LABOR’S PLAN to rescue TAFE NSW
In an era of rapid industrial transition and technological change, equipping the workforce with the skills required for the jobs of today and those of the future is an urgent challenge for NSW.

This challenge is not being addressed by the Baird Government. Instead, Mike Baird and the Liberals are taking us backwards. Under changes to TAFE called “Smart and Skilled”, Mike Baird has sacked 1100 teachers and support staff, cancelled vital courses and increased TAFE fees beyond the reach of thousands of students.

Instead of dismantling our TAFE system, we need to focus on how we can improve vocational education to support the needs of young people leaving school. The community deserves the opportunity to acquire the skills needed to secure employment so they can provide a future for themselves and their families.

A Labor Government will use its first term to abolish Mike Baird’s disastrous policy, bring back affordable fees and make TAFE a world leader in providing vocational education and training. We will immediately commission a landmark review of education and training in NSW after Year 10 to deliver an action plan for a better system – one every bit as iconic as the McGaw Review of the HSC or the Gonski Review of school funding.

A Labor Government will invest in our TAFE system to ensure that everyone in NSW has affordable access to education and training.

Yours sincerely

Luke Foley
NSW Labor Leader
Mike Baird and the Liberals have ripped the heart out of the TAFE system in NSW.

Since coming to Government in 2011, the Liberal/Nationals have:
- Cut $1.7 billion from education and training
- Sacked 1100 TAFE teachers and support staff
- Cut TAFE courses and slashed class contact times
- Drastically increased student fees by up to thousands of dollars

In 2012, the Liberal-National Government introduced significant changes to the state’s vocational education and training system, beginning their own form of market-based vocational education and training where TAFE would have to compete for students and funding with private providers.

Mike Baird’s government went ahead with the changes despite the problems with similar reforms in other states, which were criticised because they require large funding cuts to TAFE while providing increased state funding to private providers.

To prepare for the changes, TAFE institutes in NSW have been forced to cut their costs. Teachers have had to reapply for their jobs, funding has been slashed and 1100 teachers and support staff have been sacked.

A recent Parliamentary Committee into Skills Shortages indicated caution to the system.

The inquiry also found that:

“TAFE NSW is the backbone of vocational education and training in NSW and that to achieve the state’s economic and social priorities it is vital that TAFE NSW receives appropriate and adequate funding.”

Mike Baird’s cuts have happened at a time when youth unemployment has increased to 17 per cent in Western Sydney, and there are now an additional 39 600 more unemployed people in NSW than there were when Mike Baird and the Liberals were elected to Government.
TAFE FEES hiked UP

As of Semester 1 2015, TAFE course fees have increased substantially. To learn at TAFE students now face fees of up to $4000 for basic certificates, while 40% of students will be slugged an extra $500 to $1500 for courses.

Young people who have been unable to secure an apprenticeship – the group more at risk of long-term unemployment – will have to pay more to gain work-ready skills.

Mike Baird’s massive TAFE fee increases mean:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TAFE Qualification</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>2014 Fee</th>
<th>2015 Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certificate III Hairdressing Apprentice</td>
<td>West Wollongong</td>
<td>$1012 over 2 years</td>
<td>$2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma of Electrical Engineering</td>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>$3636 Full time over 2 years $5454 Part time over 3 years</td>
<td>$7,280 1 trainee $8490 2nd qualification (students must hold a Cert III electrical)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate III in Early Childhood</td>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>$419 over 6 months</td>
<td>$1590 for first qualification or trainee $1910 for second qualification up to certificate III $6540 (if previously completed a certificate IV)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate III in Agriculture</td>
<td>Goulburn</td>
<td>$838 over 1 year</td>
<td>$2170 for first qualification or trainee $2600 for second qualification $8850 (if student hold a Certificate IV or above)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To make matters worse, Government loans for TAFE fees are only available for the highest-level diploma or advanced diploma courses - not entry-level training. This means students will be forced to pay large sums up-front, or take on large debts which will take years to pay off.

Overall, the increase to the fees of TAFE courses under Mike Baird’s changes will put vocational training out or reach for many people in NSW. The massive hikes will also lead to long-term skills shortages in many industries.

These fee increases will not only hurt our economy, they will compromise the future jobs of thousands of people in NSW.
The Liberals & Nationals
Broken Promises

While in Opposition, Education Minister, Adrian Piccoli, signed the NSW Teachers Federation TAFE pledge.

By signing the pledge, the Minister promised to:

- “Guarantee TAFE funding”;
- “Increase permanent teaching positions;” and
- “Ensure that everyone in NSW has affordable access to a TAFE education.”

Adrian Piccoli said:

“Cuts to TAFE [are] short-sighted and would cost NSW in the long-term... failure to invest in education and training in NSW is a failure to invest in our future.”

“Studies show that every dollar spent on TAFE returns $6.40 to the economy, so it makes perfect economic sense to invest in vocational training.”

- Adrian Piccoli, media release, 29 September 2009

Since becoming Minister, Adrian Piccoli has:

- Cut $1.7 billion from education and training;
- Sacked 1100 TAFE teachers and support staff;
- Cut TAFE courses, including the HSC; and
- Increased student fees by over $1500
LABOR'S PLAN for FAIRER, MORE ACCESSIBLE AND HIGHER QUALITY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Labor is committed to investing in skills and training in the face of savage cuts by the Liberal state government, because quality education and training is the key to a better job, a better career and a better life.

Within one term, a Labor Government will:

• Abolish the Liberal’s ‘Smart and Skilled’ privatisation program;
• Reverse the Baird Government’s TAFE fee hikes;
• Guarantee funding to TAFE by capping the amount of public funds that can be contestable by private operators at 30 per cent; and
• Commission a landmark review of education and training in NSW after Year 10.

Labor will abolish Mike Baird's vocational and educational training policy. Under the name “Smart and Skilled”, these disastrous changes have been used to sack 1100 teachers and support staff, cancel courses and increase TAFE fees beyond the reach of thousands of students.

A Labor Government will again make TAFE affordable and accessible for everyone in NSW.
Labor will cap contestable funding for private education providers at 30 per cent thereby providing TAFE campuses with a guaranteed pool of funding to continue the great job it does for local communities.

In Victoria, 70 per cent of vocational education and training funding is contestable which had led to the destruction of the TAFE system in that state. NSW Labor’s plan of a 30 per cent cap stands in stark contrast and will ensure TAFE funding in NSW is protected.

The private sector has a role to play and we value high quality providers and the contribution they make to the sector. But we will not allow TAFE to be destroyed by diverting funding to large companies and corporations who are profit driven.

Labor will invest in a vocational and education system to ensure broad access to affordable education and training and to ensure it can provide student support services, offer extra help to students with a disability, students from disadvantaged backgrounds or those requiring literacy and numeracy development.

A Labor Government will always invest in TAFE in NSW.
Instead of dismantling our TAFE system, a Labor Government will invest in TAFE and make it a world leader in providing vocational education and training.

**Labor will immediately commission a landmark review of education and training in NSW after Year 10.**

Conducted by a pre-eminent expert, Labor will seek an action plan for a better system – one every bit as iconic as the McGaw Review of the HSC or the Gonski Review of school funding.

The plan will focus on how we can improve vocational education to support the needs of young people leaving school.

It will consider the adequacy of the HSC curriculum in meeting the needs of young people who pursue vocational education or enter directly into the workforce.

The NSW Higher School Certificate has not been reviewed since the mid-1990s McGaw Review. In the period since the McGaw Review in NSW, participation in vocational education in schools has grown rapidly, with 36 per cent of senior secondary students in NSW now taking at least one vocational subject.

In today’s dynamic working environment, NSW faces the challenge of equipping the workforce with the skills required for the jobs of today and those of the future.

And to address these challenges, our vocational education and training system has to adapt – and it must be supported.

In 2012, the NSW Auditor General raised concerns about existing school arrangements and their capacity to meet the needs of students looking to undertake vocational education and training (VET).

It’s clear that more needs to be done to engage those students who are not focused on a university pathway.
It is time to start looking for new solutions.

That’s why Labor’s high-level review will have a particular focus on how arrangements can be improved to better meet the needs of young people who enter the labour market and vocational education and training after they leave school.

The review should address issues such as:

• The adequacy of the NSW HSC in meeting the needs of students who do not enter university after leaving school

• The adequacy of funding arrangements across schools, TAFE and other vocational education providers after Year 10 in supporting better pathways to employment and vocational training, and proposals for improving these arrangements;

• Strategies for raising the level of vocational education taken by 16-17 year-olds so that the qualifications awarded better meet the breadth and depth of skills required for life and work in the 21st century;

• Whether senior school certificates should contain requirements for the achievement of minimum standards in literacy and numeracy; and

• Whether senior school certificates should include requirements for career planning and personal development.

Labor will appoint a pre-eminent expert to undertake the review and make recommendations to ensure that the state’s sector is a world leader, but most importantly, they will ensure our system is accessible to all.