

Attachment

Summary of the ten point plan

- A focus on improving the quality and increasing the number of Australians with VET qualifications which meet future industry and workforce needs.
- The centrality of the industry stakeholders, especially employers, workers and their representatives.
- Improved youth engagement to give students access to multiple pathways and curriculum choices, especially in middle and senior schooling.
- A crucial role for student support and skilling intermediaries, recognizing the importance of brokerage, guidance, advice for students.
- National workforce development and existing worker strategies
- Genuine competency-based progression & improved apprenticeship completions focused on achieving higher rates of completion and improved quality of learning and work experience.
- A review of traineeships to ensure they contribute to the development of a high wage, high value-add and innovative economy.
- A public and industry investment strategy for vocational education and training to improve the level of Australia's investment in education and training is needed.
- A clear vision for flexible and responsive vocational education providers, and for the future of TAFE in particular
- A focus on the skills needed for a low carbon economy.

Six reasons why Australia needs to act

First, Australia faces a significant shortfall in the supply of workers with the required vocational qualifications. A shortfall of 240,000 workers can be expected by 2016.

Second, Australia faces a significant shortfall in the supply of people with the necessary professional qualifications. A serious shortage exists in the sciences and mathematics, with an estimated shortfall of 19,000 scientists and engineers by 2012.

Third, Australia is struggling to lift school completion rates. Other OECD countries have managed to progressively improve school completion rates, but these rates have barely shifted in Australia over the past 15 years.

Fourth, 46 percent of adults – or seven million Australians – are estimated to have poor or very poor skills across one or more of prose literacy, document literacy, numeracy, problem-solving and health literacy. This means they did not attain the skill levels regarded by most experts as a suitable minimum for coping with the increasing and complex demands of modern life and work.

Fifth, Australia's total public spending on education at 4.8 percent of GDP is below the OECD average (5.4 percent), and well below the Scandinavian countries, France, New Zealand, the UK and the USA.

Sixth, more than a decade of sustained economic growth and prosperity means we can seriously tackle educational exclusion and disengagement, and in ways that can deliver greater social equity.