

LABOR'S PLAN FOR SKILLS, TAFE AND APPRENTICES

A Shorten Labor Government will reverse the decline in apprentices and restore TAFE to the centre of the Australian vocational education and training system.

Under the Liberals, more than \$3 billion has been cut from TAFE, skills and apprentices, and Australia now has 150,000 fewer apprentices than we did in 2013.

Labor's \$1 billion investment in TAFE and Apprentices will:

- Provide 150,000 Additional Apprentice Incentives in areas of skill shortages – **reversing the decline that has occurred under this government.**
- Waive upfront fees for 100,000 Australians to go to TAFE.
- Invest \$200 million to rebuild and upgrade TAFE campuses across the country.
- Support 10,000 young Australians to do a pre-apprentice program to prepare them for work.
- Provide support for 20,000 older workers to retrain through an Advanced Adult Apprenticeship.
- Guarantee at least two out of three dollars of public funding goes to public TAFE.
- Require at least one in 10 jobs on all major infrastructure and defence projects will be filled by an apprentice or trainee.
- Establish an Apprentice Advocate, to improve the quality of Australia's apprenticeship system and develop a long term plan for skills and training.
- Undertake a once in a generation National Inquiry into Post-Secondary Education – to ensure our vocational education system is fit for the future.

Apprentice Incentives

Under the Liberals, there are 150,000 fewer apprentices and trainees than there were in 2013.

Labor wants to reverse this decline. That's why Labor will provide an additional \$334 million to support 150,000 Australians to become an Australian Apprentice.

Labor will increase incentives for employers to take on an apprentice, and encourage more people to start an apprenticeship, with a new apprentice incentive.

Under Labor's proposal, 150,000 Apprentice Incentives will be provided, including:

- \$8,000 for an employer to take on an apprentice (an increase of \$4,000)
- \$2,000 to assist a new apprentice with costs of their education.

These incentives will come on top of other incentives already provided through the Apprentice Incentive Scheme.

Fee-Free TAFE

Labor will waive the up-front fees for 100,000 students to attend TAFE to get the skills we need in the places we need them.

Course fees and upfront costs have risen to the point where many Australians can't afford to go to TAFE.

Many trades face skills shortages - from carpenters and bricklayers, to bakers and pastry cooks. Despite high unemployment in some areas, workers can't learn the skills they need locally, particularly in regional areas.

If we don't get this right, we won't be enough skilled workers to meet the demands of our ageing population and the rollout of the NDIS. Nor will there be sufficient workers with the high-tech skills to work in digital and emerging industries.

We know that TAFE is the best place for young and adult Australians to gain knowledge and skills in the communities that benefit from them.

Building TAFE for the Future

Labor will invest \$200 million in a new Building TAFE for the Future Fund, to reverse the decline in TAFE facilities, and revitalise TAFE campuses across Australia. The Building TAFE for the Future Fund will:

- Re-establish TAFE facilities in regional communities that have lost campuses or course facilities
- Establish new facilities in regions and suburbs where the population is growing and industry is changing or expanding
- Provide facilities and equipment to support up-to-date teaching in the digital economy and technology
- Support expanded course offerings and new areas of study that meet the needs of the local community and industry

TAFE consistently delivers high quality vocational education in our cities and regions, and yet under the Liberals it has been left to decline. We want to restore TAFE to the centre of our vocational education system.

Advanced Entry Adult Apprenticeships

A trade apprenticeship takes three or four years to complete. That's a long time to spend on training wages for workers who want or need to change jobs.

A Shorten Labor Government will fast-track quality trade apprenticeships for up to 20,000 adults who need to retrain because of changes in the economy.

Workers will be given credit for their existing skills and provided with training at TAFE to fill the gaps in their skills.

These apprenticeships will be available in the trades the economy needs.

Apprentice Ready

Knowing what you want to do before you start work is tricky. It's one of the reasons young apprentices don't finish their apprenticeship.

Giving young people the chance to try a range of work options leads to better choices and results in more apprentices qualifying in their trade.

Labor will help 10,000 young job seekers choose the best apprenticeship for them by providing nationally recognised, industry endorsed 20 week pre-apprenticeship training.

Places will be available to young people who have been unemployed for six months or more and will be delivered through TAFEs where local employers are on board, and there is the opportunity for ongoing work.

Jobs for Apprentices

A Shorten Labor Government will boost apprentice numbers across the country on Government funded projects.

At least 1 in 10 jobs on all major infrastructure projects will be filled by an apprentice.

This will result in thousands of additional apprentice and trainee opportunities for people across Australia.

We'll only fund projects where major contractors have an Apprenticeship and Training Plan that link in with local TAFEs and provides skills to workers living locally.

Labor will also work to deliver 1 in 10 apprentices on priority projects already underway – like the NBN and in Government Enterprises like the Australian Rail Track Corporation.

Labor's TAFE Guarantee

A Shorten Labor Government will invest in excellent vocational education and enduring careers for Australians by guaranteeing TAFE at least two thirds of public funding. Labor will work with States and Territories to:

- Guaranteeing TAFE two thirds of State and Territory funding and maintaining their funding for all vocational education
- Prioritising training in areas where the jobs are
- And keeping quality regional campuses open to support industry and the community

Labor will reverse the decline of TAFE and make sure quality vocational training is available in our suburbs and regions.

Labor will not abandon providers delivering quality training, particularly those in the not-for-profit and community education sector.

Apprentice Advocate

Labor has always championed quality apprenticeships and will continue to ensure more Australians can follow that trusted path into decent work.

Labor will establish an Apprenticeship Advocate. The Advocate will:

- Support and promote quality standards for employment and training of apprentices and trainees.
- Work with employers, unions and the Fair Work Ombudsman to ensure apprentices receive their legal entitlements.
- Focus on retention, completion, safety and wellbeing of apprentices and trainees.
- Support high quality skill development to ensure all apprentices and trainees have well rounded, transferrable and valued skills that lead to good jobs and careers.
- Respond to the skills needs in the economy.

National inquiry into Australia's post-secondary education system

Labor wants prospective students to see TAFE and university as equally attractive study options.

That's why if we are elected, in the first 100 days of government we will undertake a once in a generation National Inquiry into Post-Secondary Education that will look at every aspect of the vocational and higher education systems.

This will be the first time a national inquiry has put TAFE and unis on an equal footing.

This is about the future. It's about making sure Australians have access to the best post-secondary opportunities in the world.

We want our kids to get the education and skills they need to thrive, and to make sure all Australians have the opportunity of lifelong learning.

The Review will be comprehensive and inclusive. Labor has released Terms of Reference that were developed with advice from of a panel of eminent experts, educators, unionists and members of the business community.

Critically, it will examine the role of TAFE – which under a Labor government will be at the centre of Australia's future vocational education system.

Financial Implications

Labor's plan for skills and apprentices will cost the budget \$730 million over the forward estimates and \$1 billion over the medium term.