FED:Aust obsessed with small class sizes: Pyne

CANBERRA, July 17 AAP - The federal opposition says too much has been spent on reducing school class sizes and not enough on lifting the quality of teachers.

Opposition education spokesman Christopher Pyne says Australia’s education system is not attracting the best people to the profession.

“We have in Australia a straightjacket over how teachers are remunerated, what career progression they can expect and as a consequence we are not attracting the highest calibre people to the teaching profession that we should be.”

He has criticised Liberal and Labor state governments for their “obsession” with smaller class sizes over the past 10 years.

“There is no evidence that smaller class sizes somehow produce better student outcomes,” he told reporters in Sydney on Tuesday.

“In spite of Australia having small class sizes for 10 years ... their outcomes have gone backwards.”

Professor Barry McGaw, chairman of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, said the standard of teaching needed to improve in Australia.

He agreed that money had been wasted on reducing class sizes.

“It's a very expensive thing to do,” he told ABC Radio.

“The range in which we've reduced it has almost no impact on student learning.”

Australian Greens leader Christine Milne said Australia had slipped in education standards in the past decade because of a lack of investment in the sector.

But she disagreed with Mr Pyne on his criticism on class sizes.

“As a former classroom teacher, I would say to you that class sizes matter,” she told reporters in Canberra.

“They matter absolutely, as do the training opportunities and professional development opportunities for teachers.”

Acting School Education Minister Chris Evans said Mr Pyne's comments revealed the opposition was planning to cut the number of teachers and increase class sizes.

“After months of deafening silence on education policy, this is all he can come up with - sacking teachers and squeezing more students into our classrooms,” he said in a statement.

Mr Pyne was out of touch with the education community.

“He has no vision for Australian schools but instead has promised to slash the schools budget by $2.8 billion,” Senator Evans said.
United scheme to fast-track tradies

YOUNG tradies will be able to fast-track apprenticeships and transfer their skills anywhere in Australia without any setback to training, as part of a groundbreaking national deal.

Retail giant Woolworths is spearheading the plan to accelerate training for its 2400 apprentices and has signed a $1.16 million deal with the Gillard Government to help train the next generation of butchers and bakers.

Other companies will take advantage of the public funding, part of a plan to cut the high drop-out rate for apprentices of about 52 per cent.

For the first time, the states have agreed to a national plan that will allow apprentice welders, electricians or builders to take a job in the mining sector without hitting a bureaucratic brick wall.

It will allow a young apprentice from western Sydney or Melbourne to seek work in the Pilbara or other boom areas – and be certain that their skills will transfer with them.

The national scheme will ensure a standard training program and replace eight separate state and territory schemes that have existed for decades.

It will be in place by next July, slashing bureaucratic red tape and reducing complexity for bosses and trainees alike.

Chris Evans, the Minister for Skills, has been driving the push to overhaul skills training – with the Government particularly keen to ensure that apprentices can transfer to the boom mining states of Western Australia and Queensland without being penalised.

“At a time when we have jobs in the north and the west, it is essential that we have a national system that helps, not hinders, apprentices take up these job opportunities,” Senator Evans said. “Nor can we have a system that makes it difficult for employers to take on apprentices. These reforms will be a win for apprentices, employers and the economy.”

For Woolworths, the “accelerated skill development program” will target around 2400 apprentices over the next 16 months and includes the introduction of e-learning and work-based assessment.

Among other reforms, paper-based processes will be scrapped and replaced with national online forms.

But the Gillard Government’s hopes of boosting apprentice wages – through a Fair Work Australia hearing – appears to have been dashed after the industrial umpire suggested it was outside of its jurisdiction to consider the matter.

APPRENTICE  HOURLY PAY RATES
Carpenter  $7.44 to $17.17
Electrician  $7.22 to $19.51
Plumber  $6.91 to $17.04
Diesel mechanic  $7.31 to $19.65
Cook  $8.43 to $20.21
Baker  $7.06 to $15.32
Butcher  $9.72 to $14.87

Source: PayScale

BENEFIT: Woolworths apprentices Jake McDonald, Andrew Murphy, Carl Vescio and Grant Crawford.
Scrapheap looms for unskilled

Fleur Anderson

Any Australian worker with less than a trade certificate or university degree risks being thrown on the jobs scrapheap as employers demand increasingly skilled workers over the next decade.

High-school graduates and people with low-level qualifications, such as hairdressers, fitness instructors, massage therapists and baristas, could be forced back to school or face being out of work within 13 years, according to economic modelling to be released by the federal government today.

Unskilled work will be scarce regardless of whether Australia enjoys boom times or faces a scenario of worldwide economic crisis, natural disasters, political unrest in Asia or threats of nuclear war, the analysis by Access Economics Deloitte has found.

Highly qualified workers in healthcare, the professions, education, and mining will have the pick of the jobs market by 2025 as industry looks for postgraduate and university-educated workers and qualified tradespeople ahead of high-school leavers and those with basic post-secondary qualifications.

As part of the Gillard government’s renewed political focus on jobs, Skills Minister Chris Evans will today launch the National Workforce Development Agency, which will aim to provide taxpayer-subsidised education to generate the skills demanded by industry, instead of those deemed important by education providers.

The economic modelling commissioned by the Commonwealth has found demand for high-skilled workers will grow to 65 per cent and 75 per cent of the workforce, compared with 60 per cent now. Growth in high-skilled jobs will occur at about 160 per cent of the rate of low-skilled jobs across a range of economic scenarios.

Commonwealth and state governments will shape their tertiary education funding in light of four economic scenarios showing industry demands during a “long boom” with 15.1 million people in work; a “smart recovery” with a workforce of 14.1 million; a “terms of trade shock” with 14.3 million in work, and a “ring of fire” in which only 12.7 million have jobs.

The report shows that as the population ages, healthcare and social assistance will be the hot spots regardless of the economic circumstances. Professionals, education and training, and financial services will be the key skills in a “smart recovery”, in which global growth would resume in 2014-15 and Australia would be rescued by productivity improvements and more high-tech activity.

Education and training will come to the fore in the “terms of trade shock”, in which Australia would be forced to build a broader-based economy when an oversupply slams commodity prices, the terms of trade fall and the $A loses value. Trade relations with China would deteriorate.

In the gloomiest scenario, the “ring of fire”, Australia and the world would lurch from one crisis to another, with Europe struggling to recover, industries damaged and lives lost through natural disasters and severe weather. Political unrest in Asia, nuclear warfare threats and skirmishes over water security would contribute to this scenario. Many countries, including Australia, would adopt protectionist trade barriers, but the lower $A dollar would help our trade-exposed industries. There would not be many jobs but professionals and community and personal service workers could still have reasonable prospects.
### Quality not Quantity

**Change in Demand for Workers Under Different Economic Scenarios Between Now and 2025 (%)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Long Boom</th>
<th>Smart Recovery</th>
<th>Terms of Trade Shock</th>
<th>Ring of Fire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adv Diploma/Diploma</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate III/IV</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate VII</td>
<td>-3.8</td>
<td>-2.4</td>
<td>-3.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total post school qualifications</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cert III and above</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
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**Occupation Trends Under Different Economic Scenarios Between Now and 2025**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment in 2025</th>
<th>Long Boom</th>
<th>Smart Recovery</th>
<th>Terms of Trade Shock</th>
<th>Ring of Fire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health care and social assistance</td>
<td>15.1 million</td>
<td>14.1 million</td>
<td>14.3 million</td>
<td>12.7 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, scientific and technical services</td>
<td>14.1 million</td>
<td>14.3 million</td>
<td>12.7 million</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>14.1 million</td>
<td>14.3 million</td>
<td>12.7 million</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and training</td>
<td>14.1 million</td>
<td>14.3 million</td>
<td>12.7 million</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport, postal and warehousing</td>
<td>14.1 million</td>
<td>14.3 million</td>
<td>12.7 million</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care and social assistance</td>
<td>15.1 million</td>
<td>14.1 million</td>
<td>14.3 million</td>
<td>12.7 million</td>
</tr>
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<td>Education and training</td>
<td>14.1 million</td>
<td>14.3 million</td>
<td>12.7 million</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and insurance services</td>
<td>14.1 million</td>
<td>14.3 million</td>
<td>12.7 million</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and recreation services</td>
<td>14.1 million</td>
<td>14.3 million</td>
<td>12.7 million</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
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<td>14.3 million</td>
<td>12.7 million</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and insurance services</td>
<td>14.1 million</td>
<td>14.3 million</td>
<td>12.7 million</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public admin and safety</td>
<td>14.1 million</td>
<td>14.3 million</td>
<td>12.7 million</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Highest Growth Occupations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest Growth Occupations</th>
<th>Professionals</th>
<th>Professionals</th>
<th>Community and personal service workers</th>
<th>Professionals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community and personal service workers</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community and personal service workers</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community and personal service workers</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Deloitte*
Low-skilled jobs face a dim future

By Bianca Hall

Up to 180,000 low-skilled jobs will be obsolete by 2025, according to modelling to be released today, while professionals, community and personal service workers and managers will dominate the jobs market.

The modelling, compiled for the federal government by Deloitte, predicts Australia’s future will be a high-skilled one, with demand for post-school qualifications to remain high.

“Currently almost 60 per cent of people have achieved a qualification since leaving school,” the analysis said. “By 2025, industry demand for post-school qualifications is expected to increase to between 65 per cent and 75 per cent, depending on the shape of and growth in our economy.”

It predicted that demand for higher-skilled jobs would grow by about 1.6 times the rate of low-skilled jobs.

Under four scenarios posed by the agency, jobs requiring just a TAFE certificate 1 or certificate 2 would decline by between 1.1 and 3.8 per cent by 2025. In contrast, jobs requiring post-graduate qualifications will rise by 2.1 to 5.2 per cent.

The Deloitte discussion paper will be released today to support the federal government’s launch of its new National Workforce Development Agency, established on July 1.

That agency has been charged with re-working the vocational education and training system so that employers and the government collaborate to train workers in areas of need.

According to the Deloittes analysis, the top-growth industries in 2025 will be health care and social assistance, professional, scientific and technical services and education and training.
Trades scheme to spread skill base

Steve Lewis
NATIONAL POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

TRADIES will be able to fast-track apprenticeships and transfer skills to anywhere in Australia without any setback to training as part of a groundbreaking national deal.

Retail giant Woolworths will spearhead the plan to accelerate training for its 2400 apprentices and has signed a $1.16 million deal with the Federal Government to help train the next generation of butchers and bakers.

Other corporations could take advantage of the public funding, which forms part of a plan to cut a drop-out rate for apprentices of about 52 per cent.

For the first time, the states have agreed to a national plan allowing apprentice welders, electricians or builders to take a job in the mining sector without hitting a bureaucratic brick wall.

It would allow a young apprentice from western Sydney or Melbourne to seek work in Queensland or other boom areas – and be certain that their skills would transfer with them.

The national scheme would ensure a standard training program and replace eight separate state and territory schemes that have existed for decades.

It would be in place by next July, slashing bureaucratic red tape and reducing complexity for bosses and trainees alike.

Skills Minister Chris Evans has been driving the push to overhaul skills training.

The Government is particularly keen to ensure apprentices can transfer to the boom mining states of Western Australia and Queensland without being penalised.

“At a time when we have jobs in the north and the west, it is essential that we have a national system that helps, not hinders, apprentices take up these job opportunities,” he said.

“Nor can we have a system that makes it difficult for employers to take on apprentices. These reforms will be a win for apprentices, employers and the economy.”

For Woolworths, the “accelerated skill development program” will target about 2400 apprentices over the next 16 months and includes the introduction of e-learning and work-based assessment to train the next generation of tradespeople.

“Trying to manage a substantial national apprentice program across multiple states with differing rules and requirements has involved unnecessary administration and cost,” a company spokesman said.

But the Government’s hopes of boosting apprentice wages through a Fair Work Australia hearing – appear to have been dashed after the industrial umpire suggested that the matter was outside its jurisdiction.
STAFF relations at one of Australia's top universities have become so dysfunctional some employees spend working days "crying in the toilets".

More than two thirds of the academic and general staff at the University of NSW — many in senior positions — said they had been bullied at work. Some claimed to have been sexually assaulted.

Many of the alleged bullies are women and university authorities have been accused of failing to address the issue, a federal parliamentary inquiry into workplace bullying has been told.

A submission to the inquiry prepared by the National Tertiary Education Union said a confidential survey of more than 550 UNSW staff uncovered complaints about "unfair treatment, public humiliation, arbitrary misuse of power and repeated shouting, swearing and threatening behaviour in their work units".

Almost 40 respondents said they received or witnessed "unwanted sexual attention" while others reported "illegal discriminatory activity, pressure to retire and demeaning and discriminatory jokes".

One senior staff member was heard to comment on a colleague, saying she looked like "Princess Diana after the accident with the steering wheel through her face".

The submission said: "This was reported to senior management in the workplace but the respondent was unaware of any action taken."

Some of the open-ended responses described incidences that amounted to physical and/or sexual assault.

"Another said that seeing colleagues crying in the toilets was a daily occurrence."

UNSW vice president of university services Neil Morris said yesterday university chiefs had met the NTEU to discuss the report on workplace bullying.

"While there are isolated cases of bullying as with any large organisation — the university does not accept there is a culture or pattern of bullying at UNSW," Mr Morris said.

"None of our internal measures of bullying complaints or claims match the NTEU data and, in fact, are much lower."

Federal Tertiary Education Minister Senator Chris Evans did not respond to a request for comment.

NTEU branch president at UNSW Dr Sarah Gregson said in the submission she feared bullying was becoming an unacknowledged but deeply corrosive aspect of campus life.

"The evidence we gathered suggested that, although UNSW has a bullying policy and other guidelines that outline acceptable workplace conduct, these policies are routinely ignored and harmful behaviour is often excused."

The submission said many staff feared speaking up about bullying, were demoralised and would like to leave UNSW.

"We were surprised at the number of relatively senior staff members who were also being bullied," it said.

The union has recommended a range of reforms.
Trading in a system for one that works

STEVE LEWIS

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Other corporates will also take advantage of the public funding, which forms part of a plan to cut a horrific drop-out rate for apprentices of around 52 per cent.

For the first time, the states have agreed to a national plan that will allow apprentice welders, electricians or builders to take a job in the booming mining sector without hitting a bureaucratic brick wall.

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Among other reforms, paper based processes will be scrapped and replaced with national online forms.

But the federal government’s hopes of boosting apprentice wages through a Fair Work Australia hearing appears to have been dashed after the industrial umpire suggested it was outside its jurisdiction to consider the matter.

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Carl Vescio and Grant Crawford. Picture: Brad Hunter
Youth allowance benefits for students

MORE than 315,000 students who receive Youth Allowance or Austudy will be able to earn more from part-time and casual work without impacting on their payments, from the Gillard Government changes coming into effect this week.

From July 1, changes to the student income support system mean students will be able to earn $400 a fortnight, up from the current threshold of $236 per fortnight, before there is any impact on their student payments.

Minister for Tertiary Education, Senator Chris Evans, said the Australian Government is making it easier for students to supplement their income support payment with earnings from part-time or casual employment. “We know living costs can be a barrier for students, and this change to the income threshold will allow students to earn more each week before their payments are reduced,” Senator Evans said. “Having more students with qualifications they need for tomorrow’s jobs will be of huge benefit to regional businesses.”
Fast-track apprentices free to roam

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Minister explains funding cuts and gains

State Government contributes “more, not less” funding

MINISTER for Higher Education and Skills Peter Hall last week responded to the plight of Mansfield Secondary College’s moves to have funding cuts overturned which impacted on the Australian School Based Apprentices scheme.

Mr Hall, in a letter to the Courier, said while much had been written and said about changes to funding for the state’s vocational education and training (VET) system, the one fact that had been missed is that the Victorian Coalition Government had actually committed more, not less funding, for training over the next four years.

“Mr Hall said this cost was unfunded and unexpected and largely due to an explosion in courses with low job outcomes. For example, since 2008, enrolments in courses like fitness trainers grew by 1955 per cent and customer contact by 2234 per cent, while apprenticeships have only increased by 10 per cent.

“Anyone who has had to run a household budget, especially during difficult financial times, knows you have to live within your means,” Mr Hall said.

“And importantly you have to direct your resources to where they are most needed and do the greatest good.”

Mr Hall said as a consequence this government has locked in, over the next four years, around $1.2 billion in annual funding to support Victorians accessing vocational education and training.

“Mr Hall said the changes the government announced in May provide increased hourly subsidies for training in areas of skill shortages and high value to the Victorian economy. Every apprenticeship course will receive increased funding.

“With its established industry links from which to promote ‘preferred provider’ type arrangements, I believe our TAFE institutes have a strong and positive future ahead of them,” Mr Hall said.
EXCLUSIVE
EWIN HANNAN
INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

THE federal government agency that approved a union-related company to assess workers offshore took advice from a panel whose membership included a representative of the same union.

Trades Recognition Australia approved Future Skills International, an entity related to the Communications Electrical and Plumbing Union, to conduct offshore assessments of electrical workers who wanted jobs in Australia.

Skills Minister Chris Evans confirmed last night a CEPU representative was on the five-member panel that assessed the bid.

A spokesman for Senator Evans said the company underwent a rigorous assessment that included representatives from government and industry, as well as an independent evaluation that led to the company making changes before it was approved.

Peter Tighe, the union’s national secretary, had earlier confirmed to The Australian that a representative of the industry skills council, EE-OZ Training Standards, was also on the panel.

Mr Tighe is the chairman of EE-OZ and was a director of Connect Assess, which now trades as Future Skills International.

He has acknowledged the union’s Queensland branch does “have an interest” in Future Skills, which proposes to charge $2100 to foreign workers to conduct individual assessments.

The revelation came as officials from the CEPU engaged in public brawling after The Australian revealed yesterday that Mr Tighe had held discussions with employers in May about importing up to 2000 skilled workers from the US on temporary visas to plug gaps on resources projects.

The union’s Victorian secretary, Dean Mighell, a long-time rival and critic of Mr Tighe, accused him of “a sickening betrayal of present and future ETU members”.

“You’d expect this sort of thing from Gina Rinehart and her mining billionaire mates, but for it to come from a union leadership defies imagination,” Mr Mighell said.

Allen Hicks, the union’s assistant national secretary, confirmed...

Continued from Page 1

Unionist on panel advising agency on union-linked bid

Continued from Page 1

the union held two meetings with Bechtel Corporation about the company bringing in US workers, but denied the union was in active negotiations with the company. Mr Tighe has said that Bechtel “was talking about (importing) somewhere between 1000 to 2000 workers depending on their needs”, Mr Hicks accused Mr Mighell of “shameful opportunism” and insisted the union was committed to ensuring Australians were employed before overseas workers.

Mr Tighe said the union and EE-OZ sat on a reference group when it assessed applications by another training organisation, VETASSESS, and Victoria University, which have also been given approval to assess electrical workers offshore. But the union had no role in Future Skills putting in an application.

“There was a reference group that look at their standards,” he said. “There was someone from the union and EE-OZ that looked at the standards that would be applied by the companies. VETASSESS and Victoria University went through the same process.

“We did it for them, the same that we did it for Future Skills. It’s a set criteria.

“How are you going to assess your people? Are you going to use assessors that have a trade background? How are you going to undertake your technical assessments? How are you going to undertake your practical assessments?”

“All they do is referendum reports back to TRA. TRA makes the call at the end of the day.”

In a statement last night, a spokesman for Senator Evans said that Future Skills “underwent a rigorous assessment process before being granted a services agreement for overseas recruitment”.

“A five-member panel undertook an approval process for an expression of interest which selected two candidates, one of them Future Skills,” the spokesman said.

“The panel then sought an independent evaluation.”

Union bid to import US workers

How The Australian broke the story yesterday
Unskilled work ‘a thing of the past’ as gap set to bite

AUSTRALIA’S demand for highly skilled workers will soar by 2025, with the need for professionals, healthcare and community service staff jumping while unskilled work becomes a “thing of the past”.

This prediction comes as one of the world’s biggest energy companies says the government needs to do more to address the skills shortage.

Todd Creeger, president of US energy giant ConocoPhillips, said: “Addressing the skills gap is not an issue that any one company or even any one sector can do on its own — collaboration involves government too.”

Economic modelling to be released today by the Gillard government’s new Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency predicts growth in employees with post-school qualifications and a drop in those without higher education.

The research, contained in a discussion paper to be unveiled by Skills Minister Chris Evans, outlines four scenarios dependent on the global outlook in the next 13 years.

It finds the highest-growth jobs across all scenarios are not just in the mining industry but rather professionals, community and personal service workers and managers. This includes anyone with a university qualification.

The modelling reveals the top five growth industries, with healthcare and social assistance No 1 across all scenarios, scientific and technical services No 2 in the better economic scenarios, and education and training ranked second in the less positive outlooks.

“Healthcare and social assistance and retail trade are projected to be the top two employing industries in 2025,” the paper, seen by The Australian, says.

The modelling shows workers with postgraduate qualifications will increase by about 5 per cent in good economic conditions, while the number of employees without post-school qualifications will drop by as much as 2 per cent.

Senator Evans said roughly a third of Australia’s workforce would require a bachelor’s degree or higher. “The future job opportunities are in high-skilled jobs,” he said. “Unskilled jobs are becoming a thing of the past — the future economy will demand more highly qualified workers to fill high-skill jobs. We need to be a smart country to remain competitive.”

MILANDA ROUT, AAP