

Parents and teachers call for state inquiry into TAFE

**TIM WILLIAMS
EDUCATION REPORTER**

PARENTS and school staff are demanding a state parliamentary inquiry into the failings of TAFE SA and want its entire board sacked.

A survey by the state's peak public school parent group found 80 per cent support for an immediate state-based inquiry into the vocational training crisis.

The threat of suspension hangs over 10 TAFE SA courses after a damning audit by the national regulator last year.



The survey, which had more than 900 responses including 78 school principals, found more than 90 per cent of school staff wanted an SA inquiry, while about four in every five parents and principals favoured sacking the whole TAFE

SA board. Respondents also were scathing about a Senate committee which had its only hearing in New South Wales.

"It's clear from the results that parents and educators ... want a transparent, local investigation into the crisis," SA Association of State School Organisations director David Knuckey said.

"The feedback reveals the community's anger and frustration at how the crisis is being handled.

"Obviously, the community believes responsibility goes beyond the former CEO (Robin

Murt, who resigned)." Each year thousands of high schoolers take vocational courses, some via TAFE.

SA Best leader Nick Xenophon last month called for a parliamentary inquiry to be held straight after the state election. Opposition education spokesman John Gardner has promised a Liberal Government would sack the board.

Two independent reviews of TAFE SA commissioned by the State Government are underway, one by consultants Nous Group and another by vocational training expert

Terry Moran. The Government sacked TAFE SA board chair Peter Vaughan.

Mr Gardner said with multiple reviews underway, a parliamentary inquiry as well would only delay reforms to the public trainer. However he said a Liberal government would extend the terms of reference of the Moran review.

Education Minister Susan Close said: "A re-elected Labor Government will ensure that TAFE SA is a strong, high quality provider of training for jobs of the future." TAFE SA declined to comment.

Dredging up fears of disease

**ASHLEIGH PISANI
NORTHERN MESSENGER**

A PLANNED dredging operation could wipe out oyster stocks in Gulf St Vincent after the discovery of Pacific oyster mortality syndrome (POMS) in the Port River, local fishermen and businesses fear.

They believe the disease could spread throughout the gulf if Flinders Ports' plan to dredge 155 million cubic metres of silt, and dump it 30km out to sea, goes ahead.

Adelaide University marine ecologist Dr Dominic McAfee said the dredging was "not a good idea from a biosecurity perspective".

"Any vessel carrying water — and a dredging vessel certainly would — could potentially transport the virus," he said. "If you transport material from one place to another with infected material you need to treat it by leaving it in the sun. There is a threat there."

Wildcat Fisheries president Dennis Holder said the dredging plan should be put on hold to contain the disease. Steve Castle from Salisbury tackle shop Stop On said "dredging is a great way of transporting (it) and allowing it to form new colonies".

PIRSA said the disease had not been detected in commercial oyster-growing regions.

More women at the top as change starts to spread

A "NEW normal" is slowly but surely entering South Australian workplaces — and insurer Health Partners has revealed its own push for change in the lead-up to International Women's Day on Thursday.

The group, which doubled its number of women executives in the past few years, has six women in its local team of 10 senior executives.

Chief strategist Marissa Galatis says it's not a result of conscious gender planning, but about hiring smart people who just happen to be women.

Equal Opportunity Commissioner Niki Vincent said the pace of change had been "glacial", but there is more help at hand.

All 14 SA Chiefs for Gender Equity, including SAPOL Commissioner Grant Stevens, will today sign up to a new "targets with teeth" framework to promote women in their own workplaces.

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ON BOARD: Tracy Shepherd, Helen White, Sharon Liberal and, front, Marissa Galatis, Jennifer Amato and Lalena King.

Parkside man in rape arrest

A PARKSIDE man was last night charged by police with unlawful detention and the rape of a woman.

The 32-year-old man was arrested following investigations by detectives from Sturt CIB.

The accused, whose name has not been released, was refused bail — and he was expected to appear in the Adelaide Magistrates Court today.

Police have not released further details of the alleged sexual assault or where the attack occurred.

