Skilling Young Australians for the Future

The Catholic System supports keeping skills and training programs in schools
1 A Skills Based Economy

The Australian economy, like other developed modern economies, is heavily dependent upon the skills and training of its workforce to compete globally. Higher skill levels and knowledge equates to much higher productivity for individuals, companies and the economy as a whole.

Without the appropriate skills being available, industry and individual workers are not in a position to maximise their contribution to Australia’s overall economic success. Skill shortages and bottlenecks have consistently been identified as a major threat to Australian’s ongoing strong economic performance.

2 Catholic Schools Take Up The Challenge

Queensland Catholic schools are playing a key role in ensuring that students leaving school have the skills and training necessary to immediately bring value to their employer’s enterprise, as well as to fully develop their own learning potential and technical competency. Through a well-planned and consistent focus on high-quality, relevant skills and technical training, Catholic schools are delivering tangible and beneficial outcomes tailored to industry specific needs.

3 Delivering Value for Industry

Catholic school skills training programs are deliberately designed to address the workforce requirements of employers within their area of operation. This is achieved through close working partnerships with industry, where employer requirements and input can be sourced on an ongoing basis to ensure that students are being trained in a way that makes them immediately employable. Combined with teachers who are genuinely experienced and knowledgeable in their field, the outcomes for both students and employers add significant value while being strongly focused and relevant to contemporary industry standards.

The areas of training undertaken in Queensland Catholic schools include:

- Engineering
- Building and Construction
- Food and Hospitality
- Business Services
Feedback from employers indicates that the standards of training being achieved are very high. This includes meeting the standards of the Australian Quality Training Framework. In a sign of real confidence, local employers are coming directly to schools when they are seeking to take on new employees as they know the quality of the students being trained will be an asset to their business.

4 A Key Factor for Success

In training young people, schools have a key advantage in being able to provide a holistic program of support and guidance. As well as technical and skills training, schools are able to maintain instruction in vitally important subjects such as English and mathematics to ensure that students have the necessary abilities to be fully job ready. Additionally, schools provide extensive opportunities for social, emotional and spiritual growth, along with the development of leadership skills and sporting abilities.

Most importantly of all, school-based skills training is able to effectively address the area of student welfare. Schools are well practiced at meeting the personal, social and safety needs of students, in addition to their learning needs. Without this multifaceted support, even highly developed training programs are in danger of failing as the broader range of student requirements are not addressed.

5 A New Partnership with Government

Without an effective policy in the area of skills training in schools, the costs for Australian industry and government will be high in terms of missed opportunities, skill shortages and loss of competitive edge.

Schools have shown that they can effectively deliver skills training. Continuing funding for schools to do this makes strong economic sense, as the skills training delivers young people ready and able to take up proactive employment.
The Australian Government is requested to support an improved skills training program with the following features:

- The skills training is school-based;
- The program is targeted to areas of skills shortage;
- The program allows for enhancement and strengthening of existing arrangements in schools where applicable;
- The program provides for capital assistance funding for building and equipment, as well as some initial recurrent funding support if required; and
- The program is managed locally in partnership with industry.

With these enhanced features, skills training in schools will be in an even better position to deliver significant value adding to both industry and young people’s careers. It is strongly urged that these proposed enhancements be undertaken by the Australian Government.
Schools Making a Difference

Two outstanding school skills training programs

St Teresa’s College – Abergowrie

St Teresa’s College is a secondary college located in a rural setting at Abergowrie, near Ingham, Queensland. The College specialises in providing excellent education to remote Indigenous students from Cape York, the Northern Territory and the Torres Strait.

St Teresa’s College has been providing successful skills training for its student since 2009. In December 2011, the College was approved for an Australian Government Department of Education grant to construct a purpose built Indigenous Health Care Training Facility. This is the first such facility located in remote Australia. The College has also established close industry partnerships with James Cook University and the Townsville Hospital. Fifteen traineeships have been secured at the Townsville Hospital for students from the College.

More information on this outstanding example school-based skills training can be access by clicking on the image below.
St Edmund’s College – Ipswich

St Edmund’s College is a secondary college of some 750 students located in Ipswich, Queensland. The College has a long history of providing relevant and practical skills training to its students. With a significant upgrade to its training facilities made possible by an Australian Government grant, the College has specialised in the skill areas of Construction, Engineering and Automotive Mechanics.

St Edmund’s College has very developed industry links and its skills training is highly valued by local employers. The College has active partnerships with Construction Skills Queensland and Queensland Manufacturing Industry (QMI) Solutions.

Student demand for the skills training programs at St Edmund’s College is strong, with over 300 students enrolled in the programs in 2013. Industry traineeships currently stand at 20 students. The success of the skills training programs is evident from their outcomes.

- In 2013, St Edmund’s College automotive students won Gold and Bronze awards in the Queensland division of the World Skills tournament.

- Construction Skills Queensland has nominated the College as one of its select Doorway to Construction schools.

- The automotive program is able to integrate with numerous local business, ranging from light vehicle to heavy diesel engineering. Additionally, there is strong demand for automotive skill training due to extensive mining and gas production in Queensland.