Conference to discuss vocational options in schools

A three day conference to improve vocational education and training (VET) options for high school students across the country was officially opened by NSW Education Minister Verity Firth today.

Ms Firth welcomed around 500 delegates from Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific to Sydney for the sixth biannual VETnetwork Conference, themed Connection, Capacity and Collaboration.

“Vocational options in senior school years help many students make the transition into the workforce,” Ms Firth said.

“These courses also encourage kids who aren’t interested in university to stay in school to finish Year 12.

“And students who undertake vocational courses learn vital skills that will help them make a valuable contribution to their local economy and community.

“The Conference will give dedicated teachers, trainers and careers advisers the opportunity to talk through experiences and ideas as to how VET options in schools can be strengthened.”

Ms Firth said the Conference would hear about the success of NSW’s school-based vocational programs.

“NSW has more students in school-based vocational education and training programs than any other State in the country.

“NSW high school students are getting started learning the skills they will need to work in field like finance, hospitality, tourism and the traditional trades.

“In fact, around one third of school students in NSW studied a vocational course as part of their HSC last year.

“And this early study is delivering great results.

“A recent review by Melbourne University found that within two years of graduating, 96.5 per cent of HSC vocational students were engaged in study, work or both.

“The research confirms that the NSW system of VET in schools improves student retention, makes students more work-ready than other schools leavers, and improves students’ transition from school to work.”

Ms Firth said the Rees Government was committed to providing the community with more education and training options.

“The NSW Government has again provided record funding for education and training, investing $11.2 billion this year alone,” Ms Firth said.
“Since coming to office, Labor has nearly doubled total education and training spending and more than tripled spending on school maintenance.

“We are ensuring our students have access to the most up-to-date training in the best possible facilities.

“We want to make sure every school student is ready for work or further study when they graduate.”

Established in 1995, VETnetwork has members in every state and territory in Australia and has developed links with peak bodies including the education and training sectors, universities, government departments and industry groups. The VETnetwork Association organises a national conference every two years for the professional development of training providers.