

- 1. Please explain the concept of 'education' in contrast to 'training' and indicate**
 - a. Why is it, in your experience, important for the student and for society?**
 - b. Does Smart and Skilled for a particular qualification provide funding for education that is not directly necessary to achieve training outcomes?**
 - i. If not, please explain what the implications are for**
 - 1. TAFE, and**
 - 2. private for-profit providers**

"Education" and "Training" are both distinct but not unrelated processes of "Learning".

"Education" is regarded more as an active accumulation of information and knowledge, hence more theoretical in nature.

"Training" is regarded more as an active accumulation of skills and competencies, hence more practical in nature.

Both learning processes are "married" exceptionally well in TAFE ("Technical and Further Education", to spell out the full name).

The "technical" aspect of TAFE is the "training" aspect – courses focused to a greater extent on inculcating and developing skills and competencies.

The "education" aspect of TAFE is its other complementary aspect – courses focused to a greater extent on imparting information and knowledge, especially in the provision of a "second chance" capacity; a general education for adult learners who perhaps for a variety of reasons had their earlier opportunities for a general education compromised.

"Education" as a process in itself is important for people as individuals and for society in general. It "teaches" people not only a designated specific area of theory, whatever that theory might be, but it is a process whereby people "learn" how to "learn".

"Education" teaches people critical thought; how to comprehend, analyse, critique and discuss (both informally and formally) all bases of knowledge.

In doing so, inculcating this process and method, society develops its information and knowledge systems, and the more these knowledge and information systems are shared in this same process the more society's members are able to make informed, evidence-based decisions and choices about all aspects of life.

"Education" empowers people and society.

The more "educated" a society's population becomes, the more those society members, individually and in groups, can make unbiased and unprejudiced contributions to the transparent, equitable, cooperative and healthy development of civilization.

In my opinion, Smart and Skilled as a funding model is far too restricted and far too limited in its focus on "training", aimed at particular and specific skills sets.

As important and as useful as this may be, it causes an imbalance in the partnership between education and training, a detriment to the former due to an over-emphasis of the latter.

Such an imbalance can only lead to an attenuated over-investment in an artificial competition between state and private provision of training services.

The educators and trainers, being experts in their fields, should be left to their own decision processes as to what education and training programmes they provide, not be forced into an inherently unfair market-based competition for limited funds.

Doing such will only serve to devalue not only the education and training itself, but as a direct result disempower and destroy the foundations upon which society depends to grow and prosper.

2. Please explain the work of a TAFE counsellor and the significance of that work to TAFE students and the community.

TAFE Counsellors are akin to our state education School Counsellor colleagues.

Excepting that TAFE Counsellors add career (vocational) counselling responsibilities to their duties.

The great majority (approximately 80%) of TAFE Counsellors across the state are Registered Psychologists. Those few who are not Psychologists have tertiary qualifications in other human specialty fields, such as Social Work.

TAFE Counsellors provide professional high quality personal, educational and vocational counselling to **enrolled** TAFE students, and educational and vocational counselling (not personal) to **prospective** students. If prospective students demonstrate need for personal counselling intervention we refer on to an external provider sensitive and appropriate to demonstrated needs.

In addition we design, develop, implement and deliver sessions to groups of enrolled and prospective students. Depending on cohort demographics, these group sessions may be focused on (but not limited to) course information, career information, learning skills, and personal and interpersonal skills. For example; study, time management and communication skills)

We also provide professional support and advice to other TAFE staff, especially teachers, relevant to more broadly assisting and helping those staff in their own service provision to TAFE students. For example; professional insight into and strategies for managing personal and interpersonal dynamics.

Nobody else in TAFE has the time, knowledge, skills, experience and expertise to offer this same service to students.

In addition, no other provider, neither in VET nor more broadly in the human services industry offers this same service.

TAFE Counselling is unique.

The loss and or diminishment of this service is unconscionable.

One cannot imagine public schools without School Counsellors.

Equally, one cannot imagine TAFE Campuses across New South Wales without TAFE Counsellors.

TAFE Counsellors add quality and value to TAFE and its students. We help students make informed decisions and choices about their learning, their employment and their careers.

We ensure the right person does the right course for the right reason at the right time in the right way for the right outcome.

We ensure students make informed decisions about which course to select, based upon their specific and individual needs, and we support those students throughout the duration of their course to maximise opportunities for successful course completion.

TAFE Counselling is a purpose built quality assurance programme.

The loss and or diminishment of TAFE Counselling puts at great risk not only individuals' investments in their education and training future, but also puts at great risk the state's investment in its own people, its own health as a society, its own continuing development and its prosperity.

Please consider the statistics in accompanying documents submitted as evidence to this Inquiry.

3. How many TAFE Counsellors have lost their positions as a result of restructuring or other changes since 2011?

a. How many were before the restructuring began?

b. Please explain the impacts on students and TAFE of this change.

Statewide data has become increasingly difficult to access since the creation of individual TAFE Institutes and the subsequent devolution and then deletion of statewide internal knowledge and information support services.

NSW TAFE Counselling in the past was once coordinated statewide by such a support service, entitled "Policy, Research and Training" – but this internal agency was minimised and defunded piece by piece decades ago and its minor remnants eventually disappeared completely last decade.

Thus, communications between TAFE Counsellors between Institutes has for some time been limited to informal and ad hoc means.

This has meant information sharing, analysis and comprehension of statewide trends has been undeniably compromised.

As a result I find myself in a difficult position in responding to this question.

However, I can respond with accurate data and information specifically relevant to Hunter TAFE.

I would then assume circumstances for other TAFE Counsellors in other Institutes across the state would perhaps be somewhat similar.

For many years over the last two decades Hunter TAFE Counsellor positions have been quite stable.

There are 13 permanent TAFE Counsellor positions (part-time and full-time) which account for an effective full-time total of 10.5 positions.

Add to this 2 full-time Senior Counsellor positions.

Finally, there are several other TAFE Counsellors in a casual pool who provide backfill and relief from time to time as necessary.

Prior to Smart and Skilled, complete funding for this service accounted for approximately 1% of the Hunter TAFE global budget allocation.

Which in my opinion is a negligible figure, considering the professional quality service provided to students for such a relatively minimal monetary sum.

Under the present change management model in response to Smart and Skilled, it has been proposed that funding for Hunter TAFE Counsellors will be reduced by approximately 60%.

This proposed model deletes all TAFE Counselling positions and replaces them with 6 new positions (all 0.6 permanent part time), reducing the effective full-time number from 10.5 to only 3.6.

It is also proposed that the 2 Senior Counsellor positions be reduced by half, leaving 1 only Senior Counsellor position.

As indicated in other evidence to this Inquiry, the loss and or diminishment of TAFE Counselling is unconscionable.

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A sample of some statistical reports are also made available to this Inquiry.

They suggest Smart and Skilled has already had a dire impact upon the efficacy of TAFE Counselling in the Hunter.

The trends suggest Hunter TAFE Counselling has this year devolved significantly.

Please consider the statistics in accompanying documents submitted as evidence to this Inquiry.

CStats Data Report from 2010 to Present (as at 17th August 2015) – Whole of CCPS

Noting breakdown between Career, Educational and Personal Counselling Interviews

Noting breakdown between Enrolled and Prospective Students

For the purposes of this report, focus is given to the three main areas of TAFE Counselling service provision; ***career, educational and personal counselling*** interviews. Where other counselling areas are recorded (for example “Financial”) these interviews are ignored. Thus, there may be some small discrepancy between “Total” interviews for any year and the final cumulative totals of the three main divisions mentioned.

In addition, similarly, focus is also given to ***Student Status***, being either Enrolled or Prospective. Other categories of client background (for example “Staff”) are ignored as well.

For simplicity, “Educational Choice” and “Educational Problem” interviews are combined to give total for ***Education Counselling***, “Initial Vocational Choice”, “Career Development” and “Retraining” interviews are combined to give total for ***Career Counselling***, and ***Personal*** stands alone, of course.

NOTE:

All figures are rounded to the nearest whole number.

After double-checking data and calculations we now find, on average, across 2010 to 2015 (inclusive):

Subject Matter of Counselling:

- Educational Counselling sessions account for 41% of interviews
- Career Counselling sessions account for 32% of interviews
- Personal Counselling sessions account for 24% of interviews

Student Status:

- Counselling sessions with Enrolled Students account for 53% of interviews
- Counselling sessions with Prospective Students account for 41% of interviews

Leaving out the incomplete 2015 data, and using only 2010-2014 (inclusive) data, the percentages above change only slightly, being 40%, 30%, 25%, 55% and 38% respectively.

Below is the tabulated data for individual years:

	<i>Total Interviews</i>	<i>Educational</i>	<i>Career</i>	<i>Personal</i>	<i>Enrolled</i>	<i>Prospective</i>
<u>2010</u>	3412	1483	778	966	1999	1180
	100%	43%	23%	28%	59%	35%
<u>2011</u>	5825	2484	1614	1477	3390	2074
	100%	43%	28%	25%	58%	36%
<u>2012</u>	5734	2134	1867	1486	3141	2144
	100%	37%	33%	26%	55%	37%
<u>2013</u>	5497	2170	1810	1315	2749	2346
	100%	39%	33%	24%	50%	43%
<u>2014</u>	4327	1717	1493	981	2306	1699
	100%	40%	35%	23%	53%	39%
<u>2015 (at 08/10/15)</u>	1654	662	686	263	682	873
	100%	40%	41%	16%	41%	53%

Five Years of CStats - A Snapshot.

CCPS Data at a Glance:

(Counselling, Careers and Pathways Service / Hunter TAFE)

Client Data Report (Number of Interviews and Number of Individual Clients)

	<u>Number of Interviews</u>	<u>Number of Individual Clients</u>
<u>2011</u>	5825	3795
<u>2012</u>	5734	3416
<u>2013</u>	5066	3122
<u>2014</u>	4327	2771
<u>2015</u>	1654	1200

Staff Activities

	<u>Total Number of Activities</u>	<u>Total Participants</u>	<u>Total Contact Hours</u>
<u>2011</u>	1908	9322	2476.15
<u>2012</u>	2441	14,817	3018.54
<u>2013</u>	2498	8582	2658.95
<u>2014</u>	1793	7969	1930.1
<u>2015</u>	100	565	595

Group Work

	Total Groups	Total Participants	Total Meetings	Total Contact Hours
<u>2011</u>	252	5724	322	202.3
<u>2012</u>	280	5968	309	253.5
<u>2013</u>	242	5197	264	220.3
<u>2014</u>	218	5352	241	189.25
<u>2015</u>	42	717	43	34.25

Consultations/Enquiries

	Consultations	Enquiries	Internet Enquiries
<u>2011</u>	1401	810	51
<u>2012</u>	1200	1045	192
<u>2013</u>	745	1042	237
<u>2014</u>	649	823	214
<u>2015</u>	194	221	66

NOTES:

- a) All 2013 data as at 27/11/13, all 2011 and 2012 complete.
- b) A recurring question is "When does an enquiry become an interview?" which can determine how this occasion of customer service is then recorded (CStats definitions indicate an enquiry is less than 10 minutes duration, but this is potentially at cross purposes with the Client Data Interview Duration field)
- c) Another recurring question is "When is a consultation a staff activity?" which again can determine how this is recorded.
- d) 2015 data is accurate as at 08/10/15