

Skills and Training

ACT Labor knows how important it is to provide Canberrans with the skills needed to ensure our community and economy continue to thrive.

It is vital we have a skilled and well-trained workforce if we are to protect the economic health of the ACT now and into the future.

We are also committed to providing Canberrans with the best opportunities to reach their full potential in education and in life.

In response to the emerging skills shortage, ACT Labor acted quickly by establishing the ACT Skills Commission to work out ways for the Government and the Canberra community to meet the challenge of increasing our skilled workforce.

Acting on advice from the Commission, the ACT Labor Government published its *ACT Skills Future Strategy*. This strategy focussed on four themes:

- People and Workforce – attracting and retaining skilled workers and their families from interstate and overseas;
- Productivity – aiming to increase the productivity of our workers through encouraging employee access and participation in formal and informal training;
- Participation – lifting workforce participation by encouraging those people who have traditionally been unable to participate, or fully participate, in the workforce to do so; and
- Education and training – ensuring the ACT education and training system is responsive to the needs of participants, industry and the economy.

ACT Labor has backed this strategy with a record \$51 million in funding and will continue to prioritise policies and strategies to increase the skills of our workforce – for the good of our economy and our community.

ACT Labor has been able to do all this, and deliver much more, because we have been strong economic managers. This has allowed us to invest in fostering, supporting and building a skilled community.

Jon Stanhope
Chief Minister
Minister for Business and
Economic Development

Andrew Barr
Minister for Education and Training

A Proud Record of Building a Skilled Community

ACT Labor is committed to providing opportunities for all Canberrans to increase their skills and believes that investment in vocational education and training is essential if we are to be ready for the future.

Currently about 70% of Canberra's school students do not go on to university but instead pursue other pathways into study and work.

ACT Labor has made a record investment in building a skilled community and has introduced a range of policies and strategies to increase the skills of our workforce.

Our Record

To support vocational education and training in the Territory, the ACT Labor Government has:

- Increased funding for the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) by 15.5% since being elected – a stark contrast to the 25% cut under the previous Liberal government;
- Funded the establishment of the CIT Vocational College offering essential skills and jobs training for around 3,000 youths, mature aged and migrant workers;
- Invested heavily in new infrastructure at the CIT including \$9 million for a new, state of the art horticulture centre at the Bruce Campus;
- Provided an extra \$4 million in user choice funding to meet the demand for Australian apprenticeships;
- Provided an additional \$3.4 million for teachers to help with careers and pathways planning in our colleges and high schools;
- Invested \$2.495 million over four years in CIT to deliver an additional 35,000 hours training for students;
- Invested an extra \$1 million into CIT for a technology upgrade, to ensure students are learning with the best equipment;
- Funded the feasibility and design for a new CIT Trade Skills Centre at Fyshwick, and for the upgrade of the Reid campus;
- Provided extra support for students with a disability at CIT;
- Supported Australian School Based Apprentices, with this year's goal to be 500 apprentices in our schools;
- Worked with CIT and industry to provide accelerated apprenticeships in areas such as panel beating, hairdressing and cheffing;

The ACT Labor Government has also:

- Re-established the *ACT Skilled and Business Migration Program* in 2005 to sponsor skilled workers and business investors from overseas to come and work in the ACT. Since July 2005 over 2,734 skilled workers, business investors and their dependents have been sponsored by the ACT Government. The sponsored skilled migrants will transfer over \$68 million into the ACT for settlement purposes. The sponsored business migrants have invested over \$74 million into the ACT economy;
- Established the *Live in Canberra program* to attract and retain skilled workers and their families from around Australia, and to work with the Skilled and Business Migration program on international recruitment;
- Established the *ACT Skills Commission*, chaired by ANU Vice Chancellor Prof Ian Chubb and later Mr Derek Volker, which reported in May 2008 on skills issues and possible solutions;
- Published its *ACT Skills Future Strategy* responding to the *Skills Commission Report* and fed it into the 2008-09 ACT Budget, which
 - Funded an expansion of the ACT Government's analysis and projection work in areas of expected and current skills shortage in the ACT;
 - Introduced a new recruitment campaign for the ACT Public Service - *Great careers come with the Territory*;
 - Implemented a new long-service leave scheme for the ACT community sector;
 - Provided additional resources to Volunteering ACT to support the *Students Participating in Community Enterprise*, which provides work experience and skills for young people in danger of not completing year 10;
 - Provided an additional \$1.2 million for the *Skilled and Business Migration Program*, to link final-year and graduating international students with potential employers and increase traineeships and apprenticeships in the ACT Public Service; and
 - Provided \$4.2 million to strengthen the ACT's existing health workforce and boost the *Live in Canberra* campaign.

The 2008-09 ACT Budget

The ACT Labor Government moved quickly to implement the initiatives identified in the *ACT Skills Future Strategy*, through providing significant new funding in the 2008-09 Budget.

The ACT Labor Government's 2008-09 Budget identified \$51 million over four years (comprising \$36.6 million over four years in recurrent funding and \$14.3 million in capital funding) for skills. In particular, ACT Labor allocated:

- \$2.5 million for additional places at CIT and an extra \$1 million for the CIT Vocational College;
- \$1.2 million to strengthen the *Skilled and Business Migration Program*, link final-year and graduating international students with potential employers and increase traineeships and apprenticeships in the ACT Public Service;
- \$4.2 million to strengthen the health workforce and boost the *Live in Canberra* campaign;
- Resources for a feasibility study into a new trades training centre in Fyshwick; and
- \$2.5 million to build capacity and leadership in the ACT public service.

Moving Forward

Encouraging post-school training in areas of identified skills shortage

ACT Labor is committed to helping support small business to attract better-qualified workers. It will aim to do this through a mix of measures that support employees while they improve their skills and training, and through policies that make Canberra a more attractive city for employees to move to and remain in.

A re-elected ACT Labor Government will:

- Invest \$1 million to provide assistance with CIT fees and course materials to CIT students in areas of skills shortage; and
- Invest \$1 million in a scheme to pay HECS fees for graduates in areas of skills shortages as long as they remain employed in Canberra. This program will begin with graduates in areas of identified skills shortages, but will be reviewed during the term of the next ACT Labor Government for possible extension to other graduates.

Strengthening the Canberra Institute of Technology

ACT Labor believes a strong TAFE system is critical to not only responding to the critical issue of skills shortages, but to also ensuring Canberrans have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Since being elected in 2001, we have increased real funding to the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) by a massive 15.5% - a stark contrast to the previous Liberal government which cut funding by 25%.

A re-elected ACT Labor Government will:

- Continue to recognise CIT as a world-class education provider and provide support and funding;
- Invest an extra \$5 million over the next four years for technology upgrades at the CIT including:
 - o New media and multimedia equipment;
 - o Equipment for environmental science programs;
 - o Dental instruments and materials to establish a simulated dental laboratory;
 - o Hydraulic client hairdressing stools;
 - o Upgrade of ovens and deep fryers;
 - o Restructure and upgrade of specialist computer laboratories; and
 - o Replacement of servers at the Reid campus.
- Continue to invest \$600,000 per year for the next three years in delivering extra teaching hours at the CIT, as outlined in the 2008-09 Budget;
- Continue to invest over \$250,000 per year for the next three years in supporting students at the Vocational College; and
- Provide additional support for students with a disability at the CIT.

VET in schools

ACT Labor believes that a flexible and innovative approach to vocational education and training is needed if we are to build the skills base of our community.

A re-elected ACT Labor Government will:

- Continue to support Australian School Based apprenticeships, with the goal of 500 apprenticeships per year;
- Provide \$1.4 million to support 100 new Australian School Based Apprentices each year in our schools;
- Invest \$225,000 over four years to give 15 young Canberrans each year the opportunity to complete an Australian School Based Apprenticeship in the sport and recreation industry;
- Provide \$40,000 over the next term for Young Achievers Australia to develop business skills in ACT high schools, college and university students;

- Continue to invest over \$1 million per year for the next three years in increase funding for apprentices as outlined in the 2008-09 Budget; and
- Conclude consultations on raising the school leaving age, as outlined in our consultation paper *Pathways to the Future*.

Better access to training

A re-elected ACT Labor Government will:

- Further develop links to searchable websites for small businesses, and education and training providers, to allow them to identify the most relevant sources of information and training advice for small business.

Attracting migrant workers

In line with recommendations from the Skills Commission, ACT Labor recognises that we need to increase our population of skilled workers. Currently we are disadvantaged under the Commonwealth Government's migration points scheme that does not recognise Canberra as a regional centre.

A re-elected ACT Labor Government will:

- Pursue the Commonwealth to remove the disadvantage the ACT experiences through the current migration points system.