

FACT SHEET

RENEWING TECH WINGS

HOW THE BRACKS GOVERNMENT WILL RENEW ALL SECONDARY SCHOOL TECH WINGS

Investing in the future

The Bracks Government is serious about improving the teaching of technical skills so our children can get good jobs in the field of their choice.

Victoria needs more and better skilled people to support our skill based economy.

Increasing the skills, knowledge and abilities of Victorians will support increased productivity and better workforce participation.

What's good for the economy is also good for individuals. The longer a person has trained or studied, the more likely they are to have a job, a home and a secure income.

Progress in the last seven years

Since 1999:

- The number of students taking VET in Schools subjects has doubled from 15,500 to 32,500 – which is over 24% of all students studying years 10, 11 and 12.
- More than 5,000 students now undertake a School Based New Apprenticeship.
- More than 12,000 students study the new vocational Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL).
- The number of apprentices and trainees has almost doubled (from 76,000 to 134,000).
- The school leaving age has been increased to 16.
- Year 12 completion rates have increased to 85.2% – the highest of any Australian state.

All students under 20 now have a guarantee of a place at a school, TAFE or Adult and Community Education, to complete year 12 or an equivalent training qualification. Young people in Victoria have never had a better range of options for pursuing both academic and technical subjects.

A comprehensive \$241 million skills strategy, *Maintaining the Advantage: Skilled Victorians*, was released in March this year, which:

- Creates 15,000 extra training places.
- Provides funding for four new Technical Education Centres at a cost of \$32 million.
- Introduces a \$500 Trades Bonus as an incentive for apprentices to continue in their training.
- Provides \$48 million for new equipment at TAFE colleges.
- Provides funds for three TAFE upgrades.

But there is still more that needs to be done to improve technical education.

Renewing Tech Wings

All government secondary schools have tech classrooms in which vocational and technical subjects are taught. However, some of these facilities are dated and in some areas are inadequate to meet the demands of changing skills, particularly at the senior secondary level, with more advanced VET subjects. New equipment can improve the quality of trade teaching and keep students interested in trade options.

That's why we are now committing another \$50 million to renew Tech Wings in every government secondary school

- *\$35 million for new state of the art trade wings at 30 secondary schools.*
- *\$15 million for equipment upgrades to all other secondary schools to modernise existing trade classrooms (grants will be up to \$100,000 depending on the size of the school and age of existing equipment).*

The 30 new or rebuilt trade wings will be spread across the state, to maximise access to these facilities. Schools will be able to focus on trades like metal work, automotive studies, electronics, carpentry and manufacturing according to the interests of their students and skill shortages in their areas.

Equipment grants will enable schools to improve the machinery and technology used in tech wings. Examples of such new equipment could include:

- computer aided drafting and computer assisted manufacturing equipment and software (metals and engineering)
- robotics equipment (metals and engineering)
- car hoists and computer tuning equipment (automotive)
- machining equipment (building)
- digital lathes (manufacturing)

Schools and the TAFE system

Victoria leads the nation in ensuring that TAFE colleges and schools work closely together and are linked to local employers through Local Learning Employment Networks (LLEN's).

Schools will continue to work closely with TAFE colleges to broaden the options for students to study Vocational Education and Training subjects and courses while they are still at school.

The government has already provided funding for four Technical Education Centres at Ballarat, Wangaratta, Berwick and Heidelberg. These facilities, attached to TAFE colleges, will provide high level skills development for year 10 to 12 students, with cutting edge facilities, equipment and teaching. The first three TECs will enrol students during 2007, with Heidelberg opening in 2008. In addition to the TECs, Holmesglen Vocational College will also open in 2007, focusing on vocational subjects for senior secondary students.

These initiatives ensure that Victoria will continue to lead the nation in skills development – from skills training in school, to apprenticeships, to advanced vocational courses in TAFE.