



Chris McCall
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Adult Learning Australia
Henderson House
45 Moreland Street
Footscray VIC 3011

Dear Chris

Thank you for your letter to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Minister for Education and Training, Tanya Plibersek, on behalf of Adult Learning Australia.

Labor believes that all Australians should have access through their lives to the education they need for decent jobs and to be active members of the community.

No one should be excluded from access to education as a result of disadvantage, course costs or fear of debt.

Unfortunately, Australia's TAFE and community education system is under enormous pressure as a result of funding cuts, neglect and poor and incoherent policy development.

The Australian vocational education and training system requires stable, competent and visionary leadership; instead, the Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison Government has made nine different ministerial appointments to provide oversight of vocational education over its six years in office.

In contrast, a Shorten Labor Government will restore public TAFE as the major provider in the vocational education and training system and ensure that not-for-profit community and adult education providers are supported in the critical complementary role they play.

Recognising the role of Adult and Community Education in the Australian education system

Labor recognises the strong and positive role adult and community learning plays in delivering quality and inclusive post-secondary education to people in our communities.

In Australia today, educational opportunity remains uneven. Too many people miss out on education and too many Australians have language, literacy and numeracy problems that make them vulnerable to underemployment and social exclusion.

Labor wants to change this.

A Shorten Labor Government will break down the barriers that prevent so many Australians from getting the quality education they need.

It is time for a renewed shared commitment by federal and state governments to adult and community education objectives, principles and goals. The last declaration was made under the

previous Labor government in 2008. Federal Labor has undertaken to take leadership in ensuring a new Ministerial Declaration on Adult Community Education.

Funding ACE nationally

Labor will secure funding for vocational education and ensure that at least two thirds of public funding for training will go to TAFE with the remaining one third of funding available to high quality, including not-for-profit community providers.

For too long the adult and vocational education sectors have been put under intense pressure due to misapplied competition and incoherent policies. Labor is committed to restoring TAFE as the anchor in the vocational education system and the supporting the unique role of not-for-profit Adult Learning and Community Education organisations to Australia's post-secondary education system.

Priorities for ACE research, including a national data collection for ACE

An evidence base to understand adult education needs is critical. International benchmarking and shared learnings is central to educational improvement and reform. Labor is committed to world class research in education.

This includes continuing Australia's participation in the OECD's survey of adult skills (PIACC), noting that only after pressure from Labor did the Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison Government reverse its recent decision to withdraw from the PIACC.

Priorities for ACE programs and LLN in the workplace

Labor has a vision for a stronger, fairer and fit-for-purpose post-secondary education system that meets the needs of our society and economy while helping to deliver fairness, address inequality and ensure equity.

In order to achieve our vision, we must reverse the slow decline that has characterised vocational education and training and adult and community education over the past few years.

In the first 100 days of a Shorten Labor Government we will establish a once-in-a-generation national inquiry into post-secondary education in Australia.

This inquiry will be independent and comprehensive.

We see adult and community education as central to this inquiry, as we know that we won't be able to deliver it without your expertise, practice and community connection.

Labor believes that as we work together to build a stronger education system, we will be able to meet the opportunities and challenges of the future so that no Australian is left behind.

Labor will ensure a just transition for Australians by making sure everyone can get access to quality education they need throughout their lives.

Labor commits to developing and implementing a national adult literacy strategy, prioritising language, literacy, numeracy and digital learning in the range of contexts in which this is needed.

The Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison Government put an end to Labor's longstanding Workplace English Language Literacy and Numeracy program (WELL). After neglecting this area of education and training for six years, it has only just proposed to restore a similar program.

Labor will guarantee that level of investment for adult language, literacy, numeracy and digital foundation education and will work with adult and community educators to design and implement the program. In addition, Labor has also committed to addressing the problems in the Adult Migrant

English and Skills for Education and Employment programs from Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison Government changes that cut funding, impacting quality, and leading to enrolment declines.

Yours sincerely

Australian Labor Campaign Headquarters

www.alp.org.au

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