

The public education revolution requires real world funding for TAFE staff, 2010 equipment for students

The union of public sector workers is asking the federal government to identify funding, including an urgent allocation, to help improve TAFE public education across Queensland's tropical north.

The call follows a meeting of local public sector workers in Cairns today.

Our communities in the far north need a public education revolution and that means extra funding is required for TAFE workers in places like Cairns, Innisfail, Mareeba, Atherton, Mossman and the Torres Strait," local QPSU organiser Kevin O'Sullivan said today.

While the federal government has allocated funds for bricks and mortar, we know our far north communities now require more TAFE teachers and support staff in the class rooms for students as well as 2010 equipment that prepares students for the future workforce.

"You can give a TAFE student a seat in a brand new classroom but it requires someone to stand at the front of each class and teach skills as well as TAFE support workers to maintain student training equipment, among many other things.

"Unfortunately TAFEs have been losing experienced public education workers, so more must now be done by the federal government to keep experienced people in public TAFEs so we can address the tropical north's skills shortage and train a future green jobs workforce.

"We also know from new data that should the federal government decide to take strong action to tackle climate change and generate green jobs that there will be thousands more local workers who will require TAFE training.

"New research shows that strong federal government climate change action would generate an extra 14,000 jobs throughout our local region through until 2030, including more than 3,500 additional services workers, plus thousands more across construction, manufacturing and agriculture and this can only happen with a strong, properly funded public TAFE system. (Source: Australian Council of Trade Unions and ACF).

"We are simply asking the federal government to increase funding and allocate urgent funds for Queensland community TAFEs, provide more teachers and support staff, as well as ongoing TAFE staff training, modern student equipment and course funding so that Queenslanders can skill up for the future."

TAFE Snapshot – Tropical North Queensland

Tropical north TAFEs are located at: Cairns; Innisfail; Mareeba; Atherton; Mossman; Torres Strait (Thursday Island)

Contact: Alex Scott, General Secretary, QPSU: 0407 379 284