

MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW BUSINESS CHAMBER RELEASES BLUEPRINT CALLING FOR COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE HSC

NSW's largest business organisation, NSW Business Chamber, today released a blueprint for a comprehensive review of Post-Year 10 education and training in NSW.

The blueprint, entitled **Could Do Better**, will be at the centre of a high level roundtable discussion tomorrow in Parramatta attended by key stakeholders in the education and training sector, including representatives of the NSW Education Minister, Federal and NSW Departments of Education, employers, parents, training providers, academics and school representatives.

The blueprint calls on the NSW Government to:

- Extend the HSC's core subject area beyond English only, and to include subjects such as numeracy, personal development and career planning;
- Raise the level of vocational studies undertaken as part of senior schooling so that most result in a qualification at Certificate III level, and then for this to count towards diploma and emerging degree programs;
- Raise the quality, status and level of vocational education and training in high schools;
- Undertake a wide ranging review of post year 10 education and training in NSW;
- Expand the number and capacity of senior colleges, and the range of subject choices available to high school students;
- Include minimum standards for literacy and numeracy in certificates.

"By most measures, NSW lags other states with respect to engaging students in senior high school. In part, this is because the system has predominantly been orientated to students intending to undertake university study," said Paul Orton, Director of Policy & Advocacy at the NSW Business Chamber.



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Table 1: Key education performance indicators, 2008 (%)

	NSW	Victoria	Australia
a. Apparent Year 12 retention rate	69.6	79.4	75.9
b. Total educational participation, age 15-19 ¹	76.7	86.4	78.5
b1. School participation, age 15-19	51.3	57.4	51.4
b2. VET participation, age 15-19 ²	13.5	16.3	14.2
c. School-based apprentices and trainees as a share of all Year 11 and 12 students	1.6	6.3	5.6
d. 20-24 year-olds with Year 12 or Certificate III	82.2	88.2	83.2

“The business community has a vested interest in the education system providing the right training for young people. We want young adults, when they finish their education, to have developed the skills they need to succeed in the workforce.

“The Government has taken the first steps towards overhauling senior secondary education with the scrapping of the out-dated Year 10 School Certificate. The replacement of the School Certificate should not be considered in isolation, rather as part of a wider review of Years 11 and 12.

“Frankly, this area is too important for the State Government to accept the status quo. Now is the time to have a serious community debate about how we are performing as a State in helping senior secondary students prepare for life after school.

“The last time we reviewed the HSC was in the mid-1990s at a time when very few, if any, students had even seen or been on the internet.

“We believe a comprehensive review of post-Year 10 education and training is needed and this review needs to look at the interaction between schools and TAFE.

“By calling for a review, we recognise that all stakeholders including parents, principals, teachers, and employers, as well as government and non-government providers, need to make an honest assessment about how we are performing in developing strong, skilled and capable senior secondary school graduates.

“Business believes that the current system has not paid due attention to vocational education and this deficiency is leading many young people into making personal career, study and training choices which do not match their skills and needs.”

Mr Orton said the release of NSW Business Chamber’s blueprint into reviewing post-Year 10 education and training was part of the Chamber’s *10 Big Ideas to Grow NSW* campaign.

Copies of the report are available from www.nswbusinesschamber.com.au.

Media Contact: Paul Orton 0408 488 767 or Chris Taylor 0419 692 236