

MEDIA RELEASE

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PROPOSED NATIONAL TRADE CADETSHIPS BUILD AUSTRALIA'S SKILLS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Peter Garrigan, national president of the Australian Council of State School Organisations, today greeted the proposal by Julia Gillard to establish a program of **national trade cadetships** as an important and valuable further contribution to building our nation's skills to meet the needs of our forward development and prosperity in the 21st Century.

"Public school parents see this as another step towards Julia Gillard's fulfilment of her commitment to Australia's families: 'to make sure that every student – in every community – can achieve their potential'."

"The whole purpose of our education system is ultimately to provide all students with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and aspirations they will need to make their way successfully in the modern world, to gain a practical understanding of the career choices and opportunities for the future and to shape an informed choice about the sort of career they will personally find satisfying and fulfilling."

"Trade cadetships provide a sound, practical means of enabling young people with an initial interest in those fields to build a structured and supported stairway into the work field of their choice."

"Importantly, this initiative will be built into Australia's National Curriculum – so the program will be shaped with the same rigour, richness and coherence of all other aspects of this catalytic national initiative," Peter noted. "Students will have the opportunity just when they need it to come to grips with the essential skills and knowledge required for vocational competency and skilled employment."

"We know that employers across the country are wanting and waiting to see a structured plan to provide a sustainable supply of skilled workers with the depth of expertise we need for our future development, and this provides an important avenue of supply."

"And we know that while our young people are capable of great things, they need support resources and structures, a road map forward, at critical stages of their development. The worst thing we can do is to ignore that need – it is unfair to them and unfair to our future to leave them to find their own way by hit or miss," Peter said.

"The 2003 report by the Business Council of Australia "*The High Cost of Dropping Out*" (*) indicated some 50,000 young people, for lack of clearly structured opportunities or support, drop out of structured learning before Year 12 each year – at a great future opportunity cost to themselves – and to our society and economy."

"Every young person deserves the information and opportunity to achieve their potential. And the Trade Cadetships proposal is a very positive step in that direction that will be welcomed by thousands of young people and their families." Peter concluded.

Further comment, contact:

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(*) "*The Cost of Dropping Out: The Economic Impact of Early School Leaving*" – Business Council of Australia (2003) - <http://www.bca.com.au/Content.aspx?ContentID=87400>