Support for parents

TRAINING for single and teenage parents to help them join the workforce is available.

Skills Minister Senator Chris Evans says an extra $20 million in funding is being given to states and territories to help young parents on income support get access to vocational training from certificate II to advanced diploma level.

Workers can discuss their training options with their Job Services Australia or Disability Employment Services provider and will be referred to appropriate courses.

“We are removing the barriers and giving more Australians the opportunity to train for the first time or improve their existing skills so they can access the jobs we know industry is demanding,” he says.
Trade your future
The path to career success through vocational education

Advertiser (Adelaide), Adelaide
25 Aug 2012, by Cara Jenkin

Careers, page 31 - 737.41 cm²
Capital City Daily - circulation 186,951 (MTWTFS-)
Working for the future

Vocational education and training is the start to a successful career path, National CareerOne Editor Cara Jenkin reports

SKILLS are the passport to a better job, higher pay packet and more rewarding worklife.

Australians increasingly need to be better qualified to get work, with a vocational Certificate III the minimum qualification that many employers now seek before they hire staff.

Skills Minister Senator Chris Evans says for businesses, skilled workers are the critical ingredient for sustained success. But for workers, their payoff for gaining skills is better wages and more rewarding work.

“To compete for the jobs of tomorrow, jobseekers will need to be increasingly more qualified,” he says.

“An Australian with a Certificate III or IV will have improved earnings of more than $324,000 over their working life. A person with a Diploma or Advanced Diploma can earn around $400,000 more over their working life than those with a Year 12 certificate.”

National Skills Week is an annual showcase of the career diversity available through vocational education and training. Hundreds of events are being held across Australia to showcase available careers and the qualifications required.

SkillsOne chief executive Brian Wexham says apprenticeships, traineeships and vocational education are not just options for young people.

Mature-age workers also have many options and can improve their opportunities by gaining or boosting skills.

“Trades and traditional areas are very important and always will be,” he says.

“(In an apprenticeship or a traineeship,) you’re being paid to learn something that will be of great value.

“National Skills Week is about dispelling some of these negative myths that exist.

“We’ve got quality providers in the private and public sector. They should be respected in the way people respect universities.”

Evans and Wexham encourage workers to take advantage of the week’s events to learn more about the opportunities.

“In trades, you’re getting paid to learn and by going to university, you have to pay to learn. (At university) you may have a $30,000 HECS debt at the end of it and don’t have a job.”

Government agencies are funding training for employers as well as workers so that staff can upskill.

“Training both young and old can make a huge contribution to the Australian economy,” Wexham says.

“We want to make sure Australians from all walks of life are able to maximise their potential to participate in the workforce and share directly in our continuing prosperity.”

Evans says the Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency has been set up to liaise with industry on meeting skills in demand. “We are putting industry at the heart of the training system to ensure the skills being delivered are the skills that employees need,” he says.
STUDENTS can be overwhelmed with the variety and number of training organisations at which they can obtain their vocational education qualifications.

National CareerOne Editor Cara Jenkin defines the main players in the education sector.

■ REGISTERED TRAINING ORGANISATION
A registered training organisation (RTO) is an enterprise which provides vocational education and training to students so that they can obtain a qualification which is recognised in any state of Australia.

They are registered with federal, state or territory authorities to ensure that they provide quality training to their students.

An RTO can be any enterprise, such as a private or public education provider, a business or a Government department, which has met guidelines to provide the training. It can offer a range of qualifications from Certificate I to Graduate Diploma, with some RTOs specialising in an industry area.

Private RTOs set their own tuition fees but also can offer Government-funded courses.

■ TRAINING AND FURTHER EDUCATION
Training and Further Education (TAFE) is Australia’s largest registered training provider with campuses for its institutes located in major cities and towns in every state and territory.

TAFEs are government-funded and fees set by the government. Subsidised courses are available.

Qualifications offered range from Certificate I to Bachelor degree, with many pathways between courses and degrees offered to help students further their skills.

Qualifications in technical, creative, paraprofessional and mid-level administrative subject are offered.

The curriculum of most courses are developed in partnership with industry.

■ ADULT/COMMUNITY EDUCATION
An Adult or Community Education (ACE) provider offers many entry-level or short courses to help workers get the basic skills they need for work.

Language, literacy, numeracy, computing and personal skills are among the key skills on offer.

Some courses may not lead to a qualification once completed and may only recognise or improve a competency while other courses may lead to a formal, nationally recognised qualification.

Most providers are not-for-profit, community-based organisations and colleges which provide low or no-cost training that is subsidised by government or industry.

ACE courses are a great start for people who are returning to study after a long absence, do not want a formal qualification or want to update personal skills before starting on formal learning.
Recipe for education apartheid

The achievement gaps between rich and poor exposed by Gonski are nothing less than a national scandal.

KENNETH DAVIDSON

It has been truly said: every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost. The Gonski report on school funding concluded that restoring equity across the three systems (public, Catholic and independent) would require the spending of some $6 billion a year by 2014 on students from low socio-economic status (SES) households and other disadvantaged students — 80 per cent and more of whom now attend government schools.

The response has been a huge outcry from the non-government school sector and an unedifying scramble by the Prime Minister and the Opposition Leader to assure the private sector that their interests would be placed first even though the achievement gaps between rich and poor exposed by Gonski are nothing less than a national scandal.

Incredibly, Tony Abbott claimed that independent schools were victims of a funding injustice. The implication was that they should get even more funding — despite having nearly 40 per cent of their secondary students from high-socio-economic status families and only 10 per cent from low-SES families. Giving those schools more would reverse Gonski's plan to better fund disadvantaged students.

Education has become what economists call a "positional good", in which access to quality education, and therefore life chances, is determined by income. Education's vital role in promoting social and civic solidarity is being trashed as public schools have become residualised.

The middle class and the wealthy resent paying for a public system they consider inferior and won't use.

Politicians on both sides have the mealy-mouthed task of justifying this unpalatable reality. Thus for both sides it is a question of "quality of teachers and teaching", and "values" rather than "resources". This is a dog whistle for attacking government school teachers and their union, who are the main defenders of public schools. The Gonski report reminds us of the ugly truth of what
school education in Australia has become. The government had the report last November — six months before the May budget. Buried in the budget was an allocation of $5.8 million over two years “to validate and refine elements of the recommendations” out of an education budget of $60 billion.

Abbott has drawn the crabs in this debate by his injudicious claim that the present funding formula is unfair to independent schools. He has since been forced to back down but neither he nor his education spokesman, Christopher Pyne, have backed away from the opposition position that the Gonski report is an unaffordable failure, and there is no inequity arising out of the present funding system.

At least they are upfront about supporting educational privilege. Julia Gillard’s support base means she has to be more circumspect in her hostility to public education.

Gillard has repeatedly declared she is passionate about education. But in 2007, as education minister, she extended the Howard government’s unfair funding formula for a further four years. In 2010, as Prime Minister, she extended it again by directing Gonski, irrespective of evidence of private school overfunding, that no school should lose a dollar.

Gillard’s craven response to the independent schools lobby last week means that non-government schools will get an additional $1.5 billion a year, according to Trevor Cobbold’s authoritative “Save Our Schools” website. Most of this increased funding will go to medium and high-SES schools and probably at the expense of Gonski’s priority for all the increased funding to go to disadvantaged students, who will benefit most from smaller class sizes and other targeted programs. On average, low-SES 15-year-old students are two to three years behind high-SES students in reading, mathematics and science. The gaps have increased since 2006.

Analysis by the Australian Council for Educational Research has shown no difference between Catholic, independent and government school results when socio-economic background is taken into account. The My School website also shows that selective government schools based on high-SES populations similar to elite independent schools achieve academic results that are similar or better, even though the private schools have total per capita resources two to three times their government equivalent.

This suggests that government funding for elite schools is pure waste. The lesson derived by influential Coalition supporters is that “free education” in government schools for high-SES parents of students is “middle-class welfare” that should be curbed by introducing means-tested school fees for high-SES families who choose to send their children to government schools.

But, of course, they want to retain the funding “entitlements” of wealthy private schools.

The effect of this policy would be to drive even more of the articulate middle class to take their children out of the public system and increase the political pressure on governments to transfer even more resources into private education at the expense of other standards. It is a recipe for complete education apartheid.

The Gonski reforms are affordable. Introduced over three to four years, they can be financed out of the normal growth in tax revenues. It is a question of priorities. Do we wish to institutionalise class distinctions based on education or not?

Kenneth Davidson is a senior columnist. Email: kdavidson@dissent.com.au

“The middle class and the wealthy resent paying for a public system they consider inferior and won’t use.”
Regional campuses to address fees

Joanna Mather

The heads of regional universities will convene in Queensland this week and will consider devising a united policy on student fees amid speculation the Coalition will raise degree prices by 25 per cent and reintroduce caps on student places.

Regional Universities Network (RUN) chairman and Ballarat University vice-chancellor David Battersby said a policy statement outlining where members of the newly formed six-member group stood on a variety of issues including fee deregulation was due in October.

“At the end of the day for us the balancing act is between advocacy for our students and impact in relation to participation rates, versus on the other side of the ledger issues of revenue generation,” he said.

Regional vice-chancellors are concerned that increasing fees will have the biggest impact outside capital cities, where students tend to be more price sensitive.

Media reports on Sunday said the Coalition was considering allowing universities to increase fees by 25 per cent and imposing a new cap on numbers, following the 150,000 extra enrolments which had occurred since Labor uncapped places.

As peak body Universities Australia tries to come up with a sector-wide consensus on fee “flexibility”, sub-groups such as the Regional Universities Network are forming their own policies. Professor Battersby said the Regional Tertiary Education Conference in Queensland this week would provide a forum for further discussions ahead of the release of a policy statement in October.

He said the deregulation of student fees in vocational education and training (VET) in Victoria had provided some “warning signs” about the price sensitivity of regional students and the thin markets in non-metropolitan locations.

The issue of price also tended to be more complex in regional Australia, where universities had much higher proportions of students from low socioeconomic and disadvantaged backgrounds. Such students were known to be more debt-averse.

“But I think what’s important is for us to have the debate about deregulation,” Professor Battersby said.

“It’s a debate not just about the deregulation of fees but about public good and private gain from higher education.”

Other RUN members are CQ University, Southern Cross University, the University of New England and the University of the Sunshine Coast. CQ University vice-chancellor Scott Bowman said so long as government subsidies and indexation were guaranteed at current levels he had no problem with fee deregulation.

“If the big boys in the city want to triple or quadruple their fees, good on them, that can only do me a lot of good,” he said. “What the really

Continued page 25+
Regional campuses look at fees

From page 23
important issue for us is that we don't have a reduction in government funding to higher education.”

The amount of money universities get per student is made up of a Commonwealth allocation and a student contribution.

Thanks to the HECS system, or HECS-HELP as it is now known, students can defer paying their fees until after they graduate and reach a certain income threshold.

Although some form of fee deregulation has long been advocated by the Group of Eight, it has largely been a side issue since Labor came to power and axed full-fee degrees.

But with a Coalition government a distinct possibility, the debate over fees has taken centre stage.

A Grattan Institute report released this month said the Commonwealth contribution could be wound back by up to 50 per cent in many disciplines without impacting on demand for higher education, skill supply or graduate earnings.

In Graduate Winners, Andrew Norton, the Grattan Institute’s higher education program director, said the federal government should start phasing down the $6 billion it spent on tuition subsidies and direct the savings to areas of greater need.

He said this would save the government $3 billion a year by 2016-17.

Professor Bowman said the uncapping of university places had been a boon for his university, which had become one of the fastest growing in the country.

He said raising the cost of a degree would no doubt affect participation rates – the issue the Labor government has worked so hard to address.

“I would have no problem voting in favour of universities being able to charge whatever fees they want, as long as we could get adequate funding to keep [CQ University’s] fees just about where they are now,” he said.

University of Southern Queensland vice-chancellor Jan Thomas said a move to deregulate fees would have to be very carefully considered because the “consequences of getting this wrong are dire”.

She said she had strong objections to the approach taken in Graduate Winners.

“This report downplays, to the point of essentially ignoring, the public good arguments that Bradley argued so well as justifying significant public investment in higher education.

“It also relies far too heavily on the notion that HECS has an unlimited capacity to remove any disincentive to enrolment provided by fee rises.”

As HECS architect Bruce Chapman has previously told The Australian Financial Review, there is likely to be some room for fee rises because the income-contingent loans scheme provides a buffer for poorer students.

However, he does not believe there should be full price deregulation for that reason. HECS distorts the market signal.

“HECS was designed to be gentle and not to deter people,” Professor Chapman said.

“The better it is at that, the worse it is as a market instrument for price differentiation. That’s the trade-off.”

Aside from fees, vice-chancellors named regional economic development, locally relevant research and skills provision as the key contributions that regional universities make.

Raising high school and university participation rates was an ongoing challenge, although regional universities had already made significant headway. “A very significant amount of under-utilised talent is currently locked up in regional Australia,” Professor Thomas said.
Change in legislation on data sharing welcomed by VCs

Joanna Mather

The federal government will amend higher education laws in an attempt to ease the red tape burden on universities following a spat between vice-chancellors and the national regulator.

Legislative amendments, due to be introduced by the end of the year, will allow federal bureaucrats to share more information with the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Authority (TEQSA).

Several university leaders have accused the regulator of imposing onerous reporting requirements on the sector since it assumed control of higher education standards this year.

TEQSA chief commissioner Carol Nicoll has rejected the claims, insisting that data requests made by the regulator are reasonable and that attempts to streamline reporting requirements are under way.

But she warned there would be no “box ticking” under the new quality assurance and consumer protection regime, which was introduced by Labor to uphold standards as caps on university enrolments were lifted and to repair damage to Australia’s reputation following violence and visa rorts involving Indian students.

“We appreciate there are concerns about things we are asking for, but if providers and their leaders reflect quietly on some of the approaches we’re taking, most reasonable people will see that we are asking is reasonable,” Ms Nicoll said.

Nevertheless, the Higher Education Support Act will be amended in a bid to reduce red tape.

“The department is prevented from supplying unit record data which contains personal information to TEQSA,” a spokesman for Tertiary Education Minister Chris Evans said.

“To address this, the government will introduce a bill to amend the act in the spring sitting.”

University of Western Australia vice-chancellor Paul Johnson said he would “welcome anything that reduces duplication of effort in reporting”.

“Yes, of course, the higher education sector needs to be monitored. It needs to be regulated and that’s entirely appropriate,” he said. “But there is a desperate need to reduce the overlap between different regulator authorities.”

Professor Johnson said although TEQSA’s initial data requirements were onerous, the latest version of the requirements was more reasonable.

Like many vice-chancellors, he questions the need for universities to provide data and information to multiple authorities at state and federal level.

“We provide a whole load of data to the department in Canberra, then we are required by TEQSA to provide a whole load of data — some of it is the same, some of it is different.

“Then we’re required by state auditors-general to provide another set of data; again, some of it the same some of it different.

“What is the purpose? There is a cost every time an institution produces another set of data.”

Responding to accusations by University of NSW vice-chancellor Fred Hilmer that TEQSA is taking too long to approve courses for foreign students, Ms Nicoll said it would take some time for the sector to adjust to the new regime.

She said the regulator took its responsibilities under the Education Services for Overseas Students Act, which protects international students, and the TEQSA Act “very seriously”.

 Universities are self-accrediting education providers, which means they do not have to seek permission from the regulator to add or change courses if those courses are directed at domestic students. But they do need permission for courses offered to international students.

“We don’t see ESOS as something we can just tick a box on,” Ms Nicoll said. “We see it as more than data entry when a university or other provider adds a course.”

Under the TEQSA legislation, universities have to meet new threshold standards and will have to prove, through reregistration, their capacity to maintain that self-accrediting authority, Ms Nicoll said.

As internal standards watchdogs, academic boards would be under particular scrutiny, she said.
TEQSA chief commissioner Carol Nicoll .
'what we are asking is reasonable.'
It’s your passport to the big pay-off

Vocational education and training is the start to a successful career path
National CareerOne Editor CARA JENKIN reports

SKILLS are the passport to a better job, higher pay packet and more rewarding work life. Australians increasingly need to be better qualified to get work, with a vocational Certificate III the minimum qualification that many employers now seek before they hire staff.

Skills Minister, Senator Chris Evans, says for businesses, skilled workers are the critical ingredient for sustained success. But for workers, their pay-off for gaining skills is better wages and more rewarding and interesting work.

“To compete for the jobs of tomorrow, jobseekers will need to be increasingly more qualified,” he says. “An Australian with a Certificate III or IV will have improved earnings of more than $324,000 over their working life.”

A person with a Diploma or Advanced Diploma can earn around $400,000 more over their working life than those with a Year 12 certificate.”

National Skills Week is an annual showcase of the career diversity available through vocational education and training.

Hundreds of events are being held across Australia to showcase careers available. What qualifications are required to get them and the employment possibilities. Examples include cooks who work for cruise ships and can see the world as they work, and hairdressers who are employed on movie sets to tend to famous actors.

SkillsOne chief executive, Brian Wexham, says apprenticeships, traineeships and vocational education are not just options for young people, with mature-age workers having many options and better opportunities by increasing their skills or becoming qualified.

He says university is not the only option for success.

“Trades and traditional areas are very important and always will be,” he says. “(In an apprenticeship or a traineeship,) you’re being paid to learn something that will be of great value. National Skills Week is about dispelling some of these negative myths that exist in the markets. We’ve got quality providers in the private sector and public sector. They should be respected in the way people respect universities.”

Evans and Wexham encourage workers to take advantage of the week’s events to learn more about the opportunities.

“Look at some of the developments that are taking place in rural areas and in manufacturing. There’s lots of new technologies coming into it that are making these areas very attractive and a lot of people don’t have knowledge about them,” Wexham says. “In trades, you’re getting paid to learn and by going to university, you have to pay to learn. (Through university) you may have a $30,000 HECS debt at the end of it and don’t have a job.”

Government agencies are funding training for employers as well as workers so that staff can upskill.

“Training both young and old can make a huge contribution to the Australian economy,” Wexham says. “We want to make sure Australians from all walks of life are able to maximise their potential to participate in the workforce and share directly in our continuing prosperity.”

Evans says the Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency has been set up to liaise with industry on the skill demands now and in the future and how to best meet them.

“We are putting industry at the heart of the training system to ensure the skills that are being delivered are the skills that employees need,” he says. “The opportunities are endless—you just need to know what’s out there and where to look. National Skills Week is the best place to start.”
Training: the main players

Students can be overwhelmed with the variety and number of training organisations at which they can obtain their vocational education qualifications. National CareerOne Editor CARA JENKIN reports.

Registered training organisation
A registered training organisation (RTO) is an enterprise which provides vocational education and training to students so that they can obtain a qualification which is recognised in any state of Australia.

They are registered with federal, state or territory authorities to ensure that they provide quality training to their students.

An RTO can be any enterprise, such as a private or public education provider, a business or a Government department, which has met guidelines to provide the training.

It can offer a range of qualifications from Certificate I to Graduate Diploma, with some RTOs specialising in an industry area.

Private RTOs set their own tuition fees but also can offer Government-funded courses.

Training and further education
Training and Further Education (TAFE) is Australia’s largest registered training provider with campuses for its institutes located in major cities and towns in every state and territory.

TAFEs are government-funded and fees set by the government.

Subsidised courses are available.

Qualifications offered range from Certificate I to Bachelor degree, with many pathways between courses and degrees offered to help students further their skills.

Qualifications in technical, creative, paraprofessional and mid-level administrative subjects are offered.

The curriculum of most courses are developed in partnership with industry.

Adult/community education
An Adult or Community Education (ACE) provider offers many entry-level or short courses to help workers get the basic skills they need for work.

Language, literacy, numeracy, computing and personal skills are among the key skills offered.

Some courses may not lead to a qualification once completed and may only recognise or improve a competency, while others may be a formal, nationally recognised qualification.

Most providers are not-for-profit, community-based organisations and colleges. These organisations usually offer few or no-cost training that is subsidised by government or industry.

ACE courses are a great start for people who are returning to study after a long absence, do not want a formal qualification or want to update personal skills before starting on formal learning.

TRAINING TIPS

CHECK that the RTO is registered at www.training.com.au.
ASK whether the course will lead to a qualification once training is complete.
CHECK that the qualification offered is nationally recognised through www.isc.org.au.
ASK if any subsidies apply and the total cost of studying the course over the full term of training.
ENROL in a loan scheme to delay paying the cost of the course until you are working.
LABOR has condemned reported plans that a Coalition government would re-cap university places and increase fees as a “born to rule” mentality.

It was reported yesterday that the Coalition was considering increasing HECS fees by 25 per cent as part of budget savings.

As well, the reports said the Coalition would reinstate the cap on government-subsidised university places which the Gillard government removed at the start of the year.

Deregulating places has allowed an extra 150,000 students to enrol.

Trade Minister Craig Emerson said plans to limit university places again reflected a “born to rule mentality”.

“The old born-to-rulers are back again saying they want to keep those who they consider to be the riff-raff out of universities,” he said yesterday.

But opposition education spokesman Christopher Pyne denied the reports, saying the Coalition had no such plans.

“While we welcome debate over the quality and standards in our universities, we have no plans to increase fees or cap places,” he said.

Tertiary Education Minister Chris Evans said reinstating the cap on places would prevent about 130,000 people over the next five years from getting to university.

If HECS fees were increased, students would pay $1470 a year extra for nursing, teaching, humanities and arts degrees and up to $2442 a year more for law, medicine, dentistry and economics degrees, government figures showed.

The National Union of Students called on the Coalition (NUS) to make its plans clear.

“If this is just one of the options on the table, NUS would like to hear the others,” president Donherra Walmsley said.

“Students have a right to know how their vote will affect their education.”

We have no plans to increase fees

Christopher Pyne
Vocational education and training are the start to a successful career path. National CareerOne Editor Cara Jenkin reports.

SKILLS are the passport to a better job, bigger pay packet and more rewarding working life.

Australians need to be better qualified to get work, with a vocational Certificate III the minimum qualification that many employers now seek before they hire staff.

Skills Minister Senator Chris Evans said that for businesses, skilled workers were the critical ingredient for sustained success. But the payoff for workers gaining skills was better wages and more rewarding and interesting work.

“To compete for the jobs of tomorrow, jobseekers will need to be increasingly more qualified,” he said.

“An Australian with a Certificate III or IV will have improved earnings of more than $324,000 over their working life.

“A person with a Diploma or Advanced Diploma can earn around $400,000 more over their working life than those with a Year 12 certificate.”

National Skills Week is an annual showcase of the career diversity available through vocational education and training.

Hundreds of events are being held across Australia to showcase available careers, what qualifications are required to get them and the employment possibilities.

Examples include cooks who work for cruise ships and can see the world as they work and hairdressers who are employed on movie sets to attend to famous actors.

SkillsOne chief executive Brian Wexham said apprenticeships, traineeships and vocational education were not just options for young people, with mature-age workers having many options and better opportunities by increasing their skills or becoming qualified.

He said university was not the only option for success.

“(In an apprenticeship or a traineeship) you’re being paid to learn something that will be of great value. “National Skills Week is about dispelling some of these negative myths that exist in the markets.

“We’ve got quality providers in the private sector and public sector. They should be respected in the way people respect universities.”

Both men encouraged workers to take advantage of the week’s events to learn more about the opportunities.

“Look at some of the developments that are taking place in rural areas and in manufacturing. There’s lots of new technologies coming into it that are making these areas attractive and a lot of people don’t have knowledge about them,” Mr Wexham said.

“In trades, you’re getting paid to learn and by going to university, you have to pay to learn. (Through university) you may have a $30,000 HECS debt at the end of it and don’t have a job.”

Government agencies are funding training for employers as well as workers so that staff can upskill.
Qualify for a new life

Cara Jenkin defines the main training organisations where students can obtain vocational education qualifications.

REGISTERED TRAINING ORGANISATION
A registered training organisation (RTO) is an enterprise which provides vocational education and training so students can earn a qualification that is recognised in any state.

They are registered with federal, state or territory authorities to ensure they provide quality training to their students.

An RTO can be any enterprise, such as a private or public education provider, a business or a government department, which has met guidelines to provide the training.

It can offer a range of qualifications, from Certificate I to Graduate Diploma, with some RTOs specialising in an industry area.

Private RTOs set their own tuition fees, but also can offer government-funded courses.

TRAINING AND FURTHER EDUCATION
Training and Further Education is Australia’s biggest registered training provider with campuses for its institutes in major cities and towns. TAFEs are government-funded and fees are set by the Government. Subsidised courses are available.

Qualifications offered range from Certificate I to Bachelor degree, with many pathways between courses and degrees to help students further their skills.

Qualifications in technical, creative, paraprofessional and mid-level administrative subjects are offered, too. Most courses are developed in partnership with industry.

TRAINING TIPS

CHECK that the RTO is registered at www.training.com.au
ASK whether the course will lead to a qualification once training is complete
CHECK that the qualification offered is nationally recognised through www.isc.org.au
ASK if any subsidies apply and the total cost of studying the course over the full term of training
ENROL in a loan scheme to delay paying the cost of the course until you are working

ADULT/COMMUNITY EDUCATION
An Adult or Community Education (ACE) provider offers many entry-level or short courses to help workers get the basic skills they need for work.

Language, literacy, numeracy, computing and personal skills are among the key skills on offer.

Some courses may not lead to a qualification once completed and may only recognise or improve a competency, while others may be a formal, nationally recognised qualification.

Most providers are not-for-profit, community-based organisations and colleges that provide low or no-cost training subsidised by government or industry.

ACE courses are a great start for people who are returning to study after a long absence, do not want a formal qualification or want to update personal skills before starting on formal learning.
Opposition denies plans to cap uni places

**CANBERRA:** Labor has condemned reported plans a coalition government would re-cap university places and increase fees as a “born to rule” mentality.

News Limited papers reported yesterday the coalition was considering increasing HECS fees by 25 per cent as part of budget savings.

It would also reinstate the cap on government-subsidised university places which the Gillard government removed at the start of the year. Deregulating places has allowed an extra 150,000 students to enroll.

Trade Minister Craig Emerson said plans to limit universities places again reflected a “born to rule mentality”.

“The old born-to-rulers back again saying they want to keep those who they consider to be the riff-raff out of universities,” he said.

But opposition education spokesman Christopher Pyne denied the reports.

“While we welcome debate over the quality and standards in our universities, we have no plans to increase fees or cap places,” he said.

Tertiary Education Minister Chris Evans said reinstating the cap would prevent about 130,000 people over the next five years from getting to university.

— AAP
**THE DIARY**

**HECKLER**

Education’s a valuable resource too

All this squabbling over education funding has got me thinking: what if we could afford to maintain current levels of private education funding while increasing the funding allocated to government schools?

What if the government resurrected its original resource super profit tax (of 10 per cent, as opposed to the actual Minerals Resource Rent Tax of 30 per cent) and the extra revenue was used for public education?

We could adopt world-best-practice models from Scandinavia, rather than copying cheap, flawed models from the US and Britain. Teachers could be more motivated and better paid, and every child could have an equal educational opportunity.

Admittedly, the time it would take Gina, Twiggy and Clive to spend their respective fortunes might be reduced to only about 5000 years each. In return, though, they could draw on a larger pool of better-educated and better-trained workers.

And let’s not forget: we would only be taxing the super profits, so there would still be plenty of cash for important projects like rebuilding the Titanic.

Self-funded retirees would probably whinge a bit at the diminished size of their next resources companies’ dividend cheques, but we mustn’t lose sight of what we’re building: a world-class education system.

I’m sure the average grandparent would forgo the odd $1000, knowing that their sacrifice could save their children from forking out $20,000 a year and spare their grandchildren from an increasingly dilapidated public school system.

Some people might wonder how the private schools would react to the prospect of losing a fair chunk of their clientele? Since their primary aim is to educate young people in a manner that gives them happiness, fulfilment and security, I’m sure they couldn’t be anything other than enthusiastic supporters.

We wouldn’t want to entrust solely the Labor government with this education spending program so, in an admirable display of bipartisanship, Julia and Tony could agree that the Liberal Party would take the reins on this one.

An unqualified success would ensue because, as we all know, the Labs are wonderful managers of money and never make mistakes. What’s more, the roughly half of the electorate that votes for Labor will credit it with having the courage to implement the new policy; the other half will credit the Liberals with having the competence to implement the new policy. Ultimately, it’s an idea that promises plenty of winners and no discernible losers.

Sad, my guess is that we’ll keep whingeing and arguing, and nothing will change.

Dean Fraser

Readers are invited to send 450 words on what makes their blood boil to heckler@smh.com.au. Include daytime phone details.
SKILLS are the passport to a better job, bigger pay packet and more rewarding working life.

Australians increasingly need to be better qualified to get work, with a vocational Certificate III the minimum qualification that many employers now require.

Skills Minister Senator Chris Evans says that for businesses, skilled workers are the critical ingredient for sustained success.

But for workers, the pay-off for gaining skills is better wages and more rewarding and interesting work.

“For the jobs of tomorrow, job-seekers will need to be increasingly qualified,” he says.

“An Australian with a Certificate III or IV will have improved earnings of more than $324,000 over their working life.”

National Skills Week is an annual showcase of the career diversity available through vocational education and training.

Hundreds of events are being held across Australia to showcase careers available, what qualifications are required to get them and the employment possibilities.

SkillsOne chief executive Brian Wexham says apprenticeships, traineeships and vocational education are not just options for young people, with mature-age workers having many options and better opportunities by increasing their skills or becoming qualified.

He says university is not the only option for success.

“ Trades and traditional areas are very important and always will be,” he says. “(In an apprenticeship or a traineeship,) you’re being paid to learn something that will be of great value. “National Skills Week is about dispelling some of these negative myths that exist in the markets. “We’ve got quality providers in the private sector and public sector. They should be respected in the way people respect universities.”

Evans and Wexham encourage workers to take advantage of the week’s events to learn more about the opportunities available.
Many choices for students

**Registered Training Organisation**
A registered training organisation (RTO) is an enterprise which provides vocational education and training to students so that they can obtain a qualification which is recognised in any state of Australia.

They are registered with federal, state or territory authorities to ensure that they provide quality training for their students.

An RTO can be any enterprise, such as any private or public education provider, a business or a Government department, which has met guidelines to provide the training.

It can offer a range of qualifications from Certificate I to Graduate Diploma, with some RTOs specialising in an industry area.

Private RTOs set their own tuition fees but can also offer Government-funded courses.

**Training and Further Education**
Training and Further Education (TAFE) is Australia’s largest registered training provider with campuses for its institutes located in major cities and towns in every state and territory.

TAFEs are government-funded and fees set by the government. Subsidised courses are available.

Qualifications offered range from Certificate I to Bachelor degree, with many pathways between courses and degrees offered to help students further their skills.

Qualifications in technical, creative, paraprofessional and mid-level administrative subjects are offered.

The curriculums of most courses are developed in partnership with industry.

**Adult/Community Education**
An Adult or Community Education (ACE) provider offers many entry-level or short courses to help workers get the basic skills they need for work.

Language, literacy, numeracy, computing and personal skills are among the key skills offered.

Some courses may not lead to a qualification once completed and may only recognise or improve a competency, while others may be a formal, nationally recognised qualification.

Most providers are not-for-profit, community-based organisations and colleges which provide low or no-cost training that is subsidised by government or industry.

ACE courses are a great start for people who are returning to study after a long absence, do not want a formal qualification or want to update personal skills before starting on formal learning.
Training can lead to better wages

Vocational education and training is the start to a successful career path, national CareerOne editor Cara Jenkin reports

Skills are the passport to a better job, higher pay packet and more rewarding working life.

Australians increasingly need to be better qualified to get work, with a vocational certificate III the minimum qualification that many employers now seek before they hire staff.

Skills Minister Senator Chris Evans says, for businesses, skilled workers are the critical ingredient for sustained success.

But for workers, their payoff for gaining skills is better wages and more rewarding and interesting work.

“Compete for the jobs of tomorrow, jobseekers will need to be increasingly more qualified,” he says.

An Australian with a certificate III or IV will have improved earnings of more than $324,000 over their working life. A person with a diploma or advanced diploma can earn around $400,000 more over their working life than those with a year 12 certificate.”

National Skills Week is an annual showcase of the career diversity available through vocational education and training.

Hundreds of events are being held across Australia to showcase careers available, what qualifications are required to get them and the employment possibilities.

Examples include cooks who work for cruise ships and can see the world as they work and hairdressers who are employed on movie sets to tend to famous actors.

SkillsOne chief executive Brian Wexham said apprenticeships, traineeships and vocational education were not just options for young people, with mature-age workers having many options and better opportunities by increasing their skills or becoming qualified.

He said university is not the only option for success.

“Trades and traditional areas are very important and always will be,” he said.

“We’ve got quality providers in the private sector and public sector. They should be respected in the way people respect universities.”

Mr Evans and Mr Wexham encourage workers to take advantage of the week’s events to learn more about the opportunities.

“Look at some of the developments that are taking place in rural areas and in manufacturing,” Mr Wexham said.

“There’s lots of new technologies coming into it that are making these areas very attractive and a lot of people don’t have knowledge about them. In trades, you’re getting paid to learn and by going to university, you have to pay to learn.”

Government agencies are funding training for employers as well as workers so that staff can upskill.
Top training vital for opportunities

Vocational education and training is the start to a successful career path, national CareerOne editor CARA JENKIN reports

Skills are the passport to a better job, higher pay packet and more rewarding working life.

Australians increasingly need to be better qualified to get work, with a vocational Certificate III the minimum qualification that many employers now seek before they hire staff.

Skills Minister Senator Chris Evans says for businesses, skilled workers are the critical ingredient for sustained success.

But for workers, their payoff for gaining skills is better wages and more rewarding and interesting work.

“Too compete for the jobs of tomorrow, jobseekers will need to be increasingly more qualified,” he says.

“An Australian with a Certificate III or IV will have improved earnings of more than $324,000 over their working life.

“A person with a Diploma or Advanced Diploma can earn around $400,000 more over their working life than those with a Year 12 certificate.”

National Skills Week is an annual showcase of the career diversity available through vocational education and training.

Hundreds of events are being held across Australia to showcase careers available, what qualifications are required to get them and the employment possibilities.

Examples include cooks who work for cruise ships and can see the world as they work and hairdressers who are employed on movie sets to tend to famous actors.

SkillsOne chief executive Brian Wexham says apprenticeships, traineeships and vocational education are not just options for young people, with mature-age workers having many options and better opportunities by increasing their skills or becoming qualified.

He says university is not the only option for success.

“Trades and traditional areas are very important and always will be,” he says.

“(In an apprenticeship or a traineeship,) you’re being paid to learn something that will be of great value.

“National Skills Week is about dispelling some of these negative myths that exist in the markets.

“We’ve got quality providers in the private sector and public sector. They should be respected in the way people respect universities.”

Senator Evans and Mr Wexham encourage workers to take advantage of the week’s events to learn more about the opportunities.

“Look at some of the developments that are taking place in rural areas and in manufacturing. There’s lots of new technologies coming into it that are making these areas very attractive and a lot of people don’t have knowledge about them,” Mr Wexham says.

“In trades, you’re getting paid to learn and by going to university, you have to pay to learn.

“(Through university) you may have a $30,000 HECS debt at the end of it and not have a job.”

Government agencies are funding training for employers as well as workers so that staff can upskill.

“Training both young and old can make a huge contribution to the Australian economy,” Mr Wexham says.

“We want to make sure Australians from all walks of life are able to maximise their potential to participate in the workforce and share directly in our continuing prosperity.”

Senator Evans says the Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency has been set up to liaise with industry on the skill demands now and in the future and how to best meet them.

“We are putting industry at the heart of the training system to ensure the skills that are being delivered are the skills that employees need,” he says.

“The opportunities are endless – you just need to know what’s out there and where to look.

“National Skills Week is the best place to start.”
Endless possibilities: Apprenticeships in hairdressing and cooking can lead the way to exciting career opportunities. Pictures: TAFE

“We want to make sure Australians from all walks of life are able to maximise their potential to participate in the workforce and share directly in our continuing prosperity.”

– Senator Chris Evans, Skills Minister