

MEDIA RELEASE

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Incoherent TAFE COVID-19 response settings put staff, students and public at risk

The Community and Public Sector Union is demanding the temporary closure of five TAFE NSW campuses in Canterbury-Bankstown, Fairfield, and Liverpool and that students living in these areas be included in surveillance testing to avoid any transmission at other campuses across Sydney.

While teaching has moved online, college facilities, including libraries and labs, and administration support are still open, putting staff, students, and the public at unnecessary risk.

"Keeping TAFE NSW's campuses open during this lockdown is reckless, especially when we're seeing multiple campuses being listed as exposure sites," said Troy Wright, assistant branch secretary of CPSU NSW.

On Friday, NSW Health advised that Petersham, Gymea, St George, and Loftus campuses were exposure sites after a positive case visited during the lockdown.

The union has written to TAFE NSW's managing director Steffen Faurby seeking urgent clarification on the decision to keep campuses open during the lockdown.

"TAFE NSW's approach to COVID-19 is completely incoherent. Classes are cancelled or online, but libraries, labs, and administration support are all still open. Teachers can't see students face-to-face, but librarians can - COVID-19 doesn't discriminate based on your job.

"CPSU NSW members can continue to offer a very high level of support to teachers and students online."

The union wants the Liverpool, Miller, Wetherill Park, Padstow and Bankstown TAFE NSW campuses temporarily closed while the LGAs remain hotspots and all TAFE NSW staff to be supported to work from home or paid special leave if they can't.

CPSU NSW also wants to see much tighter controls introduced at other TAFE NSW campuses, including surveillance testing for any students who may be still travelling to other campuses.

"Workers living in Sydney's hotspot LGAs are required to be tested, but students aren't. If they're travelling to campuses across Sydney then it's just another unnecessary movement that will only serve to extend this lockdown."

Further comment: Troy Wright 0488 373 209