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I am writing to you regarding the above inquiry and wish to put forward my views in relation to the role of TAFE and its operation. I worked for TAFE Queensland for 20 years, in teaching, middle management and later senior management. Upon my retirement, I was asked by my department to become a consultant to private clients wishing to become RTOs. As a result, I ran my own consultancy for 10 years. Therefore, I wish to comment as follows:

- **Development of skills in the Australian economy** – Some private RTOs have, in reality met the standards required by government, BUT these are in the minority. Because as a consultant, I was able to see issues which were not picked up by audit, I believe the curriculum (Training Packages and Units of Competency) has been dumbed down. Therefore, these RTOs are not developing the skills for the Australian economy.

- **The development of opportunities for Australians to improve themselves and increase their life and employment prospects.** As stated above, private RTOs are not providing training to the standard employed by TAFE.
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- **The delivery of services and programs to support regions, communities and disadvantaged individuals to access training and skills and through them a pathway to employment.** Many RTOs purport to do this, but in fact, the majority do not.

- **The operation of a competitive training market.** The training market is already competitive. However, the standards of operation are so diverse, the out comes cannot be compared. Government authorities do not have the resources to adequately audit and monitor the market.

In summary, I believe TAFE has significantly superior standards in the development, delivery of services and programs and operates to these standards.

Regards

Helen O'Connor