



Skills for growth

February 2011



Skills for growth

The NSW economy has been the engine room of Australia's economic recovery.

NSW was the first State to bounce back from the global downturn. We have recorded seven consecutive quarters of economic growth, the best performance of any state in Australia. In addition, we have the second lowest rate of unemployment of any state in the nation, with the strongest jobs growth since the worst of the financial crisis.

To keep our economy moving forward, NSW needs more people with critical skills to help our industries grow.

We need more construction workers trained to build vital infrastructure, more IT specialists trained to connect our businesses to the world, and more automotive repair experts trained to keep us moving.

If re-elected, my Government will invest \$30 million to create 3000 fully-funded training places for new apprentices.

Training will focus on skill areas identified by industry and the Department of Education and Training as growth areas for our economy. This means training more electricians, construction managers and IT specialists, amongst other professions.

In every professional area, training courses will include the latest green skills that employers increasingly require in their businesses, such as waste avoidance, energy efficiency and the use of the latest technology to reduce our impact on the environment.

This program will be delivered through TAFE NSW, our world-class public provider of vocational training.

Labor believes in TAFE. Annual recurrent funding to TAFE is now more than \$1.8 billion and the results speak for themselves. Enrolments have increased by more than 10 per cent since 2005, and more than 90 per cent of TAFE graduates report being satisfied or very satisfied with their training – far higher than the sector average.


TAFE qualifications are high quality and increase their employability, wages and chances of promotion.

My Government will ensure TAFE remains accessible to all, with a generous system of concessions to ensure cost pressures don't restrict anyone who wants to improve their skills.

We will also continue our record investment in TAFE infrastructure, with \$315 million for upgrades and new facilities at TAFE campuses across the State.

And we will continue to strengthen partnerships between schools and TAFEs so that young people have the option of making a head start on their vocational training while still at high school.

Our initiatives will ensure TAFE remains the leading provider of vocational training in Australia – providing opportunities for all to improve their skills and participate in the strong economic growth of our State.



Kristina Lenally

What this policy means for NSW

A re-elected Keneally Government will continue to build our strong public TAFE system and enhance our apprenticeship program to support our dynamic and growing economy.

We will continue to properly resource our TAFE system so we can provide training opportunities for the NSW community and deliver highly skilled graduates to the workforce.

Over the next four years we will:

ACTION:

Training for 3000 new apprenticeships

- Create 3000 fully-funded training places for apprentices in areas of skills shortages

Expand Green Skills

- Incorporate green skills into all apprenticeship training

Invest in TAFE facilities

- Invest \$315.5 million in new and upgraded facilities on TAFE campuses

Keeping TAFE accessible to all

- Maintain Labor's concession fee structure to ensure our TAFE system remains accessible to all

Expanding Vocational Options

- Improve links between schools and TAFE campuses to expand vocational options for high school students

Labor and Skills Training

Labor believes in building a strong economy and boosting job opportunities for the people of this State. The NSW economy's strength is built on people and our apprentice program is a vital contributor to continued economic growth.

Labor has increased TAFE's annual budget to more than \$1.8 billion, with increases in funding significantly outstripping inflation over the past five years. This has been matched by rapid growth in enrolments, reflecting the confidence of NSW young people and job-seekers in the quality of training that TAFE provides.

The Keneally Government has delivered a TAFE system that is recognised as a professional and high quality training provider. This is demonstrated by the private sector signing contracts with TAFE to deliver major training packages to local and international companies in industries as diverse as retail, healthcare and telecommunications. TAFE has also maintained a dominant position in the training of apprentices, with around 80% of apprentices enrolled at TAFE.

Labor believes these opportunities should be available to every NSW resident, regardless of their financial circumstances.

In particular, Labor understands the value of making vocational training opportunities available to school students. Offering vocational options as part of the curriculum helps smooth the pathway into an apprenticeship or formal skills training at TAFE for students who might otherwise finish school without a clear plan for their future. In fact, 96 per cent of NSW public school students who complete a vocational course in school move on to employment, apprenticeships or further study.

The graduates of these apprenticeships and formal skills training will bring their skills and experience to local communities across their lifetime. Their participation in the workforce will stimulate further growth in these communities and across the State.

Our Record

LABOR

- NSW Labor has provided TAFE NSW with a record recurrent annual budget of \$1.813 billion – an increase of \$415 million since 2002/2003, which far exceeds the growth in the Sydney CPI for the same period.
- Under Labor, TAFE NSW has expanded to serve over 520,000 enrolments in 2010 in more than 1,200 work-related qualifications offered at over 130 TAFE campuses across the State.
- Enrolments in TAFE NSW have grown by more than 10% since 2005.
- A 2009 survey found 90% of TAFE NSW graduates are satisfied or very satisfied with their training – far higher than the average for the training sector.
- Under Labor, TAFE's service to Aboriginal people has expanded dramatically. Since 2005, the number of Aboriginal students graduating from TAFE NSW has risen by 38%. Today, 5.4% of TAFE's enrolments are by Aboriginal people looking to improve their skills.
- Labor has driven the creation of green skills training courses to make sure NSW has a workforce capable of delivering the energy efficiency and environmental management initiatives that will be needed in a future affected by climate change. Already, almost 8% of TAFE NSW students are enrolled in green skills training subjects.
- Under Labor, TAFE NSW is the leading provider of vocational education and training in Australia. TAFE has a particular strength in supporting apprentices, with more than 80% of NSW apprentices and trainees conducting their formal training through TAFE.
- We're on track to create 4,000 new apprenticeships and 2,000 cadetships with NSW Government agencies between 2009 and 2012.

OPPOSITION

- To date, Barry O'Farrell has failed to put forward any plans or new ideas to strengthen vocational training or our TAFE system.

Training for 3000 new apprentices

A re-elected Keneally Government will allocate an additional \$30 million to TAFE NSW to deliver fully-subsidised training for 3,000 new apprenticeships over the next term of government. The Department of Education and Training will work with NSW industry to identify skill shortage areas, tailor the program to deliver the skills business needs and make sure students graduate with clear work opportunities. We will ensure that opportunities are available across the State, including in Western Sydney, in the Hunter and Illawarra, on the Central Coast and in regional NSW.

ACTION:

- Create 3000 fully-funded training places for apprentices in areas of skills shortages

Expanding green skills

NSW Labor has led the way nationally in developing TAFE courses specifically to train workers for emerging green industries, including qualifications in areas like water sustainability, sustainable building design and renewable energy electrical trades. We will build on this success by ensuring that green skills are taught in apprenticeship courses for all professions, as well as in the specific green courses. In every industry, employers increasingly value and seek out workers with a solid understanding of energy efficiency, waste avoidance and the use of new technologies to minimise environmental impact. Under a re-elected Keneally Government, these skills will be taught in every apprenticeship program.

ACTION:

- Incorporate green skills in all apprenticeship training

Invest in TAFE facilities

A re-elected Labor Government will spend a minimum of \$315.5 million on new and upgraded facilities for TAFE campuses across the State. Major new works will include:

- Major campus upgrades at Nirimba, Nepean, Bankstown and Lidcombe TAFEs
- An automotive technology centre at Wetherill Park TAFE
- A sustainable design centre at Enmore TAFE
- Green electrotechnology facilities at Ultimo, Petersham, St George and Sutherland TAFEs
- New training kitchens at Wollongong TAFE
- A campus redevelopment at Kingscliff TAFE
- A campus upgrade at Hamilton TAFE
- A speciality facility to teach plastering and tiling at Maitland TAFE
- A new joinery and carpentry building at Cooma TAFE
- New Aboriginal training centres at Tamworth and Orange TAFEs

ACTION:

- Invest \$315.5 million in new and upgraded facilities on TAFE campuses

Keep TAFE accessible to all

The Government spends \$85 million each year to subsidise access to TAFE for students who may have difficulty meeting the costs of training themselves. Students in receipt of many Commonwealth benefits can access TAFE courses for just \$51. Students with a disability are eligible for one free course each year, and pay the concession rate of just \$51 for subsequent courses. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island students are completely exempt from course fees, as are students enrolled in any of the special access 'training readiness' courses, which focus on reading, writing and employability skills. Labor commits to maintaining this concession system so that everyone who wants to improve their skills with TAFE can afford to do so.

ACTION:

- Maintain Labor's concession fee structure to ensure our TAFE system remains accessible to all

Improve links between schools and TAFE

Labor understands that not all students want to go to university, and that public schools must offer relevant vocational courses as part of the school curriculum to help those students prepare for their future. Labor has dramatically expanded the vocational options available in high schools – in fact, in 2010, over one third of HSC students undertook a vocational course as part of their HSC. Labor has built industry-standard vocational training facilities for schools across the State, including in the 25 identified Trade Schools established in the last four years. A re-elected Labor Government will strengthen linkages between schools and their local TAFE colleges to further expand the options available to high school students for school-based apprenticeships and high-level skills training in TAFE's specialist facilities. Labor will also expand vocational options into Years 9 and 10 to keep younger students engaged and help them get a head start on their careers.

ACTION:

- Improve links between schools and TAFE campuses to expand vocational options for high school students



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