HON SHARON BIRD MP
SHADOW MINISTER FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR CUNNINGHAM

MEDIA RELEASE

SAVAGE CUTS TO SKILLS & TRAINING – BUDGET FAILS FUTURE TEST

The Budget has exposed Tony Abbott and Joe Hockey’s empty rhetoric about jobs, confirming a massive 20 per cent cut in skills funding.

This budget has also totally failed to invest in programs to develop the skills and training that Australians need to obtain jobs in the new economy.

“Last year the Abbott Government ripped $2 billion from skills funding, including $1 billion from apprentices alone. These cuts have decimated the skills portfolio,” Sharon Bird said.

“Joe Hockey has certainly shown his skills - by managing to double the deficit despite the savage cuts to the skills portfolio.”

“Skills and training is a key to driving participation, productivity and building a stronger economy.

“Unfortunately this budget is stupidly short-sighted when it comes to investing in skills, putting future jobs at risk.”

“This Budget should be focused on future jobs, not the future of Tony Abbott’s job.”

“We have seen no new funding for apprentices, no new funding for upskilling existing workers, no funding for Group Training, no support for areas and industries in transition – nothing but a 20 per cent cut in funding across the portfolio.
“Minister Birmingham’s press release was a list of old and re-hashed changes that were made over the past year – including a $1.6 million cut from abolishing Industry Skills Councils.

“This is a short-sighted Budget from a self-serving Government that has ignored the views of key peak national organisations.”

“In particular we advocate retaining, expanding or introducing a number of initiatives to boost workforce skills; incentives to invest; business capabilities; the capacity to innovate and the ability to access world markets.”

**AiG Pre-Budget Submission**

A focus on Group Training Companies who provide support with administration on employment and training to small businesses, particularly with apprenticeships.

**Council of Small Business of Australia (COSBOA) Pre-Budget Submission**

“Making savings by cutting efficient investments in human capital and infrastructure could impair productivity and income creation, just like the deficits they are intended to correct.”

**Business Council of Australia (BCA) Pre-Budget Submission**

“Investment in training and skills development is critical to improving Australia’s economic performance, meeting the skills needs of Australian businesses, and providing Australians with access to quality jobs.”

**Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) Pre-Budget Submission**

“In Government, Labor made a record investment in skills and training.

“Today we need to be investing in the workforce of tomorrow. We need to keep pace with innovation and prepare for new job opportunities to remain competitive.

“This Budget is clearly about the next election, not the next decade.”

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