

14 May 2019

Ms Sue Howard
President
Adult Learning Australia
j.macaffer@ala.asn.au

Dear Ms Howard,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the views of the Coalition on important issues facing your organisation. A response to your questions is attached.

This election will have real consequences for Australia's economy and our future.

Despite global headwinds, our economy is strong. This year, for the first time in more than a decade, the Government will deliver a Budget surplus.

A stronger economy means we can deliver on our plans to:

1. Create 1.25 million more jobs over the next five years.
2. Maintain budget surpluses and pay down debt.
3. Deliver tax relief to encourage and reward hard working Australians.
4. Guarantee increased investments for schools, hospitals and roads.
5. Keep Australians safe and our borders secure.

The alternative at this election is Mr Shorten. Labor's risky agenda includes billions of dollars of higher taxes – on retirees, housing, incomes, investments, family businesses, electricity and more.

Thank you for communicating our response to your members.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Hirst
Federal Director

MORRISON GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO ADULT LEARNING AUSTRALIA

The Morrison Government recognises the important role that Adult Learning Australia plays as the national peak body for Adult and Community Education organisations, who are significant providers of vocational education and training and foundation skills such as literacy and numeracy.

As part of the *Delivering Skills for Today and Tomorrow* package, the Morrison Government will invest \$62.4 million for the *Foundation Skills for Your Future* program.

We are investing \$52.5 million to help individuals in work and the recently unemployed, identify their foundation skills needs (such as language, literacy, numeracy and digital literacy skills) and where appropriate, access training. We are also investing \$9.9 million to establish four Indigenous delivery pilots in remote communities.

Participants can access the *Foundation Skills for Your Future* program in two ways:

- individuals can refer themselves; or
- employers can identify individuals or a cohort of employees who could benefit from additional training in digital literacy skills.

Participants assessed as needing further training would be placed in appropriate training delivered by selected *Registered Training Organisations* (RTOs) or adult and community education providers linked to an RTO.

Foundation Skills for Your Future will benefit over 11,000 Australian workers or recently unemployed individuals with low level foundation skills which may be affecting their ability to obtain and/or retain employment. This will include people who have left the school system without adequate foundation skills to fully participate in the workplace.

From 1 July 2019, the Morrison Government has extended support for employers taking on adult apprentices aged 21 to 24 years studying a certificate III or IV qualification in areas of skills needs. Recognising the importance of continued learning and the highly valued experience and maturity adult apprentices bring after years of studying or working elsewhere, employers will be incentivised through a one-off payment of \$4,000 to take on an adult apprentice aged 21 to 24 years. Current eligibility for the payment was limited to employers who engaged an apprentice aged 25 or over. This will support 12,500 apprentices over three years.

In addition, a re-elected Morrison Government will create 1.25 million jobs over the next five years, including 250,000 new jobs for young Australians. A world-class, modern and flexible vocational education and training (VET) system is crucial to meeting this goal.

The Morrison Government will build on our existing support to the VET sector by implementing a \$585 million package to:

- Reduce the shortfall of skilled workers in key occupations and create up to 80,000 new apprentices by introducing a Skill Shortages payment of \$4,000 for eligible employers and \$2,000 for apprentices;

- Further expand the successful rural wage subsidy to support employers in rural and regional Australia to take on even more apprentices;
- Streamline incentives for employers of apprentices and trainees and update the skills need list to ensure it responds to labour market demand;
- Address youth unemployment in regional Australia and create better connections between school students, employers and the VET sector by establishing 10 industry training hubs;
- Support more young Australians to gain a VET qualification through the Commonwealth Scholarship Program for Young Australians;
- Raise the profile of the VET sector and improve the career advice given to students and others transitioning to a new career by establishing a National Careers Institute and appointing a National Careers Ambassador;
- Support high impact programs that create innovative partnerships between schools, tertiary providers and employers through new competitive grants;
- Increase support for those with low levels of education to identify and address language, literacy, numeracy and digital skills deficits, including in remote Indigenous communities;
- Give students ownership over their education records and support the lifelong learning of Australian workers by expanding the Unique Student Identifier and creating a centralised digital Tertiary Learning Repository;
- Promote a nationwide approach to skills development, enhance research and analysis of future skills needs and give industry a greater role in designing training courses (by establishing a National Skills Commission and Skills Organisations across the country, starting with the growth areas of human services and digital technology (including cyber security); and
- Support thousands of young Tasmanians to gain new skills to boost the state's renewable electricity generation sector and bring the Battery of the Nation plan to life.

Training Hubs

The Morrison Government will establish 10 industry Training Hubs to address the challenge of high youth unemployment in regional areas. The Hubs will create better connections between local industry and schools to improve outcomes for students, employers and the VET sector. They will be an on-the-ground presence where new approaches are needed to help students transition from school to training and work.

The Hubs will facilitate additional education for trainers as well as career advice and mentoring for young people with a specific focus on traditional in-demand trades. A career facilitator will form partnerships between industries in sectors of local skills shortages and those providing advice and education to students. This initiative will support Year 11 and 12 students at 10 selected pilot sites across regional Australia:

Commonwealth Scholarship Program for Young Australians

The Morrison Government will establish a *Commonwealth Scholarships Program for Young Australians* to help more young people enter the vocational education and training sector and gain the skills they need for a successful and rewarding career.

Four hundred Commonwealth Scholarships will be available to students in regions surrounding the pilot industry training hubs to provide a comprehensive pathway for young job-seekers in those regions.

Successful students will receive scholarship funding up to \$17,500, depending on scholarship length and the type of study or training, for a maximum period of three years.

Priority will be given to eligible applicants in the following cohorts:

- Individuals who have exited from the Australian Defence Force (ADF) in the previous 2 years (the age criteria will not be applicable for ADF applicants).
- Indigenous young Australians;
- Young Australians with a disability.
- Young Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

A National Skills Commission and Skills Organisations

In line with recommendations of the Joyce Review, the Morrison Government will establish a *National Skills Commission* to build a nationwide approach to skills development that serves students, industry and drives long-term VET reform.

The Commission will undertake research and analysis of future skills needs and investigate the efficient and fair price of qualifications. The Commission will also play a role in promoting apprenticeships, including by collaborating with industry to assess and respond to workforce needs.

Linked to the Commission, new Skills Organisations will be piloted in areas of future jobs growth. The Organisations will provide industry-based advice and develop industry partnerships to trial new ways to develop VET qualifications. The initial pilots will be in the growth areas of human services, digital technologies and cyber security.

National Careers Institute and National Careers Ambassador

The Morrison Government will establish a *National Careers Institute* to transform the delivery of career advice for Australians across the life of their education, training and employment. This will be supported by a *National Careers Ambassador* who will have strong relationships with key stakeholders and raise the profile of VET.

The Institute will address a current gap in quality careers information to support the transition from school to further study or training. As the expectations of employers evolve, young people and others transitioning through multiple careers and jobs need to know what to study to match their ambitions to the demand for skills.

The Morrison Government will establish a competitive grants program to support high impact programs that build innovative partnerships between schools, tertiary providers and employers. This will enable employers to play an active support role in developing the skills they need for the jobs of the future.

Grants of up to \$350,000 will be available for eligible partnerships. The *National Careers Institute* will administer the program.

Labor's track record shows they cannot be trusted with VET. Their failed VET FEE-HELP policy was a lightning rod for dodgy providers who ripped off young Australian students, saddling them with debt and no qualification to show for it. The Coalition has restored the integrity of Australia's VET system.