

# THE MISSING PIECE: ANCHORING VET IN PLACE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

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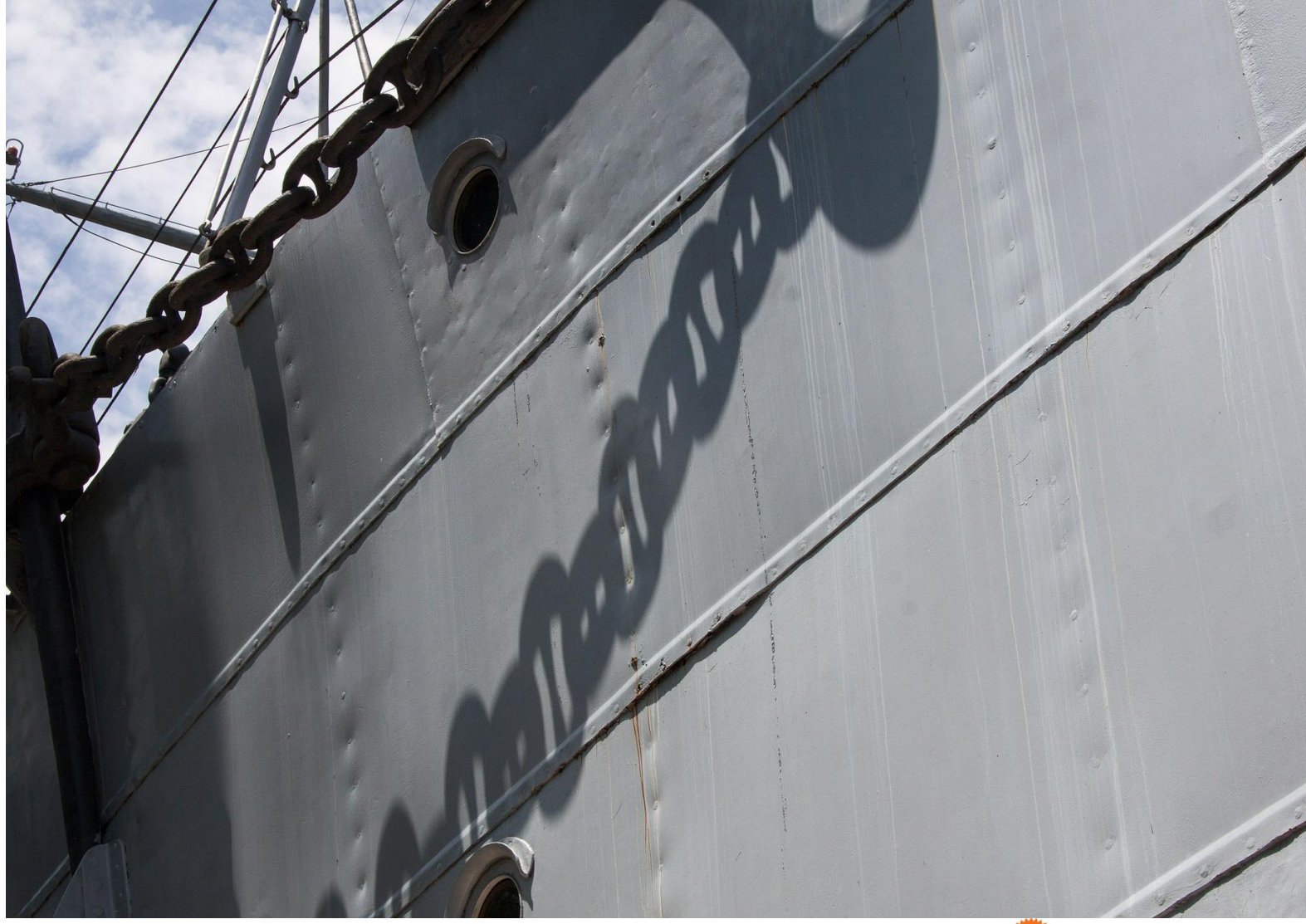
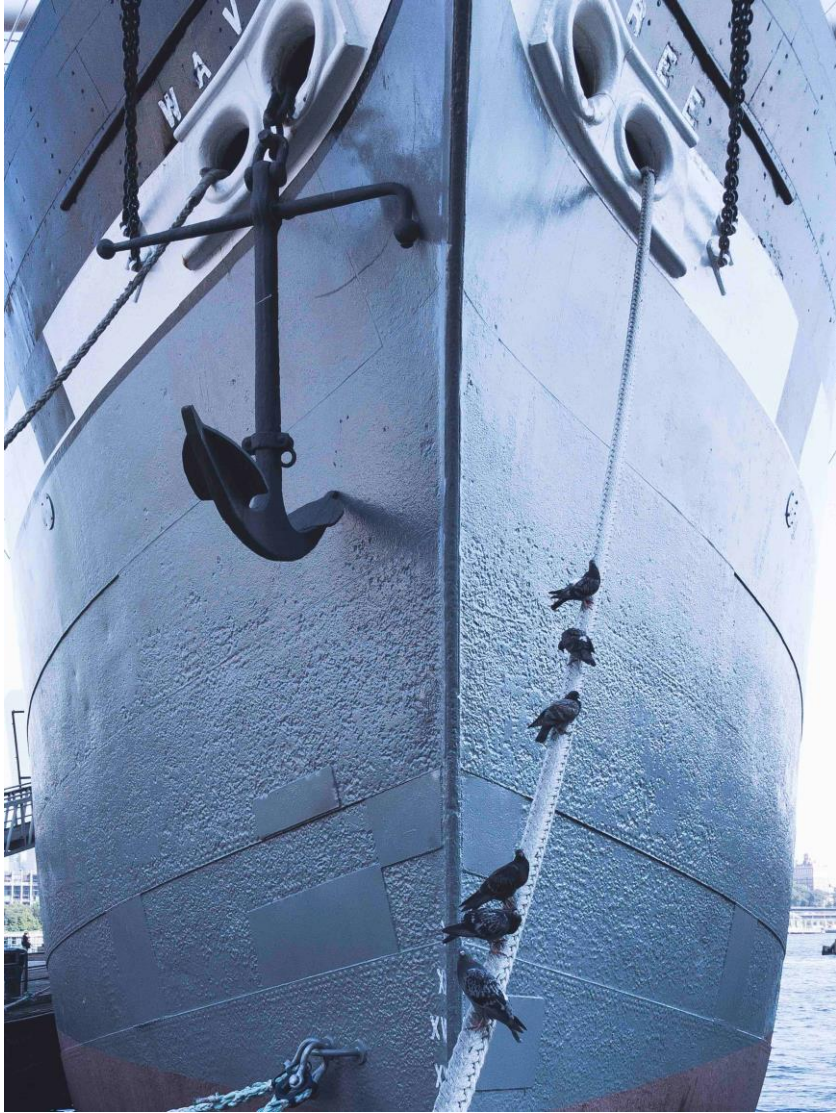
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**Brotherhood of St Laurence**  
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# LET'S START WITH A METAPHOR...



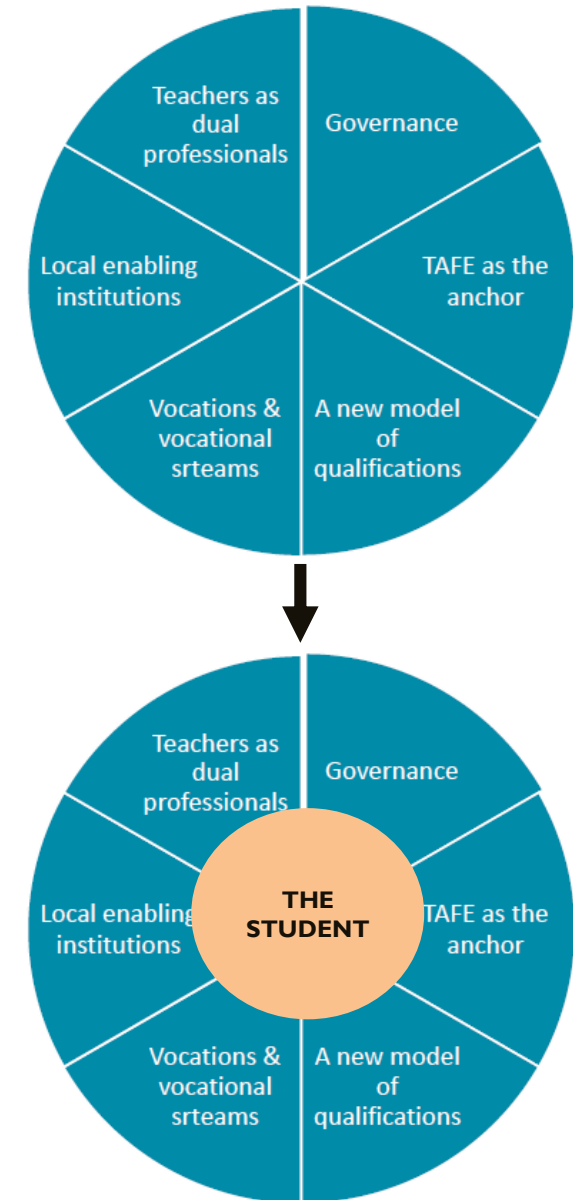


## ONE END OF THE CONTINUUM: PRODUCTIVE CAPABILITIES AND TAFE AS ANCHOR

Prominent writers in the space (Wheelahan et al. 2015, Buchanan et al. 2018) call for reform in two areas:

- Reform of qualifications and curriculum – from Competency Based Training to productive capabilities and ‘vocational streams’.
- Elevated role for TAFEs in the diverse provider landscape – ‘anchors’ in place for social and economic development, as well as anchors in the sector for innovation and excellence in training.

However still missing a critical piece of the puzzle – the student...



# **TOP DOWN, BOTTOM UP: STUDENT CENTRED VET REFORM**

## TOP DOWN APPROACH

Partial picture

What lies beneath?

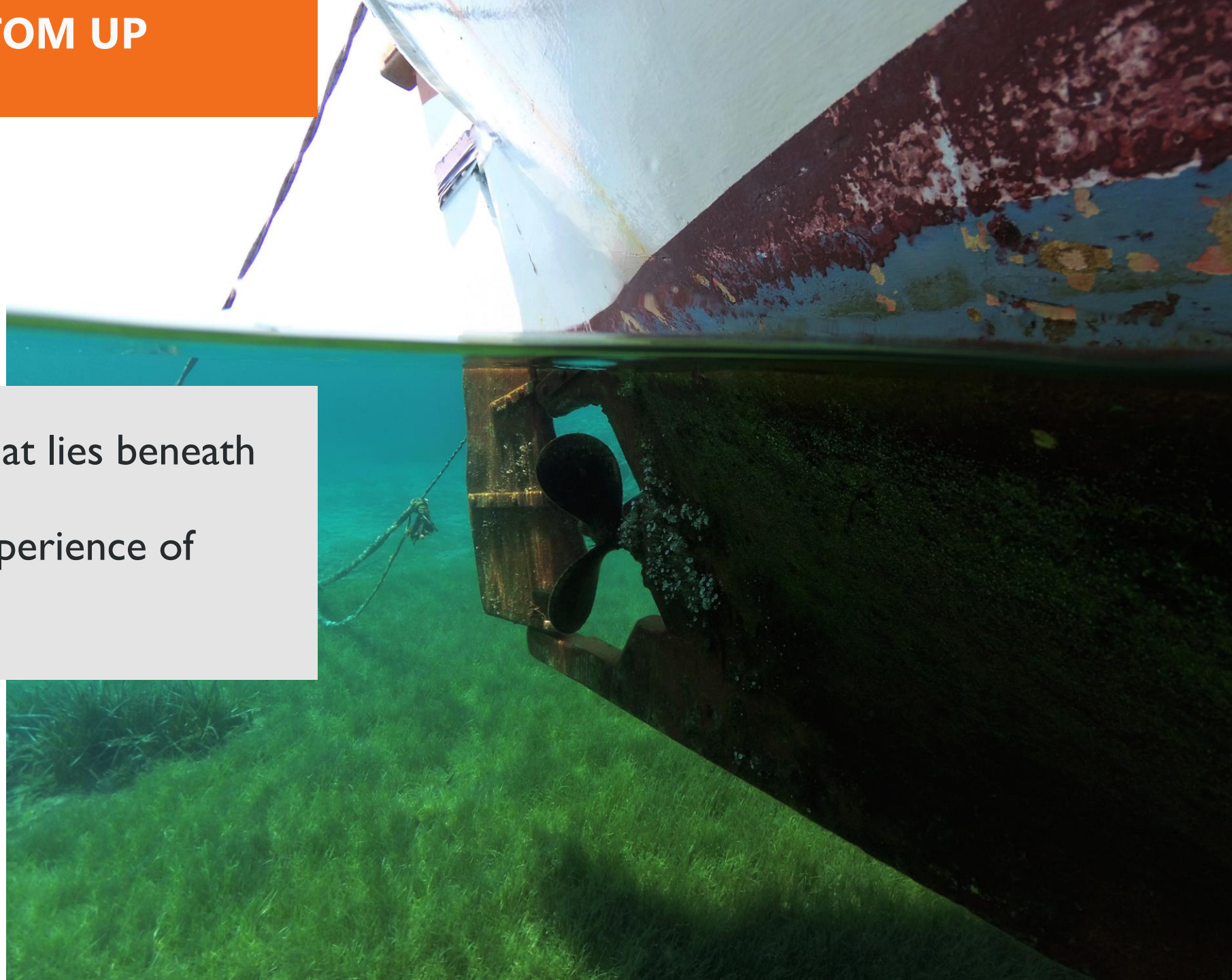




# TOP DOWN & BOTTOM UP APPROACH

Understanding what lies beneath

Young people's experience of  
systems



## NAVIGATING VET: WHAT ARE YOUNG PEOPLE TELLING US?

**Limited provision of vocational guidance and navigational support in a complex and opaque system.**

*"[with VET] you weren't offered. You had to go and speak to [them] first... But you'd always have to go back to find out. It was always us having to do the work". (Young male, Qld, 2017)*

*"I would probably be a fully qualified chef by now if someone had come in from TAFE and said, "This is the hospitality course we're offering, this is how much it is, come in and do it". (young male)*

*"... with the application and stuff... there was a lot of big words that I didn't even know about until I looked at that form [...]"*

*If you don't have a good support background... you might fill it out incorrectly and send it in they'll look at you like, "oh"". (young female)*





## LEARNING IN VET: WHAT ARE YOUNG PEOPLE TELLING US?

Inflexibility in teaching approach (despite wealth of expertise and commitment in workforce) + artificial separation of 'vocational' and 'non-vocational' needs.

*"Because it's worded differently, they're using bigger words, and it's like I don't know what that word is, and I have to keep going back to the dictionary... It's taking me extra time to do it, because I'm so confused ..."* (Young female student, Vic. 2011)

*"I actually did the whole test you do in TAFE and I got in, but then I was too scared to actually go ... because of my anxiety. [So] I haven't actually been to TAFE."* (Young female, student, outer metro, Vic)

*"They often go 'No, I'm not going to tell you that, but I'm too dumb. I can't do it. I'm not smart enough. I don't understand this. I'm stressed'"* (RTO staff, Tas, 2017).



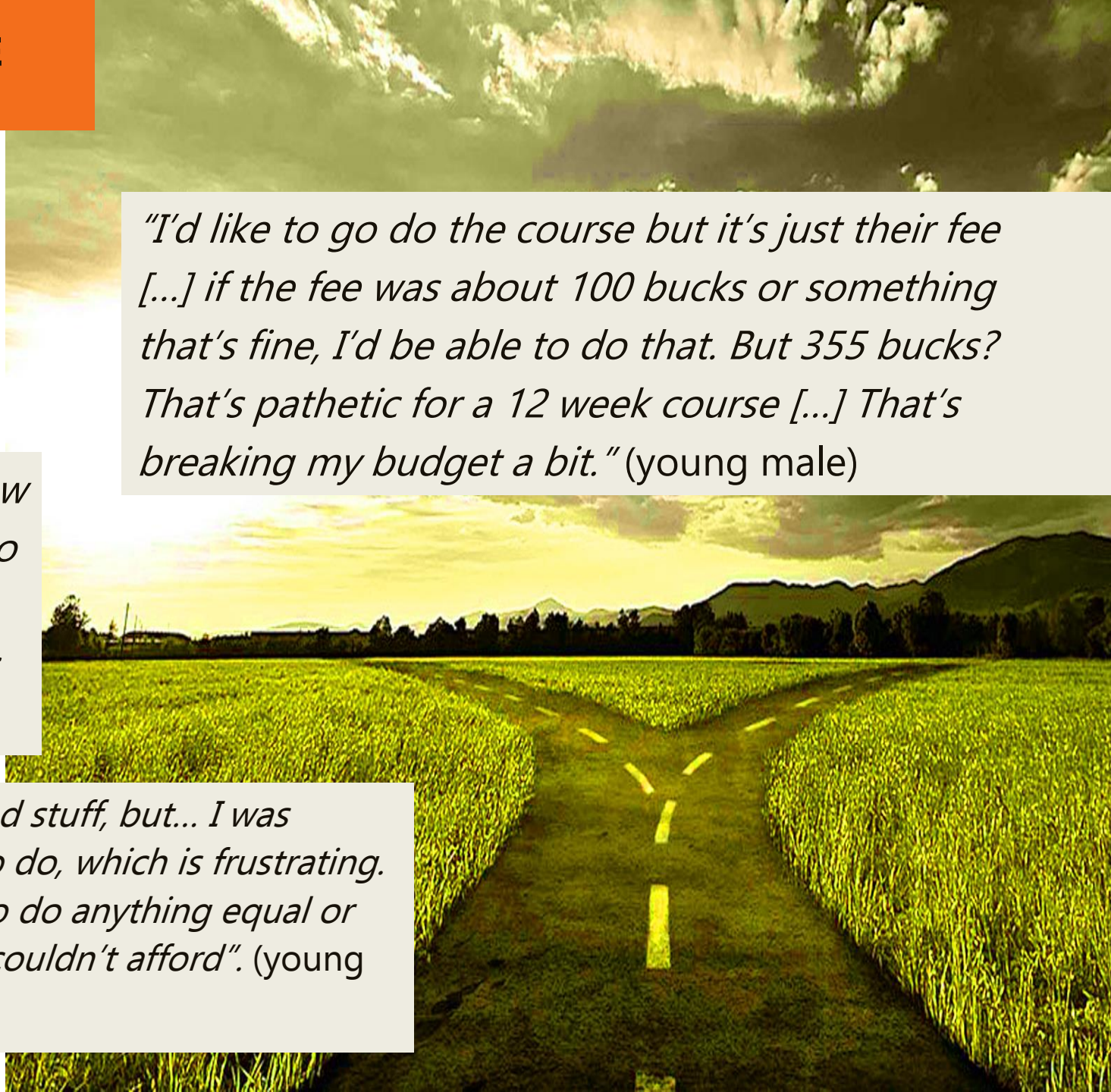
## SWITCHING LANES IN VET: WHAT ARE YOUNG PEOPLE TELLING US?

Limited flexibility and scope for agency, compounded by funding schemes which constrain real choice.

*"They should have a 'try day'... If they know what's it like beforehand they'll want to do it. If they don't know what it's like they're going to get there and be like "well this is a waste of time"."* (young female)

*"...she helped me come up with some ideas and stuff, but... I was restricted by my situation of what I was able to do, which is frustrating. Because I have a diploma so I'm not allowed to do anything equal or lower to that without paying full fees, which I couldn't afford".* (young female at Foyer)

*"I'd like to go do the course but it's just their fee [...] if the fee was about 100 bucks or something that's fine, I'd be able to do that. But 355 bucks? That's pathetic for a 12 week course [...] That's breaking my budget a bit."* (young male)

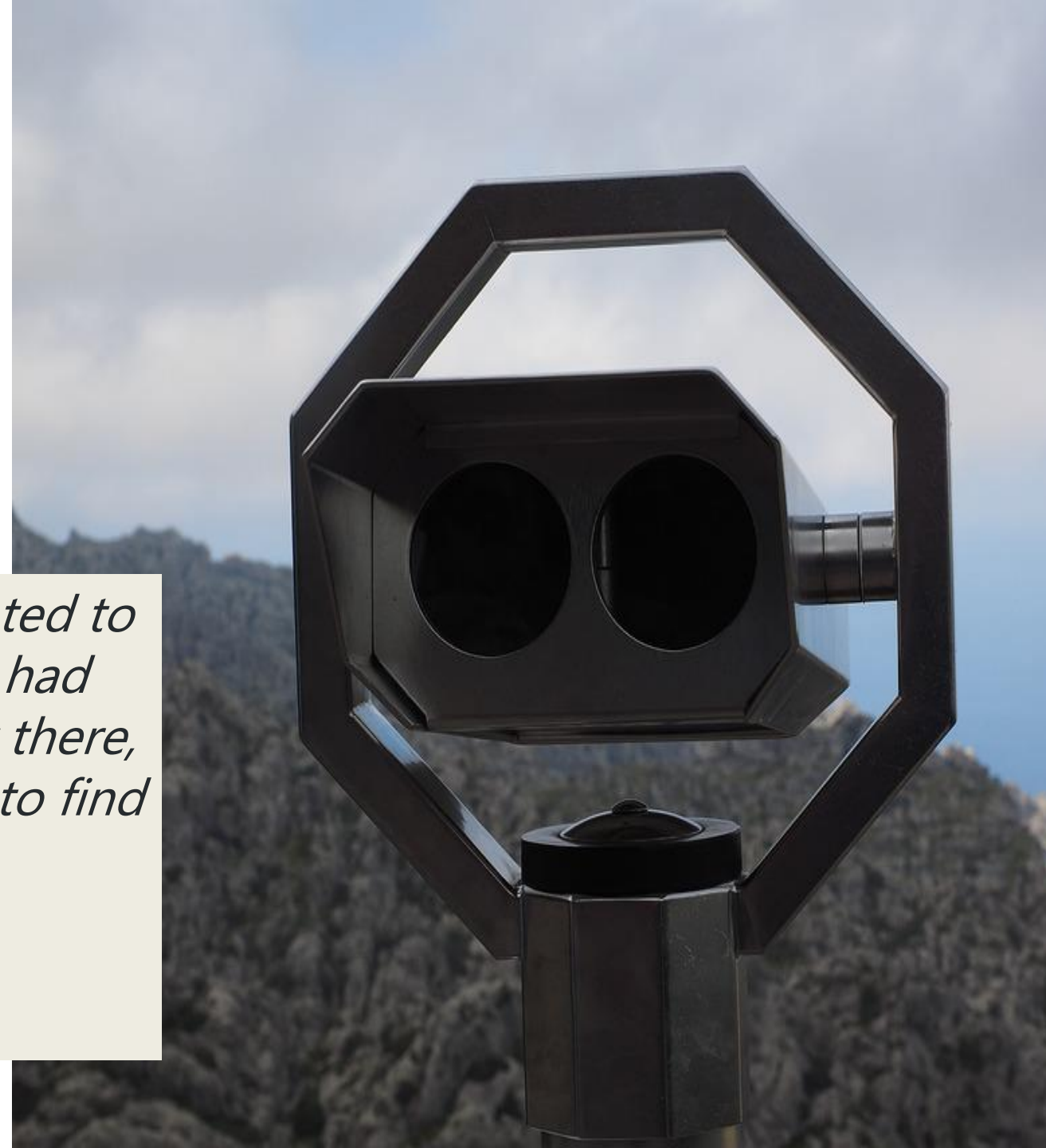


## LINE OF SIGHT IN VET: WHAT ARE YOUNG PEOPLE TELLING US?

Pathways through school, VET, higher education and on to work (or variations) don't flow.

*'I had some ideas of where I wanted to go and who I wanted to be but I had absolutely no idea of how to get there, or where to start, or even where to find the support.'*

(young person, regional Victoria)



## OTHER BARRIERS: WHAT ARE YOUNG PEOPLE TELLING US?

Compounded by financial and transport barriers...

*"I don't live with my parents... so I can't get my drivers' license as easily as I would like. I'm trying to get my motorbike license, but it's paying it that's the problem. That's the reason I'm trying to get a job, which is really hard when working jobs require you to have a license".* (young female)

*"The problem was that I had to travel down. I had to catch a bus every day. And the fact that it was money out of my pocket made it a little bit harder."* (young male)

*"A lot of people from the schools think that TAFE is for dropouts and I was getting a lot of that... I got a lot of attitude from them".*  
(young male)

*"It's more like they threaten you in a way, as in, 'Hey, if you don't finish school, you're going to TAFE'"* (young male)

*"I could Google it or something, but I didn't have internet then. I didn't have a phone. I didn't have credit. Because I didn't have a job, I didn't have money for those things"*  
(young female)

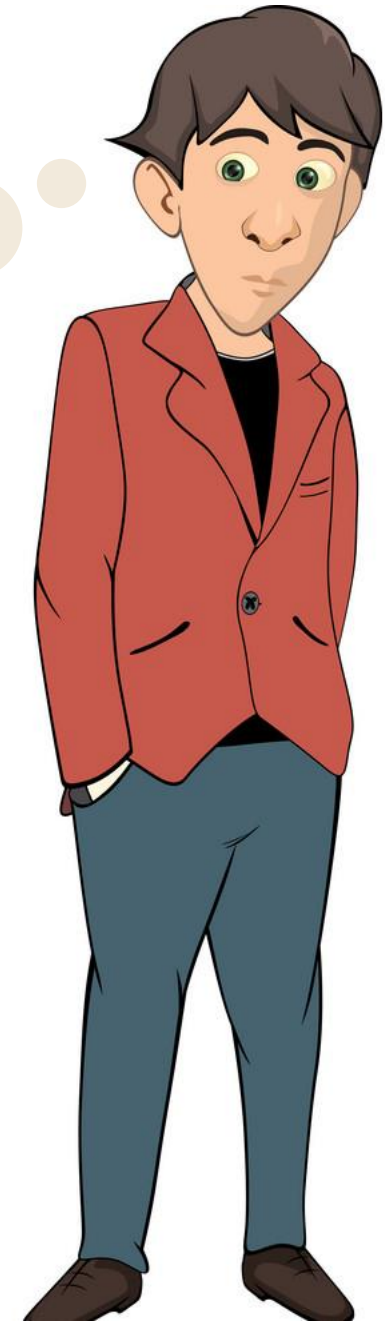


## SO WHAT DOES THIS TELL US? YOUNG PEOPLE ARE *PEOPLE*

They have:

- Strengths and skills
- Aspirations and ambition
- Hopes and dreams

*“People want to have savings, people want to go to other countries, people want to explore, people want to do things. If you don’t have a full-time job you can’t do that. I just need a job so I can move ahead in life”.*  
(young male)

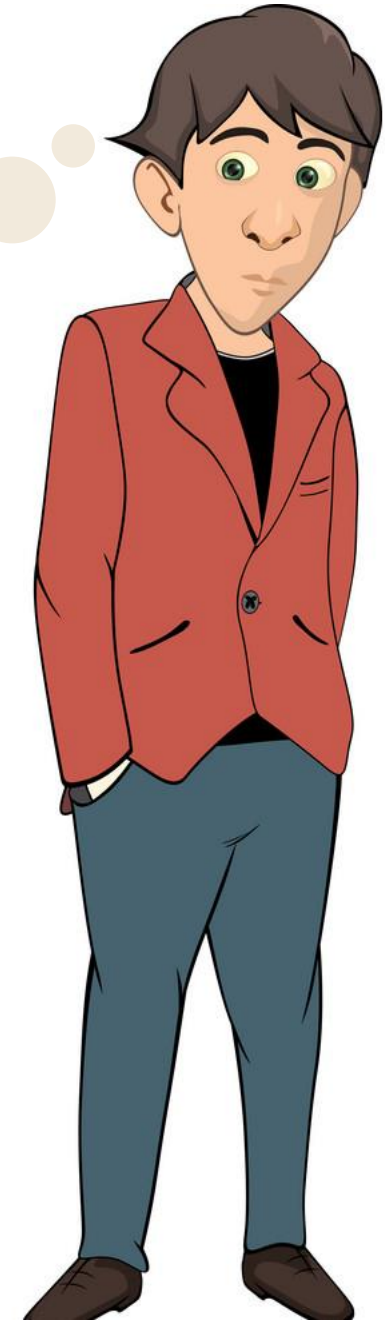


## BUT THE SYSTEM DOESN'T RECOGNISE THIS

...but also often:

- Low levels of self-esteem, self-efficacy and motivation
- Low LLN skills, undiagnosed learning difficulties
- Limited social capital
- Unmet mental and/or physical health and wellbeing needs
- Insecure housing and financial insecurity
- Little awareness of strengths and options/pathways

“They [need to] offer support for mental health, so if you feel really anxious or you’re having a really bad time there’s people here that you can talk to...”  
(young male)



# THE CAPABILITIES APPROACH

**Capabilities** = the real freedom & capacities & resources needed to make choices about how you live.

**Agency** is critical = the real ability to pursue & realise goals you have reason to value.

This means attending to:

- The **promotion of internal capabilities** (e.g. skills, attributes, cognition, metabolism, physical ability), say, by education or training.
- The making available of **external institutional conditions** and material resources (e.g. inclusive access to systems and services, secure housing, adequate income, transport).
- The conditions that **enable agency**.

**In VET, this means that we need to understand:**

- “the different kinds and levels of resource input required by different groups of learners” (Tikly, 2013: 29); and
- the things that individuals need in order to be empowered to exercise their agency in VET (i.e. information, resources and opportunities).



## SO WHAT'S THE OFFER?

- **Training curriculum** to find meaningful employment and adapt to changed labour market (Wheelahan – voc. streams & productive capabilities).
- **Seamless pathways** through education systems and levels.
- A **teaching approach** which builds skills AND self-confidence, motivation and aspiration.
- **Vocational guidance and navigational support** particularly at enrolment and initial engagement.
- **Integrated support** for mental health, housing insecurity and financial insecurity.
- **Real world opportunities** such as work experience and network building with employers.
- Freedom to **change their minds** as their learnings grow.



## SO HOW TO DO IT IN PRACTICE?

- This offer isn't possible in the current fragmented and eroded VET landscape
- What is required is an 'anchor' – which can speak to these levels, both down and up
- TAFE is uniquely positioned to serve as this anchor
- Let's demonstrate with a case study...



# **CASE STUDY: TAFE AS ANCHOR IN COMMUNITY**



## WHAT MIGHT THIS LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE? BSL AND BKI CASE STUDY

- BSL and Kangan TAFE in partnerships since 2013 for youth education and training offer in Hume.
- Kangan TAFE is the anchor in place – the gateway to training and employment.
- Working from a shared capabilities/Advantaged Thinking approach which harnesses multisectoral effort.
- Complementary expertise for service development and practice improvement.





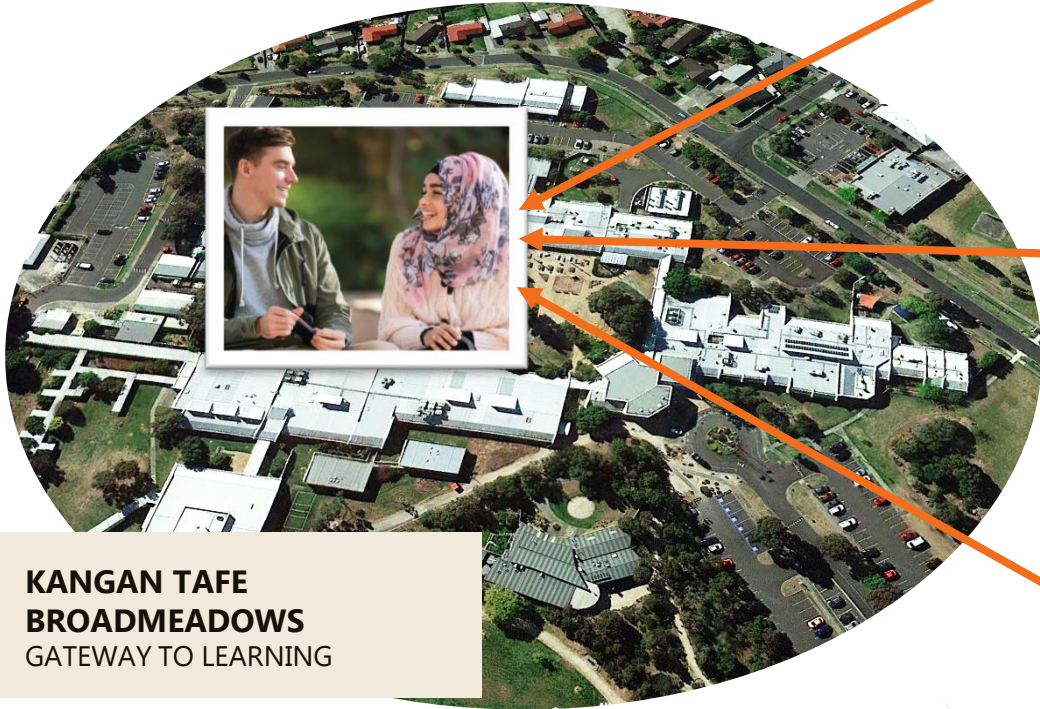
## BSL AND BKI CASE STUDY

Not just education or service delivery – collaborative governance and innovation:

- **The Hume Community Investment Committee**, Bringing together employers, Economic Development of Local Government, BSL and TAFE to drive local social and economic development for young people.
- **Communities of Practice** to drive ongoing improvement and innovation in training and service delivery.



# TAFE AS ANCHOR: THE YOUTH OFFER AT KANGAN TAFE IN HUME



## VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE & PATHWAY PLANNING

- Cert I In Developing Independence
- Next Steps
- Reconnect

## FOUNDATIONAL TRAINING

- Pre-accredited courses to Cert II (Year 12 equivalent)
- VCAL

## CONNECTIONS TO EMPLOYMENT

- Transitions To Work
- Refugee Support Pilot (Ytsp)

## SUPPORTING BEST PRACTICE DELIVERY

- Co-delivery & co-location (TAFE & BSL)
- Ongoing improvement & service development (CoPs)
- Collaborative governance
- Local economic development (CIC)



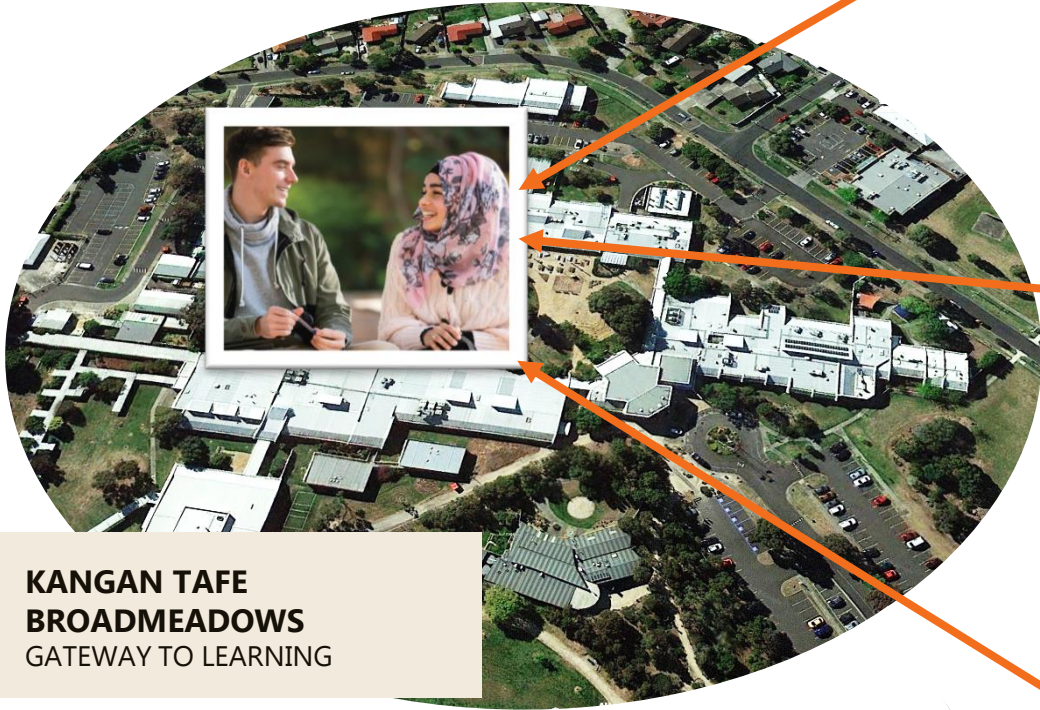
**BACK TO THE METAPHOR...**

But you need strong chains...





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## CONNECTIONS TO EMPLOYMENT

- Transitions To Work
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Homelessness (EFY Foyer)

Youth Justice

Out-of-home Care

ACE providers

Community based RTOs

Social services

Secondary Schools

Eco Dev Local Government

Rotary Melbourne

Employer partners

Settlement services

## WHAT ARE REACHING FOR? TAFES AS...

- Anchors into their community
- Anchors into the VET sector and ecosystem
- Anchors into school and higher ed
- Anchors for excellence in delivery





# IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SYSTEM

## WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SYSTEM?

All of this points us to some priority areas for investment (of effort and resources) and some places to start...

### Policy:

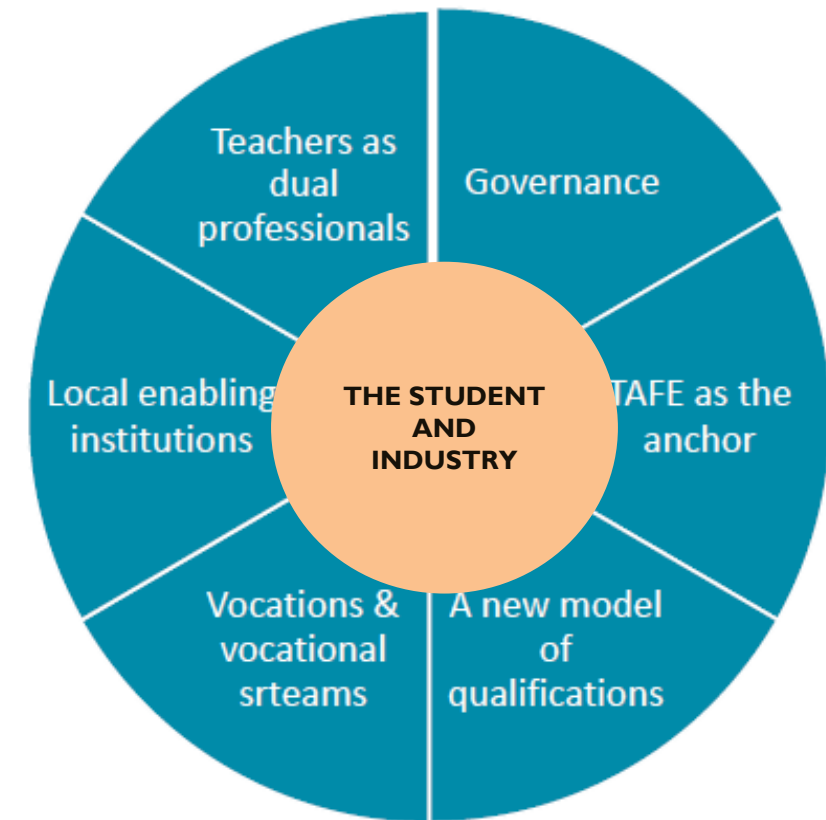
- Commonwealth/State tensions re governance, responsibility and funding
- Funding entitlements and student loans

### Governance/voices at the table:

- Strategic roadmap for VET
- NVEAC like body

### Sector capacity:

- Teacher training
- Institutional capacity for networking and collaboration



THANKS, QUESTIONS?

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