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TAFE COUNCIL DECISION – 5 AUGUST 2011 re PROPOSED MERGER OF CIT AND UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA

Members will be aware of the release last week of the Bradley Report on options for the future of CIT and UC. If you have not already seen it, the report is available at http://www.det.act.gov.au/future_of_cit_and_uc

AEU-ACT Branch TAFE Council considered the Report at its meeting of 5 August 2011, and after lengthy discussion carried the following resolution:

AEU-ACT Branch TAFE Council expresses its concern and disappointment that Professor Bradley's *Report on Options for Future Collaborations of Canberra Institute of Technology and University of Canberra* (the Bradley Report) does not advance any educational rationale for a merger of CIT and UC. There seems little recognition of the importance of VET in meeting the ACT's skills needs and of CIT's high standing in this arena.

While rejecting the version of autonomy for CIT proposed in the Bradley report, TAFE Council does not believe that the only future for CIT is as an institution merged with UC. TAFE Council believes that CIT has a strong and vibrant future as a stand-alone entity. However, in considering the recommendations of the Bradley Report for a merger a number of matters need to be clarified, including the form of the new institution, the industrial implications of a merger, and the effect of a merger on CIT's curriculum offerings. In addition, the ACT Government must clearly articulate the educational rationale and educational objectives of a merger.

Further, TAFE Council asserts that consideration of the merger proposal must address a range of issues including:

- creation of a new institution with a new name so that CIT and UC can forge a shared future identity with each being genuinely equal partners in the process;



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- guaranteed provision of quality vocational education for the ACT community;
- prevention of job losses. Jobs must be transferred to the new employer;
- the maintenance of current CIT campus provision. No CIT campus should close as part of a merger;
- prevention of diminution of funding, resourcing or curriculum offerings at CIT.

The Branch Secretary is to write to the ACT Government seeking answers on these issues and any other matters which may unfold as the consultation process moves forward.

Recognising that this issue is a complex matter with national implications, TAFE Council welcomes the offer of AEU Federal Office assistance and support to the ACT Branch in its on-going campaign, and requests AEU offices to work together to maximise the ACT Branch contribution to the debate. In particular, the AEU is to explore:

- a) the conduct of a forum on amalgamation issues;
- b) activities that will engage AEU members in the consultation process; and
- c) commissioning of research and/or advice about best practice formulation of frameworks and legislation for the establishment of a multi-sector entity.

The AEU Office will keep TAFE members advised of further developments in this matter as they arise. In the meantime, members are urged to raise your concerns and/or questions with ACT politicians such as:

Chief Minister Katy Gallagher (gallagher@act.gov.au)

Deputy Chief Minister & Education Minister Andrew Barr (barr@act.gov.au)

Greens Convenor Meredith Hunter (hunter@act.gov.au)

Opposition Leader Zed Seselja (seselja@act.gov.au)

Opposition Education Spokesperson Steve Dospot (dozspot@act.gov.au).

Don't forget to send a copy of your email to the AEU Office for information (priority1@aeuact.asn.au).

PENNY GILMOUR
BRANCH SECRETARY