and 4. Ensure where Universities wish to become part of commercial activities they establish independent organizations. 5. Strengthen and uphold the legitimate role of student organisations in representing student interests and in providing valuable services, facilities, and amenities. 6. Ensure that University administrative processes are lean and efficient, and present the smallest possible resource load consistent with the above. |

**2. Reverse casualisation in the Higher Education Sector**

Policy Recommendation: To ensure universities academic staff numbers shall be such that, the number of teaching (or teaching and research) individuals employed in continuing (tenured) appointments shall, at all times, be equal to or exceed two thirds the sum of:

1. the number of separate individuals employed as teaching ‘casuals’,
2. the number of individuals employed ‘short-term fixed contracts’
3. the number of separate individuals employed ‘fixed contracts’
4. the number of separate individuals employed ‘teaching and research contracts.’

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| Objectives | Strategies |
| 1. To reduce the university reliance on casual, short-term, short-term fixed contracts and teaching and research contracts for the teaching of university students.  2. To increase the quality of university teaching by offering research-informed teaching to students. | 1. Legally require universities to increase their continuing positions to a level that exceeds two thirds the combined number of casual, short-term contracts, fixed–term contract, and teaching and research contracts as detailed above. 2. Penalise universities with severe financial penalties and disadvantages if they do not include the yearly number of ongoing, casual, short-term contracts, fixed–term contract and teaching and research contracts with the respective worked hours in their annual report. 3. Fund universities sufficiently to allow the above targets to be achieved, and, for government to ensure that funding allocations for academic salaries are binding. |

**3. Establish an Independent City University for the Bendigo Regional Community**

Policy Recommendation: To establish an independent Regional City University in Bendigo.

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| Objectives | Strategies |
| 1. To create a stand-alone Regional Independent City University in Bendigo, Victoria.  2. To provide relevant higher education courses to regional school leavers and adult learners mitigating their need to relocate to Melbourne or suffer inadequate online services.  3. To service the regional, commerce, industries and agriculture | 1. Seek support from the City of Greater Bendigo, Bendigo industry, commerce and existing staff at La Trobe, Bendigo campus. 2. Construct a thirty-year economic strategy for Bendigo becoming a University City. Determine the long-term benefits for the regional inhabitants, community, commerce, industry and agriculture. 3. Have the committee report by June, 2024. |

**4. Make universities better places to be and more effective**

Policy Recommendation: To support the academic endeavours and research in universities.

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| Objective | Strategies |
| 1. To preserve and extend a high quality, publicly funded higher education system. | 1. Ensure all universities have a rolling five-year strategic plan approved by the relevant minister. 2. Ensure that all universities’ five-year rolling strategic plans include management plans and quality assurance programs for teaching and learning, research and administration. 3. Ensure all university workload management plans (WLMP) are limited to 1640 hours and that the WLMPs demonstrate equity and transparency for all staff. 4. Ensure all academic staff (except research-only staff) acquire the equivalent of a one-year higher education teacher qualification over a period of five years. 5. Audit each university to ensure expenditure on marketing and expenditure is limited to 1.5% of the university’s gross annual income. 6. Audit each university to ensure a minimum of 50% of the university’s annual income is available at departmental level for the direct facilitation of the teaching and learning of students. 7. Audit each university to ensure all academics have as a minimum 40% of their 1640 hours in the WLMP allocated to research activities and that teaching-only career positions reside with staff that have explicitly chosen such careers. Teaching-only positions are to be limited to a maximum of 10% of the academic staff. |
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| To ensure that an environment of academic freedom is maintained in all of our higher education institutions. | Commit to ensuring that an environment of free speech and academic freedom is promoted in all of our higher education institutions by means of statements of intent such as, for example, the American Meteorological Society's "Freedom of Scientific Expression Statement". |

**5.Democratic Governance**

Policy Recommendation To achieve university relevance to the community and industry.

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| **Objective** | **Strategies** |
| To ensure high standards of governance and accountability are maintained in higher education institutions in an administratively efficient manner. | 1. Develop further an advisory structure for higher education that will ensure all stakeholders are represented in policy development and planning processes for higher education in Victoria. The stakeholders are to include representatives from commerce, business and industry, academia, professional associations, TAFEs, local communities, local schools’ student bodies, relevant unions, university management and Commonwealth Government representatives. 2. Restore the principle of democracy to university councils by providing for half of their members to be elected: 3. by and from academic staff members, 4. by and from non-academic staff members , 5. by and from undergraduate students, 6. by and from postgraduate students, and 7. by and from graduates. 8. Maintain the distinctive role and responsibilities of university councils as the governing body of universities, including the statutory requirement that chancellors and deputy chancellors are elected by the council, and vice chancellors and acting vice chancellors be appointed by the council, and that such elections or appointments not be transferred or delegated to any other body, with the chancellor, the deputy chancellor, the vice chancellor and the head of the academic board to be ex-officio members of the university council. 9. Provide for wider community representation on university councils by providing for the minister to appoint representatives from commerce, business and industry, professional associations, the local TAFEs, the local community, the locals schools, and the Commonwealth government. 10. Conduct audit survey of the external members of each university council from time to time to ensure the appointed council membership reflects the Victorian community. 11. Ensure all proceedings are conducted openly in the interests of the university, staff, students and the public. 12. Maintain and review at an appropriate time the efficacy of the system of payments to members of the governing bodies of universities to ensure that payments are commensurate with the workload and responsibilities of such office holders. 13. Strengthen and uphold the legitimate role of student organisations in representing student interests and in providing valuable services, facilities and amenities. 14. Provide for proper accountability of university-owned business arms, subsidiaries and companies to ensure programs bring a return to the public through ethical and fair practices.” |

6. To support the academic endeavours and research in universities.

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| **Objective** | **Strategies** |
| 1. To preserve and extend a high quality, publicly funded higher education system. | 1. Ensure all universities have a rolling five-year strategic plan approved by the relevant minister. 2. Ensure that all universites’ five-year rolling strategic plans include management plans and quality assurance programs for teaching and learning, research and administration. 3. Ensure all university workload management plans (WLMP) are limited to 1640 hours and that the WLMPs demonstrate equity and transparency for all staff. 4. Ensure all academic staff (except research-only staff) acquire the equivalent of a one-year higher education teacher qualification over a period of five years. 5. Audit each university to ensure expenditure on marketing and expenditure is limited to 1.5% of the university’s gross annual income. 6. Audit each university to ensure a minimum of 50% of the university’s annual income is available at departmental level for the direct facilitation of the teaching and learning of students. 7. Audit each university to ensure all academics have as a minimum 40% of their 1640 hours in the WLMS allocated to research activities and that teaching-only career positions reside with staff that have explicitly chosen such careers. Teaching-only positions are to be limited to a maximum of 10% of the academic staff. 8. Ensure all universities have a rolling five-year strategic plan approved by the relevant minister. 9. Ensure that all universites’ five-year rolling strategic plans include management plans and quality assurance programs for teaching and learning, research and administration. 10. Ensure all university workload management plans (WLMP) are limited to 1640 hours and that the WLMPs demonstrate equity and transparency for all staff. 11. 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Encourage flexibility and innovation in program delivery, allowing for accelerated progression opportunities and for study patterns that reflect the diverse needs of Victorians undertaking higher education. 16. Acknowledge that the most importance resource in the higher education sector is the academics who teach the students and undertake research and that they must be fully supported and duly rewarded. In particular, adequate opportunities must be provided for their interaction with the national and international disciplinary peers. 17. Acknowledge the importance of ongoing professional development for academics in teaching and research activities. 18. Adjust university funding cycle to five years, to match the rolling planning cycle. 19. Limit international student intakes to a target of 15% by 2020. 20. Recognise the diversity of purpose of post-compulsory education by distinguishing between vocational and professional programs and ensuring that there are pathways between the two. 21. Ensure that financial and other pressures on students are reduced and support financial mechanisms such that the courses they undertake can have appropriate for the levels of competency required. 22. Recognise that part-time work for a full time student should not exceed 10 hours per week. 23. Adjust the Commonwealth Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) systems so that post-compulsory education providers can form 24. Adapt overseas legislation, for example, The Treaty of Waitangi, for the purpose of respecting cultural and intellectual property rights of Indigenous people including (but not limited to): 25. adopting codes of conduct that ensure consent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is obtained when collecting and using Indigenous information; 26. expanding the level of accountability to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; 27. inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in research proposals; 28. establishing mutually beneficial research relationships; 29. revising relevant legislation concerning the governance of universities; 30. public funding ring-fenced for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers; and 31. the development of recognised codes of ethics for research affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. 32. Resource efforts that address the persistent under-representation of Indigenous people in general higher education and particularly in business education via: 33. strategies that incorporate and highlight differences in Indigenous and western views of business as a discipline and a profession by including relevant mentors and role models; 34. a stronger focus on building the capacities of schools in the process of fostering university – school partnerships; 35. giving priority to students from remote areas and first in the family to attend university; 36. a stronger focus on activities involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities throughout the whole process; and 37. understanding and incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural differences into business studies (especially given the apparent lack of engagement and research in the business disciplines). 38. Create opportunities to address the need for Indigenous researchers to contribute to methodological and theoretical research literature through writing about their lived experiences as Indigenous researchers, providing insights for opportunities to overcome challenges and bring forth aspirations that exist in their communities. |

**CROSS-SECTORIAL ISSUES**

**1. Facilitate collaboration and cooperation across the educational sectors.**

Policy Recommendation: To encourage improved collaboration and cooperation (minimise contestability) between all educational providers to achieve optimum student attainment, use of resources and enhanced skill levels in Victoria.

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| Objectives | Strategy |
| 1. To develop better linkages between all educational providers. These will:   1. optimize the opportunities for individuals and the community to enhance levels of educational attainment 2. augment Victoria’s skills base.   2. To better use existing educational resources. | 1. Strongly support and facilitate cooperation between schools, VET, higher education, adult and community education, industry, government and the community, by supporting inter-sectorial resource sharing initiatives including co-location of facilities where appropriate: 2. promoting and maximizing the benefits of co-location of providers from separate education sectors, 3. encouraging optimal use of facilities during weekends, evenings and traditional non-teaching period, 4. supporting a national system of credit transfers encompassing both higher education and VET sectors where this is practicable, 5. supporting innovation and greater flexibility in the admission system for both higher education and VET sectors, including opportunities for students to transfer more easily between sectors, 6. enhancing learning pathways by such mechanisms as recognition of prior learning, promotion and extension of credit transfer arrangements and encouragement of more widespread course articulation practices. |

**1/3/2021**