Trade Schools – Producing Tomorrow’s Workforce

State Plan priority S5: More students complete year 12 or recognised vocational training

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Students who undertake vocational education and training courses in NSW public schools have better job prospects and are more likely to find full-time work than other HSC graduates, according to new research released today by Premier Morris Iemma.

“This report by the University of Melbourne vindicates my Government’s investment in a network of 25 new trade schools and the introduction of school-based apprenticeships this year,” Mr Iemma said.

“That’s why we will build five new trade schools in the coming financial year to meet our commitment to families, businesses and students.

“This month’s budget will include more than $5 million in 2007-08 for new trade schools at Penrith, Wyong, Tamworth, Nambucca Heads and Sutherland.

“The jury is back and it’s told us that providing education for all, not just those who are heading to further study at university, is better preparing a generation for life and work,” the Premier said.

The independent study surveyed 6000 NSW public school HSC graduates about their work and study destinations and satisfaction with vocational training.

It found:

- 30% moved successfully into work;
- 25% went to university;
- 25% entered post school vocational training; and
- 16% became apprentices and trainees.

“Six out of ten respondents said the option to study vocational subjects influenced their decision to stay on at school to Year 12,” Mr Iemma said.

“The majority said work-placements as part of the course increased their self confidence and provided useful on-the-job training,” he said.

Other key findings of the study include:

- Graduates who studied Automotive Studies, Engineering and Construction made the strongest transitions to apprenticeships.
- Information Technology graduates made the strongest transition to further study.
- VET in schools enables high levels of achievement by students who otherwise may have struggled with the HSC.
- VET in schools does not limit choices, rather it opens a broad range of options including university studies.
• Vocational education improves student retention rates, improves self confidence and makes students more work ready.

“The NSW Government is delivering what students, employers and communities want and meeting the NSW economy’s growing demand for skills,” Mr Iemma said.

“Strong industry support is demonstrated by the involvement of more than 17,000 NSW employers, giving students valuable on-the-job experience that often leads to full-time work,” he said.

NSW Minister for Education and Training, John Della Bosca, said more than one-third of NSW students now undertake vocational education and training courses as part of their higher school certificate.

“NSW has the best school-based vocational education and training program in the country and students who have completed these courses are telling us they have benefited from them,” the Minister said.

“This year we have introduced school based apprenticeships, increasing opportunities for students to gain trade skills while at school.

“In NSW, students can combine their vocational courses with other subjects to get an HSC – allowing them to go straight into the workforce, begin an apprenticeship or traineeship, go to TAFE, or go to university after Year 12,” Mr Della Bosca said.

To build on the success of the VET in schools program, the Iemma Government is implementing a series of innovative initiatives. These include:

• introducing school based apprenticeships as part of the HSC in industry areas, including trade skill shortage areas, in NSW schools in 2007
• establishing 25 trade schools across the state
• increasing the flexibility of school based traineeships, particularly by offering the new Board of Studies endorsed course, Industry-based Learning
• piloting VET in schools for students in Years 9 and 10 in 2006 and 2007.

A copy of the report can be found at: https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/reviews/index.htm
For more details on VET in schools programs go to: https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/vetinschools/index.html