

Media Release

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Independent Schools
Council of Australia

ALP's vocational training and education initiative supports parental contribution

'The ALP's commitment to \$2.5 billion in capital funding for trade centres in Australian secondary schools is a welcome funding initiative,' said Mr Bill Daniels, Executive Director of the Independent Schools Council of Australia.

Responding to Labor's *New Directions for Vocational Education and Training* policy document released tonight, Mr Daniels said independent schools have been eligible for only limited public subsidy to support vocational and technical education (VTE) programmes yet there are high capital costs to establish and equip facilities and workshops.

'We need further detail on the eligibility criteria for the trade centre funding, but at first glance this initiative could be of great benefit to independent schools,' said Mr Daniels.

Mr Daniels said over 20,000 students in independent schools are enrolled in industry recognised VTE programmes.

'The number of students in VTE courses in independent schools has quadrupled since 1997,' said Mr Daniels, 'and over half of independent schools now offer VTE courses to their secondary students in over 40 industry areas. The sector is grateful for the funding so far made available through the Australian Government, but school communities have had to find the bulk of funds.'

Mr Daniels said that in the independent sector as a whole, parents contribute nearly 90 per cent of funds for major capital developments such as school buildings, grounds and equipment.

'The ALP's initiative sends a positive message to parents of students in independent schools that a Labor government would be prepared to act as responsible partners in the education of their children,' said Mr Daniels. 'However, until we see the full detail of the ALP's schools funding arrangements independent school communities will remain uncertain about their future under a Labor government.'

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