



National Trade Cadetships

Julia Gillard and Labor
Let's move Australia forward



NATIONAL TRADE CADETSHIPS TO PREPARE STUDENTS FOR WORK

The Gillard Labor Government will ensure that students at school who want to pursue a career in the trades have a clearly defined pathway, equal in quality, value and rigour to more traditional academic pursuits.

From 2012 students from years 9 to 12 will be offered a new National Trade Cadetship as an option under the National Curriculum. This Cadetship will be delivered through their local Trades Training Centre and through other eligible venues.

There will be two streams of National Trade Cadetship available:

1. *National Trade Cadetship - Foundation* which will focus on essential work readiness skills and laying the foundation for further training; and
2. *National Trade Cadetship - Pre-Apprentice* which will focus on specific trade or occupation area.

The National Trade Cadetships will be developed by the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority (ACARA), in partnership with Industry Skills Councils and with States and Territories.

National Trade Cadetships will be nationally recognised and will provide credit towards an apprenticeship or further training. ACARA will work with States and Territories to ensure the Cadetships contribute towards state based senior awards, in the same way as other approved subjects under the National Curriculum.

This will mean that the National Curriculum will define the essential skills and knowledge required for employability and vocational skills. This will mean that more secondary students will have the option to start a pathway towards recognised trade qualifications while still at school.

The National Trade Cadetship will help make students work ready and will help create a more skilled workforce.

Why we need National Trade Cadetships

There are around 220,000 students participating in Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Schools representing 41 per cent of all school students undertaking a senior secondary certificate.¹

However VET in Schools does not currently provide a clear pathway or strong enough building blocks to further VET qualifications, apprenticeships or work. Within school, students will often complete different components of a VET course with no real carry forward benefit to a higher qualification.

In 2008, 57 per cent of 220,000 VET in Schools students were enrolled in Certificate II qualifications. These qualifications tend to be focussed on particular industry areas and often don't provide students with general basic skills and competencies that can be easily transferred within and between industries. At the same time, pre-apprenticeship courses vary in coverage and content, many with no opportunity for credit transfer to an Australian apprenticeship.

Employers often do not recognise students' VET achievements because they regard school-based VET as inferior to VET delivered in TAFE or by Registered Training Organisations due to inconsistent standards and quality.

This limits students' options, leading to dead ends, instead of a clear path to a higher qualification like an apprenticeship. In fact, only 12 per cent of students undertaking vocational training in schools move onto a school based apprenticeship.

In short, schools can do much more to prepare students for a vocational career and deliver the skills and knowledge to students that employers need. The system does not currently provide a clear and easily navigated pathway from school to a higher VET qualification or work.

The National Trade Cadetships will address these problems. It will be part of the new National Curriculum and will be endorsed by Industry. As part of the National Curriculum, Trade Cadetships will provide clearly defined, robust nationally recognised and consistent pathways for school students who want to pursue a career in the trades or vocational industries, or for students who want to keep that option open.

What does this mean for students

In the same way that the National Curriculum provides clear pathways for students who want to pursue a traditional academic career, like becoming a lawyer or scientist, students who are interested in a career in the trades and other vocational service and knowledge industries will be able to undertake a National Trade Cadetship with confidence that their efforts will be valued by employers and contribute towards higher qualifications, and eventually, their career.

¹ NCVET VET in Schools (2008)

Young people will benefit from a structured career pathway, starting with broad basic foundations like literacy, team work, personal responsibility and workplace health and safety moving onto more specialised skills and competencies that industry has prioritised.

How the Trade Cadetships will work in practice

Tom is 15 and currently in year 10. He isn't sure what he wants to do next year but thinks he would like to eventually do a trade. His friends are doing all academic subjects next year and he is worried that he won't really get the same recognition as they do by doing vocational subjects and he would like to continue at school with them.

When discussing his options with his parents he identifies a great new option to do a National Trade Cadetship that is being offered for years 9 to 12. He can stay at the same school and do these subjects that are delivered in the Trade Training Centre. His parents are pleased that he will still complete year 12 and be well on the way to further training or to work with recognition by his employer or training provider for vocational units he has undertaken at school. As well, he will be assisted to find work experience placements during his schooling and also on conclusion of his Trade Cadetship.

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Kylie knows she wants to pursue a career in the electrical trades but isn't sure if she wants to take a vocational path or an academic path to achieve that long-term outcome. Luckily for Kylie, she can stay at school and finish her year 12 certificate, taking a mix of academic units and vocational units as part of the Trade Cadetship program. That means she can decide later whether to do an electrical apprenticeship or follow her career path through a University course. She is happy that she can keep her options open through a flexible choice of units at school and some work experience so she can see what it's like working in the electrical industry.

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Sarah is 16 and wants to leave school. She hasn't been doing well at school and thinks she might just drop out. She would really like to be a hairdresser but hasn't been able to find an employer to take her on. They tell her they can take their pick from young people who have got their senior secondary certificate.

Sarah's school career adviser tells her about the Trade Training Centre that is a new part of the school. Sarah can do a Trade Cadetship while at school which will give her some credits towards a hairdressing apprenticeship, including a school-based apprenticeship, and help to find a placement once she finishes her Trade Cadetship.

What does this mean for industry and employers

National Trade Cadetships will ensure young people have the necessary skills and experience to make positive contributions to the workplace. Employers and industry will benefit from a better skilled workforce and in particular, less turn over as young people will be better prepared for work and their apprenticeship.

Through the consultation process led by the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority (ACARA), Industry Skills Councils will identify the particular skills and competencies they need the Trade Cadetships to deliver to their workforce.

Employers expect that young people entering their industry will have the necessary foundation skills and a clear understanding of the type of work and working environment involved. Trade Cadetships will help deliver that understanding.

The National Trade Cadetships will help tackle skills shortages with industry specific cadetships rolled out according to the priorities agreed between ACARA, Industry Skills Councils and the National Quality Council, and based on advice from Skills Australia.

How will the Trade Cadetships work?

From 2012 students in years 9 to 12 will be able to start a new National Trade Cadetship while still at school, delivered in Trades Training Centres, or by Registered Training Organisations where a Trades Training Centre is not yet available.

The National Trade Cadetships will be developed by the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority (ACARA), in partnership with Industry Skills Councils and with States and Territories.

National Trade Cadetships will be nationally recognised and will provide credit towards an apprenticeship or further training. ACARA will work with States and Territories to ensure the Cadetships contribute towards state based senior awards, in the same way as other approved subjects under the National Curriculum.

The *National Trade Cadetship – Foundation* will benefit students who aren't sure what they want to do when they leave school. It will focus on work readiness skills like team work, workplace health and safety, self confidence and personal responsibility. The *National Trade Cadetship – Foundation* will also provide high quality literacy and numeracy skills, providing the foundation skills and a pathway for further training and employment.

This Cadetship will be developed by ACARA, the body that has successfully developed Australia's first National Curriculum. ACARA will lead this work in partnership with Skills Australia and Industry Skills Councils.

The *National Trade Cadetship – Pre-Apprentice* will benefit students who have an interest in a specific occupational area and already have basic foundation skills. Courses

will provide specific vocational skills and competencies within a ‘family’ of trade occupations like construction, mechanics, hospitality or IT.

Each *National Trade Cadetship – Pre-Apprentice* course will be developed by ACARA with the relevant Industry Skills Council. It will be approved as a pathway to an Australian Apprenticeship and will ensure students receive appropriate credit for competencies achieved, including occupational health and safety. The National Quality Council and the Australian Qualifications Framework Council will also make important contributions to ensure the skills are nationally consistent and recognised by industry and employers.

National Trade Cadetship - Pre-Apprentice will be rolled out in occupations according to priorities agreed between ACARA, Industry Skills Councils and the National Quality Council, and based on advice from Skills Australia.

Young people will be able to keep their options open as National Trade Cadetships could be undertaken alongside traditional school curriculum or could be used to fast track students who have identified a particular career they want to achieve.

Federal Labor will provide \$3.1 million over two years to develop the two streams of National Trade Cadetships. This funding will be fully offset over the forward estimates, consistent with our commitment to return the budget to surplus in three years.

Labor’s Record

The Gillard Labor Government has taken action to build a world class education system and give students every opportunity to gain the skills they need to participate in the economy.

The Trade Training Centres in Schools Program was a 2007 election commitment by Federal Labor, designed to give young Australians greater training opportunities and help address the skills shortage by ensuring every secondary school had access to a Trades Training Centre.

It built on the Federal Labor’s commitment to improve the quality of schooling offered to secondary students undertaking trade-related pathways including Vocational Education and Training (VET), assisting them in making a successful transition from school to work or further education and training.

Under the 10 year \$2.5 billion Trade Training Centres in Schools Program, Australia’s 2,650 secondary schools are eligible to apply for funding of between \$500,000 and \$1.5 million to establish, or upgrade, existing trade training facilities.

Since the Trade Training Centres in Schools Program commenced, the Australian Government has approved 230 projects benefiting 732 schools. The National Trade Cadetships will build on this investment.

THE LIBERALS' RECORD

- ✘ If elected Prime Minister, Tony Abbott has already made clear that he would end the Trade Training Centres program, **cutting \$968 million and ensuring that over 1,800 secondary schools and 1.2 million students would miss out on the chance to use a Trade Training Centre.**
- ✘ As a former Cabinet Minister in the Coalition Government Tony Abbott and the Liberals promised in 2004 that the Australian Technical Colleges would help 21,000 students over four years at a cost of \$289 million. In 2008 we know the real figures were 3,000 students at a cost of \$440 million over the past four years since that program was announced.
- ✘ The former Coalition delivered only 24 Australian Technical Colleges, an average of just three per state at a cost of \$140,000 per student. **That's a cost blowout of more than 50% and they only managed to build 24 centres in 4 years.**
- ✘ With approximately 90 per cent of ATCs in either Coalition or marginal electorates, the Colleges were a cynical political response to a critical policy challenge.

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