

ARTS INDUSTRY COUNCIL OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

*an independent
voice for the arts*

22nd October 2016

Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham Minister for Education and Training
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

By email: senator.birmingham@aph.gov.au

Dear Minister,

VET Student Loans Eligible Course List

On behalf of the arts industry of South Australia, we write to request your re-consideration of the availability of Fee-Help to Creative Arts courses. We urge the Federal Government to consider a capped Vet-Fee Help contribution for the Creative Arts in South Australia.

In South Australia our VET sector has largely been protected from the unscrupulous behaviour of some private providers, as our Creative Arts VET courses are run exclusively by TAFE SA, building on the 30 year history of first the Centre for the Performing Arts and now AC Arts. These courses are highly acclaimed and are efficiently and professionally run. Furthermore, there is no alternative provider in our State.

As you will be aware, South Australia has a long history as a creative and innovative State. The last Census shows 30,555 people in South Australia were employed in either a cultural occupation or the cultural industries in their main job. There are over 4,100 actively trading businesses in the cultural industry.

Our stable and growing industries and creative economy include the craft, festivals, theatre, dance, innovative 'making' sectors and we punch above our weight in the arts. A career in the arts is not a 'lifestyle' choice, which is evidenced by the great commercial success of many of Australia's musicians, artists, actors, designers and dancers on the Australian and international stage. There are also a legion of arts administrators, sound, lighting and stage technicians, production managers and stage managers who create productions and events and provide the human resources for the production elements of our performing arts, festivals and events.

The Arts Industry Council of SA wishes to reject any implication that the Creative Arts will not be at the core of our State's future success. In the 21st century, more and more young people are looking to the arts and cultural industries as a viable long term career, as the arts continues to provide jobs, growth and long term benefits for the economy.

In South Australia we have all made a lifestyle choice. Our dentists, lawyers and civil servants all enjoy a richness of natural environment, quality food and wine, and a community that values the arts, craftsmanship and new ideas. It is our arts practices that foster the conditions in which Adelaide's population enjoy their many and varied careers.

It is worth noting that in South Australia, TAFE SA has already implemented a capping process for the numbers of students in some creative arts courses. This means that for both government and for industry, the numbers of students studying VET courses are known, manageable and sustained.

The reason why capping can work in the creative sector is that students who study these courses are auditioned or interviewed for talent and ability, thus ensuring the best are chosen. This results in small numbers of highly deserving individuals - with no access or equality issues based on their ability to pay. We believe it is the best use of tax-payers money and returns the greatest result back to industry.

It should also be noted that TAFE SA consults closely with industry with regard to training needs in order to fulfil the most pressing needs of the creative industries. A good example has been the recent study of skills requirements undertaken by the Arts Industry Council SA which has resulted in adjustments to courses offered through AC Arts.

We strongly advise and request that the following courses delivered through TAFE SA remain in the VET scheme with a quota of capped number of VET Fees:

- Writing
- Visual Arts
- Dance
- Acting
- Technical Production & Design
- Film & TV
- Arts Administration

We welcome your consideration and positive response to our recommendation and would appreciate your response.

Yours Sincerely

Gail Kovatseff
Chair, Arts Industry Council of South Australia
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Cc: Minister for the Arts, Senator the Hon Mitch Fifield