

MEDIA RELEASE

ALP'S YOUTH GUARANTEE A POSITIVE STEP FORWARD

The Chair of TAFE Directors Australia, Gillian Shadwick, today welcomed the ALP's announcement of proposed additional support for youth education and training contained in the Leader of the Opposition's Budget in Reply Speech.

Ms Shadwick said that "It is very encouraging to see the recognition of the value of TAFE in developing the nation's skill base and providing Australians, and especially our young people, with employability skills. Investing in vocational education and training and in our TAFE Institutes and Colleges is critically important for Australia's future.

"TAFE Directors Australia supports the broad concept of the Youth Guarantee and the proposal for training mentors to work directly with young people at risk of dropping out. TDA welcomes as well the proposal committing an ALP Government to cover TAFE fees for secondary school students. This will help ensure that fees are not a barrier to utilising TAFE facilities and skilled teaching staff for delivering vocational education and training to school students.

"TDA believes very strongly in the importance of all Australians being given the opportunity to have the education and training that will equip them with the skills that will enable them to get jobs, earn a satisfactory income and contribute fully to Australia's economic and social development.

"Indeed there is a strong case for setting a national goal of at least two years post-secondary education and training for *all* Australians as part of the comprehensive strategy that is so desperately needed for meeting Australia's future skills needs. Addressing the needs of young people now dropping out of school is a critically important part of that. But we also need policies that address the training needs of everyone who completes school as well as those already in the workforce, including older workers seeking new or upgraded skills to cope with an ever changing work environment.

"The role of the TAFE system in producing highly skilled people is crucial to ensuring that as a nation we can meet future challenges and that Australian industries can compete successfully on world markets. A sustained investment in our education and training system is absolutely vital for Australia's future."

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