

Women in outer suburbs and regions hardest hit from Dutton's plan to axe Free TAFE

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Australian Unions today slammed Opposition Leader, Peter Dutton's plan to scrap the Federal Government's Free TAFE program.

The ACTU has released data showing that free TAFE places have been widely taken up around the country, particularly by women living in outer suburbs and in regional communities.

The data makes a lie of the criticism by Shadow Education Minister, Sarah Henderson who was caught in a leaked video telling voters that Free TAFE "just isn't working," and claiming that "we can do better than Labor's Free TAFE program."

The Coalition attempted to block legislation to expand Free TAFE last month, with Deputy Liberal Leader Sussan Ley arguing that "if you don't pay for something, you don't value it."

The Liberals only know how to value things if you can put a dollar figure against it, whereas Australians are voting with their feet and signing up to free TAFE courses in record numbers.

Peter Dutton's disdain for the TAFE sector puts at risk vital progress under the Albanese Government to build up a skilled workforce to meet demand for childcare and other essential services in the care economy.

In the electorate of Hawke, 6429 people have enrolled in free TAFE courses in areas where there are huge skills shortages, such as nursing, early childhood education, aged care and construction.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Assistant Secretary, Liam O'Brien:

"Free TAFE is changing the lives of hundreds of thousands of Australians, particularly women and Indigenous Australians living in outer-suburban and regional communities.

"Peter Dutton, Sarah Henderson and Sussan Ley's rejection of Free TAFE shows how out of touch they are with the needs of women, First Nations people and young people who have grasped with both hands the opportunity to get a free skills qualification.

"The Coalition is wrong to claim that unless you can cost something down to the last dollar, then it has no value. In fact, for many women, First Nations and young people a free education is priceless due to the life-changing job opportunities it brings.

"Forcing working people to spend more of their money on education will result in more financial stress for households and fewer people trained up and ready to work in early childhood, aged care and construction."

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