TRAINING FOR THE FUTURE
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TAFE the Future of Training

A McGowan Labor Government will rebuild our training system, increase training opportunities and develop strong partnerships.

TAFE will remain a modern responsive training organisation that will drive the future economic development of our State. Under WA Labor’s Plan for Jobs, TAFE will continue to be the preeminent provider of vocational training in the State and do so under the banner of TAFE. Over recent years, name changes to the various TAFE colleges have diluted this important brand.

• **A McGowan Labor Government will reinstate the TAFE brand under a unified TAFE banner.**

TAFE WA is the preeminent delivery body for the skills that keep Western Australia productive and competitive. It is an organisation that for decades has trained the trade, non-trade and para-professional workers for the majority of industries across WA.

It has also been the primary source of affordable further education for the adult population over a wide range of interests. In the last seven years however TAFE has been under merciless attack by the Liberal Government. The Department of Training and all of the Colleges have been subjected to funding cuts, job losses, course closures and students have been subjected to massive increases in study fees.

In reinvigorating the TAFE brand and structure it is important to ensure that it continues to be responsive to the needs of industry and areas of future job growth and creation. As part of WA Labor’s Plan for Jobs, TAFE Colleges will be transformed into one-stop-shop Industry Skill Centres, sites where new skills can be gained, existing skills tested and where prospective employees can find direct links into work.

Government training facilities will play a vital role in the economic and industrial development of our State. As Industry Skill Centres, TAFE Colleges will liaise directly with emerging and established local industries and campuses will become not only places of learning, they will also become incubators for innovation.

Training facilities will sit alongside technical advice outlets and employment agencies. Industry Skills Centres will provide employers, unions, apprentices and trainees with a single point of contact around their training and career needs.

The creation of Industry Skill Centres on TAFE Campus will be funded through a re-organisation of existing departmental expenditure points, a better use of College assets and incorporating work previously undertaken by Workforce Development Centres and the Career Centre into College Skill Centres.

• **A McGowan Labor Government will transform TAFE Colleges into Industry Skill Centres. They will become one-stop shops that will liaise directly with emerging and established local industries, co-locate training and assessment facilities and provide employers, unions, apprentices and trainees with a single point of contact around their training needs.**
The State Training Board and the Industry Training Councils provide an important link between the needs of industry and the economic direction of the State. The dialogue that these organisations facilitate is important in focusing training on areas of future job growth.

- **A McGowan Labor Government will revamp the State Training Board and Industry Training Councils to ensure that their structures and input provides a direct link between industry needs and government economic direction.**

There are also a number of craft industries that, while small in number, provide ongoing job opportunities. Their future is in doubt as courses to support these industries are cut.

- **A McGowan Labor Government will create training outcomes that allow apprentices from craft industries with small numbers to still study within TAFE and Western Australia.**

**Quality Assurance in Training**

A McGowan Labor Government is committed to ensuring that students receive the quality education that they sign up for and that employers can be confident in the skills that potential employees will have. A better quality control system is required if these two aims are to be met.

In recent years there has been a significant freeing up of the capacity of private training providers to access government funding to deliver training. While most private providers offer high quality training, there have been significant incidences of students undertaking training and gaining qualifications without actually having the skills required to work in their chosen field.

The Auditor Generals’ 2015 Report on Registered Training Organisations and recent findings of the Senate Inquiry into VET-Fee Help schemes have shown that there is a major challenge to clean up shonky private training providers.

Through the Senate inquiry into the operation, regulation and funding of private VET providers in Australia, the Committee heard that;

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“…………….a fundamental problem with private provision of VET courses is that educational priorities are sometimes at odds with the profitability considerations central to the operation of a business.”1
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“…….providers have based their course offerings on access to government funding and not on training students for areas in which skills shortages exist.”2
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1 The Senate, Education and Employment References Committee Report into Getting our money’s worth: the operation, regulation and funding of private vocational education and training (VET) providers in Australia; October 2015, p15
2 Ibid, p15
“Evidence received suggests that some VET providers are delivering courses of inadequate quality, most obvious in the extremely short timeframes in which some qualifications are offered, alongside insufficiently rigorous assessment practices.”

The Senate enquiry clearly highlights that many course offerings through the private VET sector are being profit driven and not skills driven with a high level of non-compliance with VET national standards.

Both reports highlight the importance of ensuring there is a thorough audit process for any provider accessing government funding.

- **A McGowan Labor Government will:**

  *Immediately undertake an audit of existing WA Registered Training Organisations to ensure compliance and good practice. An assessment of RTO courses will be part of the ongoing drive to ensure training expenditure meets the economic objectives of WA Labor’s Plan for Jobs.*

  *Introduce a quality control system including an ongoing audit process for privately registered training providers seeking to deliver government funded training with an increase in on-site audits and a focus on outcomes.*

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1The Senate, Education and Employment References Committee Report into Getting our money’s worth: the operation, regulation and funding of private vocational education and training (VET) providers in Australia; October 2015, p49
Case Study: Auditor General Report into Registered Training Organisations

Key findings from the WA Auditor General Report found the Training Accreditation Council did 323 checks of Registered Training Organisations in 2012-13 and found:

- 60% were non-compliant with the national standards
- 35% were either significantly or critically non-compliant
- 22% were assessed as minor non-compliance

In the 18 checks that were received by the WA Auditor General, the Council assessed:

- 14 RTOs as non-compliant of which:
  - 5 were significantly non-compliant; and
  - 4 were critically non-compliant

Making Training a Priority in Everything We Do

A McGowan Labor Government is committed to ensuring that we maximise the number of local jobs and training opportunities created through government contracts.

Businesses tendering for work will be supported to complete Western Australian Industry Participation Plans (WAIPP). Specifically the WAIPPs will need to establish the number of apprenticeships and traineeships that will be created by businesses competing for government work.

There will also be the capacity to declare a project of strategic significance and place additional local content requirements on the project.

A Skilled Local Jobs Bill will be introduced by a McGowan Labor Government. The purpose of this legislation is to require a skilled local work agreement to be implemented on all major resource projects in WA. As part of this process the agreement would need to identify how much work is undertaken in WA and the number and type of apprenticeship and trainees positions that would be created.

- A McGowan Labor Government will maximise the number of apprenticeships and trainees created through government contracts and private sector activities in WA by:

  The introduction of Western Australian Industry Participation Plans that establish the number of training positions that will be created by businesses competing for government work.

  Introducing the Skilled Local Jobs Bill and require a skilled local work agreement to be implemented on all major resource projects in WA including details on the number and type of apprenticeship and trainee positions that would be created.

Read more about our plan at page 78.
Expand Priority Start to Create More Training Opportunities

The Priority Start policy will be expanded to all construction investment by the State Government, including big maintenance contracts and joint ventures or public private partnerships which involve a construction arrangement.

The current Priority Start policy places specific requirements on businesses undertaking government construction work to employ apprentices and trainees when the labour component of the job reaches a certain value. WA Labor introduced Priority Start under the Carpenter Government.

In recent years there have been lost opportunities to train young people. The Liberal Government was criticised by the Auditor General in 2011 for losing job opportunities for young workers by failing to properly monitor and enforce the existing Priority Start policy.1

- **A McGowan Labor Government** will:

  Create jobs for apprentices and trainees on every major State Government funded construction project.

  Expand Priority Start to apply to all major State Government funded construction investment including big maintenance contracts and joint ventures or public private partnerships which involve a construction arrangement.

  Require all business cases for construction projects to outline how many jobs, including apprenticeships and traineeships, the investment will create.

Under recent changes by the Liberal Government, Priority Start has been watered down by allowing successful tenderers of government contracts to count existing apprentices as meeting a contractor’s obligations to employ apprentices and trainees.

Contracts will be grouped together where appropriate to ensure that contractors are required to meet the obligations of the Priority Start policy.

- **A McGowan Labor Government will group contracts together to ensure that contractors are required to meet the obligations of the Priority Start policy.**

The Priority Start policy will be properly enforced and monitored closely so that State Government investment in major construction projects is used to train young Western Australians. Regular enforcement and compliance checks will be undertaken to ensure the policy is implemented.

- **A McGowan Labor Government will ensure regular enforcement and compliance checks of our Priority Start policy.**

The Priority Start policy will be expanded to ensure that the opportunity to create apprenticeship and trainee positions is maximised. The success of the Priority Start policy will also be supported through the implementation of the Western Australian Industry Participation Plan (WAIPP).

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Regional TAFEs Supporting Regional Job Growth

A McGowan Labor Government is committed to ensuring that there is a quality TAFE system in regional WA. A TAFE system that delivers training linked to real jobs and aligns with future job growth in the regions. It is also important for TAFE to develop partnerships and drive innovation and new industries.

An independent review of the training sector commissioned by the Liberal Government has identified the need to be more responsive to the needs of regional WA when developing the State Priority Occupation List (SPOL).1 The creation of the list is used to determine which courses are delivered and the level of government funding different courses will attract. The Liberal Government rejected the recommendation of the review to better align the SPOL to the needs of regional WA.

Failure to change training needs on the SPOL affects the annual funding allocations by the Department of Training including the allocations to regional State training providers on training priorities. The report found that “this has significance not only for workforce development in the regions but also for the sustainability of the STPs (State Training Providers) themselves.”2

There are numerous sources of information identified in the review that would be available to inform this process including the Regional Workforce Development Plans, the Regional Investment Blueprints and the research and information branch located within the Department of Regional Development.

The Independent Review also recommended that consideration be given to a five year project under the heading “VET Regional Partnerships Program” for regional State Training Providers that are looking to embark on new, innovative and long term partnerships for the benefit of their institutions and their communities.”3

• A McGowan Labor Government will implement a VET Regional Partnerships Program to provide an opportunity for regional TAFEs to invest in new and innovative long term partnerships to create training and job opportunities in the community.

• A McGowan Labor Government will ensure that the State Priority Occupation List will be more responsive to the employment needs of the regions and ensure regional TAFEs are delivering training that aligns with future job growth in the regions.

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1Emeritus Professor Margaret Seares, Independent Review of the Vocational Education and Training Sector in Western Australia 2013-14, Final Report (Extract), p13
2Ibid, p91
3Emeritus Professor Margaret Seares, Independent Review of the Vocational Education and Training Sector in Western Australia 2013-14, Final Report (Extract), p11