

**THE HON SUSSAN LEY MP  
DEPUTY LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION  
SHADOW MINISTER FOR INDUSTRY, SKILLS AND TRAINING  
SHADOW MINISTER FOR SMALL AND FAMILY BUSINESS  
SHADOW MINISTER FOR WOMEN  
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR FARRER**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**JUST 13 PER CENT OF FEE FREE TAFE  
COURSES HAVE DELIVERED A QUALIFICATION**

*Sunday, 20 October 2024*

Official government guidance in a secret government brief concedes “there is a relatively low number of completions” across Labor’s \$1.5 billion Fee Free TAFE program.

Minister for Skills Andrew Giles’ Question Time Brief obtained by the Opposition reveals just 13 per cent of Fee Free TAFE enrolments have resulted in a qualification being completed.

This means across the \$1.5 billion Fee Free TAFE spend, Australia has gained just 61,072 newly qualified workers to date. With over 500,000 enrolments in Fee Free TAFE, it could mean up to \$1 billion of allocated funds are yet to deliver any qualification at all.

The Government has refused to release the number of students that have started a Fee Free TAFE course then dropped out or the ‘cancellation’ number. Until they do, we have to base assessments of Fee Free TAFE on the Skills Minister's own documents which state Labor’s Fee Free TAFE program currently has a success rate of 13 per cent to date.

A completion rate of just 13 per cent calls into question claims from Minister Giles and the Prime Minister that “[Fee Free TAFE continues to be an enormous success](#)”.

Since Labor took office Australia has 85,000 fewer apprentices and trainees, a loss of one in five. This means we have lost more apprentices and trainees than Fee Free TAFE has graduated.

Industry sources suggest TAFE fail rates could be as high as 55-60 per cent across many courses and some in the training sector have indicated some courses could have failure rates as high as 70-90 per cent.

In Victoria, just 1 per cent of those who registered for a free certificate IV in plumbing successfully completed their training. It has also been found that just one in 10 students completed their certificate IV in engineering, one in three finished their diploma in building and construction, while 17 per cent finished their certificate IV in child, youth and family intervention.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Minister for Skills and Training, Sussan Ley said Australians can now see what Labor has been hiding, Fee Free TAFE is not delivering skilled graduates at the scale we need to deal with the skills crisis.

“Fee Free TAFE has not made a meaningful impact in alleviating skills shortages in critical areas like construction, and we continue to see shortages across the care sector too,” the Deputy Leader said.

“If Labor had funded the skills system as a whole instead of just sending money to just state run TAFEs then we would be seeing much higher graduate numbers across the country. More skilled workers would help drive down the cost and time to build the houses we need.

“Every time the Prime Minister and Minister Giles talk about Fee Free TAFE they should be asked how many graduates it has delivered.

“It is time for Labor to come clean with Australians about how many drop outs there have been. The test for Minister Andrew Giles is whether he is willing to be transparent with Australians about how he is spending their money – he must give us the Fee Free TAFE cancellations figures today.”

**[ENDS]**

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**BACKGROUND**

**Minister’s Question Time Brief: Released FOI LEX 1149 Document 4 p.6**

**[Completions] How many Fee-Free TAFE students have completed their course?**

- From the start of Fee-Free TAFE in 2023 to 31 March 2024, there have been 61,072 completions in Fee-Free TAFE courses, representing around 13% of total enrolments for the period.