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MEDIA RELEASE

TEACHERS CALL FOR INDEPENDENT REVIEW, RENEWED FOCUS ON TEACHING AND LEARNING AT CIT

The Australian Education Union ACT Branch (AEU), the union representing teaching staff at the Canberra Institute of Technology, today called for an independent review of CIT's governance arrangements and a return to focusing on teaching and learning. The call comes as the ACT Legislative Assembly's Public Accounts and Administration Committee prepares to deliver its findings on the recruitment of CEO Dr Margot McNeill.

The AEU has conducted analysis of CIT's annual reports from 2010 to 2024, documenting a sustained pattern of management growth, decline in teacher numbers and rising costs since the introduction of the CIT Board in July 2015. The analysis highlights governance concerns that cannot be addressed by a recruitment process review.

In the decade since the CIT Board commenced operation, CIT reduced its workforce by 68 teaching staff while gaining 58 additional senior and executive managers, as costs rose by 38%.

The controversy over Dr McNeill's appointment provides an urgent and legitimate focal point. However, the AEU cautions that focusing solely on the recruitment process risks obscuring a deeper institutional pattern. This is the second consecutive CIT CEO appointment to become mired in serious integrity concerns. Former CEO Leanne Cover was found by the ACT Integrity Commission to have engaged in serious corrupt conduct in relation to contracts totalling approximately \$8.5 million. The same Board has presided over both failures.

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- **Teaching staff numbers have fallen:** Teachers declined from 526 in 2015 to 458 in 2024 - a reduction of 68 positions, or 12.9%. Teaching staff as a share of total CIT headcount fell from 62.8% to 56.3% over the Board era.
- **Management staffing numbers have more than doubled:** Senior and Executive Officers grew from 49 in 2015 to 107 in 2024 - a 118% increase - against a nearly unchanged total headcount.
- **Student enrolments have declined:** Program enrolments fell approximately 40% between 2015 and 2024, from around 29,944 to approximately 18,000. Subject enrolments - the current accountability measure - fell 18.9% in just four years.
- **Costs have risen sharply:** Total expenditure grew from \$112.9 million in 2015 to \$155.7 million in 2024 - a 38% increase - while student numbers fell significantly.



The AEU is calling on the ACT Government to commission an independent governance review of CIT, commissioned by the Minister and not delegated to the Board, which cannot credibly review its own governance.

The AEU is also calling for immediate action to redress the imbalance in staffing profile at CIT, including:

- A performance audit by the ACT Auditor-General examining whether CIT's governance arrangements are delivering value for money and serving the institution's public mission
- A funded teacher recruitment plan committing to a minimum 15% increase in permanent teacher positions over three years, with published targets and transparent public reporting
- An enrolment recovery target returning toward 2015 levels of approximately 30,000 program enrolments or equivalent, with a resourcing commitment that explicitly links teacher numbers to student growth
- Annual public reporting on the ratio of teaching to non-teaching staff at CIT, giving the community ongoing visibility over whether workforce composition reflects the institute's core mission

Key data:

Teaching Staff as Proportion of Workforce

Year	VET Teachers	VET Teacher Mgrs	Total Teaching	Total Headcount	Teaching %	Source
2010	695	54	749	1148	65.2%	AR10, p.118
2015	526	44	570	908	62.8%	AR15, p.153
2022	452	43	495	829	59.7%	AR22, p.77
2023	456	42	498	891	55.9%	AR23, p.73
2024	458	42	500	888	56.3%	AR24, p.90

Teaching % = Total Teaching ÷ Total Headcount. VET Teacher Managers are working teachers with management responsibilities.

Senior and Executive Officer Growth

Year	Senior Officers	Executive Officers	Combined	% of Workforce	Change from 2015	Source
2010	61	8	69	6.0%	—	AR10, p.118
2015	46	3	49	5.4%	0	AR15, p.153
2022	47	11	58	7.0%	9	AR22, p.77
2023	77	14	91	10.2%	42	AR23, p.73
2024	93	14	107	12.0%	58	AR24, p.89

% of Workforce uses total headcount from Table 1A. 'Change from 2015' shows net growth in combined Senior/Executive Officers since the Board commenced.

Quotes attributable to AEU ACT Branch Secretary Patrick Judge

"CIT teachers' concerns are not with any individual CEO - it is with a governance model that has twice presided over the appointment of a CEO under a cloud of serious integrity issues, while simultaneously overseeing a decade-long shift away from teaching and toward administration. The two things are connected. Both reflect a Board that has lost sight of what CIT is actually for."

"When you spend 38% more to teach fewer students and have doubled your management layer while cutting teachers, that is not a resource problem - it is a priority problem. And a Board that has overseen that trajectory, while twice failing its most important governance obligation, warrants serious scrutiny of its own arrangements. The ACT public would rightly question why they should be paying so much more for CIT to deliver fewer services."

"Whoever leads CIT, now and in the future, our TAFE needs teachers. Canberrans need a public TAFE that can get students through the door. That requires investment in the classroom, not the boardroom."

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