



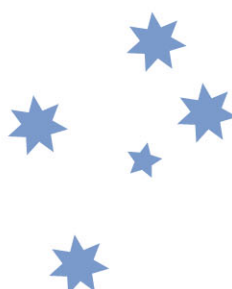
# Aim Higher: Learning, Training and Better Jobs for more Australians

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Policy Document



Mark Latham and Labor **Opportunity for all**

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## **More Australians getting a university or TAFE qualification**

A Federal Labor Government will give more Australians the opportunity to get a university or TAFE qualification.

Federal Labor will fund our universities properly, keep a university degree affordable and increase the number of university and TAFE places for Australian students.

The Howard Government has cut \$5 billion from our universities since 1996.

John Howard is forcing Australian families to make up the missing billions through 25 per cent HECS increases and more and more full fee degrees costing up to \$210,000.

Every year tens of thousands of talented Australians are turned away from university and TAFE because the Howard Government refuses to fund enough places.

Skills growth as a driver of productivity has dropped 75 per cent in the last ten years.

Australia's university system needs vision, investment and long term reform – not price hikes to make students and their families pay more.

A Federal Labor Government will create more opportunities for people to get a university or TAFE qualification, keep the cost of university affordable and invest in universities to excel in the twenty-first century.

*Aim Higher: Learning, Training and Better Jobs for More Australians* is a fully costed and funded \$5.58 billion investment in our universities over five years.

Over five years, a Federal Labor Government will:

- **Expand opportunities to get a TAFE or university qualification**
  - \$834 million to create 23,000 new (full and part time) fully funded commencing university places to be distributed throughout Australia each year by 2009.
  - \$165 million to create 20,000 new (full and part time) fully funded commencing TAFE places to be distributed throughout Australia each year by 2009.
  - \$38 million for a program to support secondary school students from disadvantaged backgrounds to progress to university or TAFE.
- **Ensure fair access to affordable tertiary education**
  - Stop the Howard Government's 25 per cent HECS hikes and keep university affordable for Australians.
  - Abolish full fees for all new Australian undergraduate students.
- **Relieve the financial burden on students**
  - \$98 million to extend rent assistance to Austudy recipients from 2006.
  - \$92 million to reduce the age of independence for students on Youth Allowance to 24 in 2006 and 23 in 2007.

**■ Address national skills shortages**

- \$67 million to reduce current HECS fees for science and mathematics students by \$1,600 per annum.
- 5,000 extra (full and part time) undergraduate nursing places by 2009 including 1,800 extra (full and part time) commencing nursing places each year.
- \$53 million to create 1,000 extra full time HECS-funded postgraduate nursing places in areas of specialisation from 2006.
- \$59 million extra funding for clinical training for undergraduate nurses.
- \$194 million to fund an extra 1,000 full time commencing medical places by 2007.
- \$43 million for a new medical school at the University of Western Sydney.
- \$12 million for the University of Tasmania to improve its medical training facilities.
- 4,600 extra (full and part time) teaching places by 2009 including 1,700 extra commencing places each year.
- \$27 million to create 500 extra full time HECS-funded postgraduate teacher education places in areas of specialisation and professional development from 2006.
- An additional \$146 million to increase the quality of teacher education including meeting the costs of in-school teaching practicals.
- \$69 million to establish 300 three year post-doctoral fellowships.
- \$30 million to establish a new veterinary and agricultural science school at James Cook University.
- \$12 million to establish a new Multimedia Design and Technology Centre in Wollongong.

**■ Increase equity in university access and participation**

- Increase funding through the Higher Education Equity Program by at least \$2.3 million each year from 2005.
- Increase funding for the Indigenous Support Fund by \$41 million between 2005 and 2009.
- \$19 million to create 600 scholarships for Indigenous tertiary students of \$10,000 a year over three years from 2006.
- \$1.4 million to support the establishment of an Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council in consultation with Indigenous students, staff and the broader Indigenous community.
- \$900,000 to create five Indigenous staff scholarships each year.
- An additional \$11 million to support people with a disability to access and complete tertiary education.

- **Provide vision, investment and direction for a diverse world-class Australian university system**
  - Establish a competitive \$809 million fund to encourage universities' transition to twenty-first century learning institutions.
  - Establish a \$215 million Community Engagement Fund to support regional, rural and outer-suburban universities' leadership role in local communities.
  - Establish a \$317 million Teaching and Learning Fund to recognise and reward teaching and learning excellence including the provision of support for new university teachers.
  - \$90 million to establish a national institute of teaching and learning to support best practice in university teaching.
  
- **Secure the foundations for high standards and improved quality**
  - Maintain the value of funding to universities by using the Wage Cost Index (Education) to increase university grants over and above existing increases which will provide \$912 million additional funding.
  - Fully fund 25,000 underfunded student places at a cost of \$749 million.
  - \$486 million to secure critical elements of the Commonwealth Grants Scheme.
  - \$29 million to ensure that the Australian Maritime College and Batchelor College do not lose resources as a result of the introduction of the Commonwealth Grants Scheme.
  - \$5 million to establish quality assurance of student assessment in consultation with the university sector.
  - An additional \$3 million to the Australian Universities Quality Agency to audit offshore campuses to the same standards as domestic campuses of Australian universities.
  - \$1.4 million to assist universities in the implementation of the Graduate Skills Assessment.
  - Introduce an enforceable National Quality and Accountability Code for publicly funded and subsidised higher education providers.
  - \$18 million to support universities in the implementation of more efficient computing and administrative procedures.

The budget impact of this policy over the forward estimates is \$3.94 billion.

***Aim Higher will establish the strategic settings for reforming our universities and TAFEs and give more Australians the skills they need for a good job and a secure future.***

***Education is the first rung on Labor's ladder of opportunity.***

***Aim Higher: Learning, Training and Better Jobs for More Australians will expand university and TAFE opportunities for more Australians.***

## Expanding university and TAFE opportunities

A Federal Labor Government will expand university and TAFE opportunities for Australians.

Education and skills are our young people's ticket to a decent job and a brighter future.

Australians without a university or TAFE qualification are more than twice as likely to become unemployed than Australians with a tertiary qualification.<sup>1</sup>

Yet the Howard Government turns away 20,000 qualified Australians from university and 15,000 young Australians from TAFE each year and refuses to create more incentives for young people to stay at school to pursue further study.<sup>2</sup>

Under Labor, more Australians will get a qualification and more secondary students will be exposed to the benefits of university and TAFE.

### 20,000 new university places

A Federal Labor Government will provide \$834 million to create 23,000 extra (full and part time) commencing university places each year by 2009.

Every year, around 20,000 qualified Australians miss out on a university place. These are people who are capable, motivated and have achieved the marks to get a university place but to whom the Howard Government says 'no'.

Federal Labor will reduce this waste of talent and potential by significantly expanding the number of HECS places for Australian students.

Labor's 23,000 places are on top of the existing 25,000 marginally funded places that the Howard Government has finally agreed to fund properly. They are also on top of the Howard Government's places allocated to national priority areas.

The Howard Government will provide only 7,050 extra full and part time university commencing places between 2005 and 2009 – less than a third of the extra places a Federal Labor Government will create.

#### Extra (full and part time) commencing public university places 2005-2009

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
<b>Labor</b>	2,950	8,380	13,000	17,300	23,000
<b>Coalition</b>	630	980	3,050	7,050	7,050

\* 1 student = 0.7 Equivalent Full Time Student Units

### 20,000 new TAFE places

A Federal Labor Government will provide \$165 million to create 20,000 extra (full and part time) commencing TAFE places to be distributed throughout Australia each year by 2009.

Demand for vocational education and training is increasing. Every year around 40,000 Australians miss out on a TAFE place including 15,000 young Australians.<sup>3</sup>

Yet the Howard Government has refused to fund any new TAFE places between 1997 and 2001 and has failed to negotiate a new Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) agreement with the states and territories.

A Federal Labor Government is committed to addressing this legacy of underfunding and giving more Australians the opportunity to get a TAFE qualification.

Labor's 20,000 extra TAFE places build on other commitments to create more vocational education and training opportunities including 8,300 Job Gateway training places and 7,500 apprenticeships in Labor's *Youth Guarantee: Learn or Earn*.

A Federal Labor Government will each year create 36,600 extra commencing vocational education and training places by 2009. By 2008 - when the Coalition says its flawed technical colleges on new sites would commence - 53,550 extra Australians will have already had the opportunity to start vocational education and training under a Federal Labor Government.

**Extra commencing vocational education and training places 2005-09**

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
<i>Aim Higher</i> TAFE places	2,000	5,000	9,000	14,000	20,000
<i>Learn or Earn</i> (Jobs Gateway) training places		2,300	4,300	6,300	8,300
<i>Learn or Earn</i> (Apprenticeships for 15 to 18 year olds)		1,000	3,000	5,000	7,500
Local government TAFE places		200	650	800	800
<b>Total extra commencing places</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>8,500</b>	<b>16,950</b>	<b>26,100</b>	<b>36,600</b>

These places will be delivered by ANTA and are in addition to the 14,600 Skill Up and Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Apprenticeships that Labor will deliver through Group Training Organisations.

**Bright futures: Raising young people's aspirations**

A Federal Labor Government will provide \$38 million to support more secondary school students from disadvantaged backgrounds to progress to university or TAFE.

Labor knows that young people's tertiary aspirations are often determined in the early years of secondary school.

Labor will establish *Bright Futures* – a schools based program to encourage secondary students from disadvantaged backgrounds and help them progress to university or TAFE.

*Bright Futures* will help to raise the learning aspirations of young people who are most at risk of unemployment and give teenagers more options for exploring further study before choosing the best path to their preferred job – whether it be as a nurse, a maths teacher, a fitter and turner, a plumber or an IT technician.

Labor will provide funding to schools, universities and TAFEs to introduce projects, excursions and a program of visits by university and TAFE students to tell school students where university and TAFE can take them.

## **Fair access and affordable university education**

A Federal Labor Government will ensure access to university is based on merit and that university fees are affordable.

The Howard Government has nearly doubled average HECS fees since 1996 and now is going to hike up HECS fees a further 25 per cent.

Already 26 universities have voted to increase HECS if the Howard Government is re-elected. That means young Australians will be paying \$20,000 for a science degree, \$40,000 for a law degree and nearly \$15,000 for an arts degree under the Howard Government. These young Australians will be graduating with massive debts, making it so much harder to buy a home, start a family and get ahead.

Over the next four years the Howard Government is planning to gouge a staggering \$828 million more out of students and their families.<sup>4</sup>

The Howard Government also wants more and more full fee payers to buy a university place ahead of others with higher marks.

Under the Howard Government's plan, more than a third of students – as many as 200,000 – could be paying full fees for degrees, with some costing as much as \$210,000.

The Howard Government is creating an American style system where money more than marks opens university doors.

### **Stopping the Howard Government's HECS hikes**

A Federal Labor Government will stop the Howard Government's 25 per cent HECS hikes and keep university affordable for Australians.

If elected, Federal Labor will recall Parliament in 2004 to stop the Howard Government's 25 per cent HECS hikes for 2005.

Under Labor, Australian students and their families will not have to face a 25 per cent HECS hike or pay higher HECS fees.

### **No full fees, no \$100,000 degrees and access based on marks (not money)**

A Federal Labor Government will abolish full fees degrees costing as much as \$210,000 for all new Australian undergraduate university students.

Before the last election John Howard promised there would be no \$100,000 degrees under his government. According to the *Good Universities Guide*, there are now at least 45 full fee degrees costing \$100,000 or more.

The Howard Government wants to treat hard working Australian students exactly the same as international students. Labor will treat Australian students better than international students.

International students may have to pay full fees costing as much as \$210,000 but Australians should not have to.

Hard working Australians who get the marks to get into university deserve a fully funded HECS place – not a \$210,000 debt.

Labor will restore fairness to Australia's university system and make merit the criteria for getting a university place.

Labor does not believe in pricing ordinary Australians out of university.

Labor will also retain a student loan scheme for full fee paying students enrolled in postgraduate study and to support students gaining qualifications for initial professional registration. Compliance with Labor's National Quality and Accountability Code will be a condition for institutions seeking to access this loans scheme.

## **Relieving the financial pressure on students**

A Federal Labor Government will give Australian university students better support to complete their studies.

Too many Australian students are struggling to cope with mounting costs and study commitments because of the Howard Government's inconsistent approach to government assistance.

Labor believes that students need better support if they are to get the best out of their study and if Australia is to get the best out of them.

### **Better rent assistance**

A Federal Labor Government will provide \$98 million to extend rent assistance to Austudy recipients from 2006.

*Aim Higher* will provide up to an extra \$90 per fortnight to around 30,000 Australian students by extending rent assistance to Austudy recipients.

Under the Howard Government, students who receive Austudy are ineligible for rent assistance.

That means many students are forced to work excessive hours as they struggle to pay their bills and still find time to study.

Under the current system, people get paid more if they are unemployed on Newstart than if they are a student on Austudy.

### **A more realistic age of independence**

A Federal Labor Government will provide \$92 million to reduce the age of independence for students on Youth Allowance to 24 in 2006 and to 23 in 2007.

The Howard Government has increased the age of independence for students on Youth Allowance to 25.

Too many Australian families are feeling the strain of financially supporting their children well into adulthood.

*Aim Higher* will progressively lower the age at which students become independent and the means test on parental income for Youth Allowance cuts out to 23 years of age meaning additional income of up to \$318 per fortnight.

### **More income options for Australian students**

A Federal Labor Government will reintroduce the voluntary Student Financial Supplement Scheme.

Australian students need more options to support themselves as they study – not fewer.

The Howard Government last year pulled the financial rug out from under 40,000 students when it closed down the Student Financial Supplement Scheme without replacing it with any other form of financial assistance.

The voluntary scheme is not for everyone, but many students relied on the scheme in order to complete their studies.

The Student Financial Supplement Scheme was previously accessed by about 40,000 students a year, giving them the option to access an income contingent HECS style loan to finance their living costs while studying.

### **Automatic membership of student organisations**

A Federal Labor Government will support the existing arrangements for membership of student organisations and oppose attempts to intervene to prevent automatic membership.

Labor recognises the important role that student organisations play in representing students and in providing services to support students in their studies, such as sporting, child care and medical facilities.

### **Commonwealth Scholarships**

All Commonwealth Education Scholarship recipients and Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarship recipients will retain their existing entitlements under a Federal Labor Government.

## **Skilling Australia and addressing national skills shortages**

A Federal Labor Government will give more people the support they need to get qualifications in areas of skill shortage.

More skills mean a better job and greater economic productivity.

Australia needs more skills growth and more skilled workers to fill existing and future skill shortages, to improve our standard of living and to remain internationally competitive.

Australia has severe skill shortages in areas like teaching and nursing, and too many of our best young minds are heading overseas because of lack professional opportunities under the Howard Government.

By 2009, 40,000 extra university and TAFE places will be in the system throughout Australia with special attention to areas of skill shortage.

**No learning limit**

A Federal Labor Government will stop the Howard Government's 7 year limit on university learning.

The Howard Government has imposed a 7 year limit on government-supported university study, leaving students with no option but to drop out or pay full fees up to \$210,000 after 7 years of government supported university study.

Federal Labor knows that no job is for life anymore. Australians must not be penalised for going back to university or TAFE to upgrade their skills or change their careers.

Federal Labor wants more Australians upgrading their skills – not fewer.

Under Labor, Australians will be able to study as they need to without being penalised by John Howard's learning limit.

**Lower fees for maths and science students**

A Federal Labor Government will provide \$67 million to reduce current HECS fees for maths and science students by \$1,600 per year.

Australian classrooms are in desperate need of more maths and science teachers.<sup>5</sup>

But under the Howard Government, maths and science teachers pay higher HECS than other teachers.

The Howard Government's proposed fee increases would mean a degree in maths or science could cost more than \$20,000 even though Australia has critical shortages in those fields.

Labor will place mathematics and science in Band 1 of HECS to reduce current course fees by \$1,600 per annum from 2006 and to encourage more people to become maths and science teachers.

Under Labor, students of maths and science will pay nearly \$5,000 less in fees for a three year university degree and \$9,000 less than under the Howard Government's 25 per cent HECS hikes.

**More nursing places**

A Federal Labor Government will expand opportunities for people to study nursing.

Australia has a critical shortage of qualified nurses, according to the *National Review of Nursing Education 2002*.<sup>6</sup>

Yet the Howard Government has turned away over 18,000 prospective nurses from university between 1997 and 2004 and has allowed universities to charge full fees for specialist nursing graduate courses.<sup>7</sup>

Labor will create an extra 5,000 extra (full and part time) undergraduate nursing places by 2009. This will start in 2005 with 630 extra (full and part time) commencing nursing places. From 2006 this will increase to 1,800 extra (full and part time) commencing nursing places each year.

These places are in addition to the nursing places already allocated to regional universities.

Labor will also provide \$53 million to create 1,000 extra Commonwealth Postgraduate Nursing HECS funded places to enable nurses to train in high demand specialist areas of skill shortage including emergency and intensive care, cardiothoracic, neonatal intensive care, midwifery, aged care and mental health.

Additionally, a Federal Labor Government will provide \$59 million extra for clinical training for undergraduate nurses.

### **More medical places**

A Federal Labor Government will provide \$194 million to create an additional 1,000 full time, commencing medical places by 2007, including 246 commencing bonded medical places starting in 2004. The additional 754 commencing places will not be bonded.

All Australians deserve the best possible care. But there are not enough doctors in many outer suburban, regional and rural areas. Too many Australians have to travel extended distances just to see a doctor.

### **A new medical school at the University of Western Sydney and better medical facilities for the University of Tasmania**

A Federal Labor Government will provide \$43 million for a new medical school at the University of Western Sydney.

Federal Labor will also allocate \$10 million for 100 extra commencing medical places for the school. These places will commence in 2007.

Unlike the Howard Government, Federal Labor is committed to establishing a medical school at Western Sydney.

The Howard Government has refused to commit to providing funding for a desperately needed new medical school at the University of Western Sydney and has instead been playing meaningless politics with the State Government.

Labor's commitment means more local students can train to become doctors in the chronically under-serviced Western Sydney region.

Labor will also provide \$12 million to the University of Tasmania to improve its medical training facilities and encourage more Tasmanians to study and subsequently practice locally.

### **More teaching places**

A Federal Labor Government will create more opportunities for people to become teachers.

Australia is facing a serious shortage of teachers over the next decade. The teacher workforce is ageing rapidly and more than 40 per cent of the current teacher workforce – over 100,000 teachers – are due to retire in the next 10 years.<sup>8</sup>

A taskforce reporting to the Ministerial Council of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs has warned of a looming shortage of quality teachers.<sup>9</sup>

But under the Howard Government, nearly 50,000 potential teachers have been turned away from our universities between 1997 and 2004 and education faculties have been squeezed by the unfunded cost of in-school teaching training.<sup>10</sup>

A Federal Labor Government will create an extra 4,600 extra (full and part time) teacher education places by 2009. This will include 1,700 extra (full and part time) commencing places.

Labor will also provide \$27 million to create 500 extra full time HECS-funded postgraduate teacher education places in areas of specialisation and professional development from 2006.

A Federal Labor Government will also provide an additional \$146 million to increase the quality of teacher education including meeting the costs of in-school teaching practicals.

### **Stopping the brain drain**

A Federal Labor Government will provide \$69 million to establish 300 three year post-doctoral fellowships from 2006.

We are losing too many of our best young minds as they go overseas because of a lack job opportunities and deteriorating conditions under the Howard Government.

This is contributing to our ageing academic population and the loss of Australian intellectual property.

*Aim Higher* will help stop the flow of home-grown talent going overseas and address the ageing of our academic population by providing more post-doctoral job opportunities.

### **Tropical veterinary and agricultural science expertise**

A Federal Labor Government will provide \$30 million to establish a new veterinary and agricultural science school at James Cook University.

The new school will become a centre for excellence in tropical veterinary and agricultural science education and research. James Cook University plans to establish the new school in Townsville, Cairns and the Atherton Tablelands.

The new veterinary school will complement Labor's commitment to establish a Centre of Excellence in Pandemic and Bioterrorism Containment in Northern Australia with potential for growth in research training for postgraduate students.

Labor will allocate \$18 million to create 50 extra commencing veterinary science places and 50 extra commencing agricultural science places for the school. These places will commence in 2005 and rise to a total of 274 extra commencing places by 2008.

Labor will also allocate \$12 million for infrastructure in the new school.

Labor's commitment will mean that students from North Queensland who wish to study veterinary or agricultural science can now do so in the North starting from next year. As a result there will be much higher potential for them to remain as practitioners in Northern Australia.

**Multimedia and design skills**

A Federal Labor Government will provide \$12 million to establish a new Multimedia Design and Technology Centre.

Australia needs more education and training for multimedia and ICT workers.

Multimedia and ICT workers need to regularly update their skills and re-train in new areas.

Labor will establish a new multimedia design and technology centre. The centre will be based in the new Brandon Park technology precinct, in Wollongong, New South Wales.

It will be a partnership between the University of Wollongong and the Illawarra Institute of TAFE and will provide education and training in multimedia design, digital imaging, graphic design and experimental filmmaking.

TAFE programs will be supported by traineeships in multimedia-related areas including traineeships that lead to higher-level vocational education and training qualifications, as well as pathways to a university degree.

**Increasing equity in university access and participation**

A Federal Labor Government will increase funding through the Higher Education Equity Program by at least \$2.3 million each year from 2005.

The proportion of people from poor and disadvantaged backgrounds participating in higher education has decreased over the last decade.<sup>11</sup>

Labor is committed to increasing the number of Australians from disadvantaged backgrounds in our universities.

Labor will ensure that more people from disadvantaged backgrounds are able to attend university by providing targeted student support.

**Indigenous skills**

A Federal Labor Government will provide \$62 million to increase Indigenous participation in higher education.

Indigenous Australians are significantly under represented in tertiary education compared to non-Indigenous Australians.

New university enrolments by Indigenous Australians declined by 14 per cent in just two years from 1999 to 2001, falling back to pre-1995 levels and wiping out steady gains made in enrolments during the mid-1990s.

The number of Indigenous students completing university studies peaked in 1998 before declining sharply in 1999 and is yet to return to previous levels.

Labor believes supporting Indigenous students to enrol in and complete tertiary education is fundamental to increasing employment outcomes for Indigenous Australians.

A Federal Labor Government will increase funding through the Indigenous Support Fund by \$41 million and provide \$1.4 million for the establishment of an Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council.

Labor will provide \$19 million to create 600 scholarships for Indigenous tertiary students of \$10,000 a year over three years from 2006. Labor will also provide \$900,000 to create five Indigenous staff scholarships each year.

A Federal Labor Government will provide nearly twice as much additional Indigenous support funding as the Howard Government between 2005 and 2008.

### **More support for people with a disability**

A Federal Labor Government will provide an additional \$11 million to support people with a disability to access and complete tertiary education.

People with a disability face many hurdles to successful access and completion of tertiary education.

Labor will provide nearly twice as much additional funding to support people with a disability in tertiary education than the Howard Government.

*Aim Higher* will help to reform national support structures to assist universities and TAFEs meet the needs of people with a disability such as coordinating the provision of course materials in an accessible form – for example, the centralised production of braille or audio materials for visually impaired students.

## **Providing vision, investment and direction for a world class Australian university system**

A Federal Labor Government will re-build, reform and expand Australia's universities and create a diverse, world class university system.

Australian higher education urgently needs vision and investment to restore its performance and expand its potential.

After eight years of Howard Government neglect, our universities are struggling. \$5 billion in cuts, fewer Australians starting an undergraduate degree in each of the last two years and lack of vision and support are taking their toll on our universities and our young people's learning.

Staff morale is at an all time low, our students are learning in deteriorating conditions and public confidence in our universities is being undermined.

The answer to the crisis in our university sector is reform.

But reform means vision, investment, and strategic direction – not just forcing students and their families to pay more and more.

A Federal Labor Government will provide the investment and set strategic directions to transform our universities into learning institutions for the twenty-first century.

### **Universities for the twenty-first century**

A Federal Labor Government will provide \$809 million to establish a competitive fund to encourage universities' transition to twenty-first century learning institutions.

In today's world, the learning needs of students, the research needs of the economy and society and the skill needs of employers are constantly changing.

The key to meeting these changing needs and attaining world class standards is increased forms of collaboration – nationally and internationally; between and across education sectors; with different sections of the community; and through new forms of information and communication technology (ICT).

A Federal Labor Government will establish a new fund to support universities in their transformation to twenty-first century learning institutions.

Guidelines will be developed in consultation with the higher education community. Examples of universities' twenty-first century activities could include:

- Capitalising on the potential of ICT in teaching and learning.
- Creating partnerships with TAFEs and schools to establish flexible learning centres for reaching more students and combining online and on-campus teaching methods.
- Developing new strategies for reaching students wherever they want to study – at home, in the workplace, at the local library.
- Developing new models for adult, part time, postgraduate and distance learning including the provision of compatible courses that are qualifications in their own right or articulated into other study options.
- Developing collaborative approaches to research that share resources and bring together a critical mass of researchers and infrastructure.
- Development of online and distance courses in areas of skill shortage and/or high unmet demand.
- Developing new strategies to share resources, expertise and content between institutions and across education sectors.
- Establishing joint electronic library purchasing and facilities.
- Strategies for improving asset management.
- International research collaboration.
- Developing clear forms of credit transfer between universities and TAFEs.
- Professional development for staff including training in harnessing the potential of new technologies.
- Developing new strategies for attracting international students.

Universities and the communities will be invited to provide submissions about the feasibility and desirability of establishing a national centre for the development and sharing of accredited online course content and materials.

### **Community Engagement Fund**

A Federal Labor Government will provide \$215 million to establish a Community Engagement Fund to support regional, rural and outer-suburban institutions' leadership role in local communities.

Universities form an integral part of their surrounding communities and can have a special leadership role in economic development and community aspirations. Labor wants to encourage universities to engage with

communities, particularly in outer-suburban, regional and rural areas where strong links with the local university can greatly assist regional economic and social development.

Labor will establish a Community Engagement Fund to encourage and support regional, rural and outer-suburban universities' involvement in local community development.

Universities will be required to demonstrate the regional benefits of their local involvement as well as propose new forms of community engagement and local partnerships.

Labor's Community Engagement Fund will apply to many universities that have been excluded from the Howard Government's regional loading – the University of Newcastle and campuses of outer-suburban universities such as the University of Western Sydney and Victoria University. Universities will not receive less funding under Labor's community engagement fund than they would from the Howard Government's regional loading system. Universities which demonstrate enhanced community engagement may gain additional funds.

### **Excellence in teaching and learning**

A Federal Labor Government will provide \$317 million to establish a teaching and learning fund to recognise and reward teaching and learning excellence including the provision of support for new university teachers.

The quality and standards of our students' education has everything to do with the quality and standard of our teachers.

But under the Howard Government, staff morale is at an all-time low and standards are being threatened because of eight years of funding cuts and deteriorating conditions.

Labor will reward teaching and learning excellence through additional funding for best practice universities and will help support young academics during their early experiences of teaching.

Labor is aware of the concerns of universities with the existing approaches to measuring teaching and learning outcomes and will develop performance indicators and a process for assessment which also take account of improvements in student achievement at different stages of assessment and includes expert peer assessment.

Labor will also provide \$90 million to establish a national institute of teaching and learning to support best practice in university teaching.

## **Securing the foundations for high standards and improved quality**

A Federal Labor Government will restore public confidence in Australia's universities.

Budget cuts and Howard Government policies have put our universities under enormous pressure. The Howard Government refuses to adequately fund standards and has not been fulfilling its quality assurance role.

The Howard Government has been forcing universities to use the funding that should be maintaining quality to make up the shortfall for marginally funded student places.

The result has been over-crowded classrooms, less individual attention, fewer resources and a 33 per cent blow out in the number of students per teaching staff.

Our students deserve the best possible university education. Only Labor will properly fund, assess and safeguard quality.

### **More funding for higher standards**

A Federal Labor Government will provide \$912 million in additional funding to universities by 2009 by properly indexing the value of operating grants.

This additional \$912 million is in the first five years alone. Labor's indexation will continue to grow and compound, providing universities with secure and increasing revenue.

Public funding for universities has not kept pace with the increased costs of running a modern university.

Last December, the Australian Parliament determined that the process of indexing university grants should be reviewed – yet the Education Minister has never commenced this review.

A Federal Labor Government will maintain the value of funding to universities by using the Wage Cost Index (Education) to increase university grants, including the HECS component. This will provide \$912 million in additional funding over and above the existing indexation policy.

This will provide the ongoing funding universities need to maintain infrastructure and facilities and deliver world class learning outcomes. Unlike HECS increases, the value of indexation will continue to grow and compound into the future.

### **Undoing the Howard Government's marginal funding damage**

Labor will provide \$749 million to fully fund 25,000 over-enrolments currently funded at less than one quarter of the full Commonwealth rate.

The Howard Government has been forcing universities to over-enrol students 'on the cheap' and has then blamed over-crowding for threats to quality.

Federal Labor will maintain standards and quality by properly funding all university places.

### **Commonwealth Grants Scheme**

A Federal Labor Government will provide \$486 million to secure critical elements of the Commonwealth Grants Scheme.

Federal Labor will pay the first 2.5 per cent increase under the Commonwealth Grants Scheme in 2005 in full to all universities.

This payment will not be conditional on complying with the Howard Government's prescriptive industrial relations or governance requirements.

Labor will also ensure that universities are not worse off as a result by delivering all funds currently included in the Transition Fund. Labor will also

fund universities for students enrolled in enabling courses that prepare students for further study such as a diploma and degree.

Labor will also provide \$29 million to ensure that the Australian Maritime College and Batchelor College do not lose resources as a result of the introduction of the Commonwealth Grants Scheme.

### **Guaranteeing standards and quality**

Australian students deserve assurances that their education is at the highest possible standard. This applies to students at Australian campuses abroad as well as those at campuses at home.

A Federal Labor Government will provide \$5 million to establish expert quality assurance of student assessment to ensure high and consistent standards in consultation with the university sector.

Labor will provide an additional \$3 million to the Australian Universities Quality Agency to audit offshore campuses to the same standards as domestic campuses of Australian universities.

Labor will also provide \$1.4 million to assist universities in the implementation of the Graduate Skills Assessment.

A Federal Labor Government will introduce an enforceable National Quality and Accountability Code for publicly funded and subsidised higher education providers and expand the role of the Australian Universities Quality Agency to include auditing offshore campuses.

Labor's national code will be overseen by an independent and expert panel and will require:

- That quality is assessed against standards determined by peer review.
- Public accountability of financial and administrative activities.
- Equal opportunity in selection and admission processes.
- Curriculum that challenges ideas from a range of perspectives.

### **Commonwealth role in determining student load and weighting of grants**

The Howard Government wants to limit universities' ability to respond to the demands of their students by imposing extremely tight controls over the mix of courses and the level of enrolments at each university. Labor will work with universities to remove the coercive control over the internal operations of universities under the Higher Education Support Act.

### **Less red tape**

A Federal Labor Government will provide \$18 million over the next four years to support universities in the implementation of more efficient computing and administrative procedures.

The Higher Education Support Act has tied universities up in red tape. Labor is committed to reducing the administrative burden on universities.

The Howard Government's 7 year learning limit has massively increased the administrative burden on universities. Labor will abolish the learning limit and save universities from wasting time and resources in administering the Howard Government's ineffectual policy.

## Costings

*Aim Higher: Learning, Training and Better Jobs for More Australians* is a \$5.58 billion investment in our universities and TAFEs over five years. The budget impact over the forward estimates is \$3.94 billion.

This figure differs from \$2.34 billion announced in 2003 as a result of updated costings spanning the forward estimates period following the 2004-05 budget.

<i>\$ million (figures subject to rounding)</i>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>5 year total</b>	<b>Four year impact on 2004-05 to 2007-08 forward estimates</b>
20,000 extra full and part time commencing university places	14.4	44.5	92.2	155.5	235.6	<b>542.2</b>	306.6
20,000 extra TAFE places	2.5	10.8	26.1	48.2	77.2	<b>164.8</b>	87.6
National Priority Student Places	7.2	7.4	7.5	7.7	8.0	<b>37.8</b>	29.8
Bright Futures	2.0	5.0	10.0	10.4	10.7	<b>38.1</b>	27.4
Income forgone from indexation of increased student debt	6.6	15.6	20.4	23.5	25.4	<b>91.5</b>	66.1
AUSTUDY – rent assistance		23.5	24.1	24.7	25.3	<b>97.6</b>	72.3
Youth Allowance – lower age of independence		15.0	25.0	25.6	26.3	<b>91.9</b>	65.6
Commonwealth Student Scholarships	17.3	17.8	18.2			<b>53.3</b>	53.3
Maths and Science to HECS Band 1		16.2	16.6	17.1	17.5	<b>67.4</b>	49.9
Regional nursing places	3.7	5.0	6.1	6.2	6.3	<b>27.3</b>	21.0
1,000 postgraduate nursing places		7.5	14.7	15.2	15.8	<b>53.2</b>	37.4
Nursing clinical	10.2	11.2	12.0	12.7	13.1	<b>59.3</b>	46.2
1,000 medical places	8.9	19.7	36.5	54.6	73.9	<b>193.6</b>	119.7
UWS Medical School	14.3	14.3	14.4			<b>43.0</b>	43.0
University of Tasmania Medical School	6.0	6.0				<b>12.0</b>	12.0
500 postgraduate teaching places		3.7	7.4	7.6	7.9	<b>26.6</b>	18.7
Classroom teacher training	26.9	28.2	29.2	30.2	31.1	<b>145.6</b>	114.5
300 post doctoral fellowships		7.2	14.9	23.2	23.9	<b>69.3</b>	45.3
JCU Veterinary School – Capital and places	7.6	8.9	3.9	4.8	5.0	<b>30.3</b>	25.3
Illawarra Multimedia Design Centre	0.6	2.6	2.7	3.2	3.2	<b>12.3</b>	9.1
Higher education equity program	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.6	<b>12.4</b>	9.7
Indigenous Support Fund	5.0	5.2	10.0	10.3	10.7	<b>41.2</b>	30.5
Indigenous HE Advisory Council	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	<b>1.4</b>	1.1
Indigenous scholarships		2.0	4.1	6.2	6.3	<b>18.6</b>	12.2
Indigenous staff scholarships	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	<b>0.9</b>	0.7
Disability support funding	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.3	<b>10.7</b>	8.4
Universities of the 21st Century Fund	50.0	100.0	150.0	250.0	259.0	<b>809.0</b>	550.0
Community Engagement Fund	40.0	41.4	42.9	44.5	46.1	<b>214.9</b>	168.8
Teaching and Learning Fund		75.0	77.7	80.5	83.4	<b>316.6</b>	233.2
National Institute for Learning and Teaching		21.8	22.3	22.8	23.3	<b>90.2</b>	66.9
Quality enhancement fund (indexation)	56.0	115.5	178.7	245.6	316.5	<b>912.4</b>	595.9
Full funding of 25,000 marginally funded places	64.8	118.6	163.5	197.6	204.7	<b>749.2</b>	544.5
Commonwealth grants scheme	150.7	116.3	92.2	63.3	64.2	<b>485.6</b>	421.4
National Institutes (AMC and Batchelor)	5.6	5.7	5.8	5.9	6.0	<b>29.1</b>	23.1
Expert panels to guarantee standards	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.1	<b>4.7</b>	3.6
AUQA audits of offshore campuses	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	<b>3.1</b>	2.4
Graduate skills assessment	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	<b>1.4</b>	1.1
Support for universities in implementing administrative change	5.4	5.1	5.3	1.9		<b>17.7</b>	17.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>512</b>	<b>883</b>	<b>1,142</b>	<b>1,405</b>	<b>1,634</b>	<b>5,576</b>	<b>3,942</b>

Abolishing the Howard Government's budget measures will generate savings of \$2.759 billion over the forward estimates.

The net Budget impact of this policy is \$1.183 billion over the forward estimates.

In addition, this policy is funded through previously announced savings including the reduction of the diesel fuel rebate scheme for mining from 100 per cent to 90 per cent – the same level that prevailed before the introduction of the Howard Government's GST.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Education and Work, May 2003*, 6227.0, December 2003.
- <sup>2</sup> Nowhere is the Howard Government's neglect clearer than in the Education Minister Brendan Nelson's comments that that young people should not be pressured to finish school and that not all young people are "biologically or emotionally equipped" to undertake TAFE or university study (ABC, 7.30 Report, 22 January 2002).
- <sup>3</sup> ABS, *Education and Work, May 2003*, 6227.0, December 2003.
- <sup>4</sup> Brendan Nelson, Media Statement, 30 June 2004.
- <sup>5</sup> *Committee for the Review of Teaching and Teacher Education, Interim Report: Attracting and Retaining Teachers of Science, Technology and Mathematics*, Department of Education, Science and Training, 2003.
- <sup>6</sup> National Review of Nursing Education 2002, *Our Duty of Care*, Department of Health and Aged Care and Department of Education, Science and Training, 2002.
- <sup>7</sup> Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee, *Applications for Undergraduate Higher Education Courses, 2004*.
- <sup>8</sup> *Committee for the Review of Teaching and Teacher Education, Interim Report: Attracting and Retaining Teachers of Science, Technology and Mathematics*, Department of Education, Science and Training, 2003; Gregor Ramsey, *Quality Matters – Revitalising teaching: Critical times, critical choices, Report of the Review of Teacher Education*, 2000.
- <sup>9</sup> Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, *Demand and Supply of Primary and Secondary School Teachers*, 2001.
- <sup>10</sup> Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee, *Applications for Undergraduate Higher Education Courses, 2004*.
- <sup>11</sup> *Higher Education Report for the 2004 to 2006 Triennium*, Department of Education, Science and Training, 2004.