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ACT Labor promises more skilled workers to tackle skills shortages

ACT businesses, students and apprentices will benefit from ACT Labor's \$8.7 million push to attract more people to train and work in areas with skills shortages.

Chief Minister Jon Stanhope and Minister for Education and Training Andrew Barr today announced that a re-elected ACT Labor Government will build on the \$51 million skills investment announced in the most recent Budget, with a package of new initiatives that will give Canberra businesses the edge against their competitors interstate as they vie to attract and retain the best and brightest.

"ACT Labor will help local businesses attract and retain university graduates by helping graduates repay their HECS debts, at cost of \$1 million over the next term," Mr Stanhope said.

"Graduates working for the private and public sector, who have qualifications in areas where there are significant skill shortages, will be eligible for assistance."

"Current areas of identified graduate skill shortages in the ACT include, but are not limited to, accountancy, architecture, surveying, engineering, nursing, dentistry, physiotherapy, valuing, planning and agricultural science.

"ACT Labor will also encourage more people to undertake apprenticeships or trade traineeships at the Canberra Institute of Technology by helping to pay for their course materials, tools and tuition fees," Mr Stanhope said.

The assistance, which will cost \$1 million over the next term of Government, will benefit trainee maintenance engineers, welders, motor mechanics, auto electricians, electricians, joiners, plasterers, tilers, bricklayers, plumbers, chefs, butchers, cabinetmakers and hairdressers.

Mr Barr said ACT Labor would continue to invest in vocational education to build a strong and skilled workforce.

"ACT Labor will continue to support a strong TAFE system that responds to the critical issue of skills shortages and ensures Canberrans have the opportunity to reach their full potential," Mr Barr said.

"We will invest an extra \$5 million over four years in technology upgrades at the CIT that will benefit students studying in areas such as multimedia, environmental science, dentistry, hospitality and IT.

"ACT Labor's investment builds on our massive 15.5 per cent increase in real funding to the CIT since coming to government – a stark contrast to the 25 per cent cut under the previous Liberal Government.

Media release

“ACT Labor will support an additional 100 new Australian School Based Apprentices each year in our schools at a cost of \$1.4 million.

“An additional 15 young Canberrans will be able to complete an Australian School Based Apprenticeship in the sport and recreation industry every year under a re-elected ACT Labor Government, at a cost of \$225,000 over four years.

“Labor will also invest \$40,000 over the next term for Young Achievers Australia to develop business skills in ACT high school, college and university students.

“These investments are only possible because ACT Labor’s responsible economic management has put the ACT’s finances on a sustainable footing. Only Labor has the experience, stability and record of responsible financial management to continue this record investment in building our skilled economy,” Mr Barr said.

Statement Ends

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