

Submission from Rhys Taylor:

1. The loss of funding to adult education at high schools via TEC has done great social and economic damage and should be reversed, because it: (a) helped aid returners to the workforce after parenthood or illness to gain confidence and hone life skills, including but not limited to numeracy and literacy; (b) many topics offered had potential to open new career directions, and to boost physical and mental health. Plenty of research confirms this but evidence was ignored in an ideological decision which cited only leisure interests and older age participants as the course attendees. It is also cost effective for the public purse to have existing secondary school buildings used for evening classes as marginal expense.
2. Life skills for the next decade will include ability to grow food at home, to organise alternatives to one-person-per-car transport, civil defence preparation for weather extremes and geological impacts (such as Christchurch quakes), water use efficiency and waste minimisation. One significant source of household education in this area of 'future living skills' is provided in 14 Council areas from Auckland to Invercargill by Sustainable Living Education Trust. People living within member council areas can register to access learning guides free on the net, with encouragement to attend classes where offered or set up study groups. I'm happy to provide further info on this public service – informal tertiary education.

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