

MEDIA RELEASE
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Lifting VET Participation Starts with Better Career Guidance in Schools

Skills and Training Minister Andrew Giles has outlined a bold vision for a more balanced education system, calling for a 50:50 split between school leavers entering university and those pursuing vocational education and training (VET), as reported in *The Australian Financial Review* on 5 June 2025. To achieve this goal, targeted investment in high quality career education is essential, ensuring all students have the support, information and guidance they need to navigate pathways that align with their skills, interests and future workforce needs.

Professionally qualified school-based career advisers play a crucial role in assisting students in making informed, confident decisions about their future. These advisers offer impartial guidance tailored to each student's interests, strengths, and aspirations. They also spearhead the implementation of career education across schools, working in partnership with teachers, school leaders, parents, and carers to weave career learning into the classroom and the broader school community.

When career education is integrated throughout the curriculum, students can better connect what they learn in the classroom to real-world skills and opportunities. Coupled with access to accurate and up-to-date career information, this approach assists students in evaluating all post-school options on an equal footing, including VET, university, apprenticeships, and pathways into new and emerging industries.

In particular, high-quality VET career information is essential for challenging outdated perceptions and supporting students in exploring meaningful opportunities in trades, technology, health, advanced manufacturing, and other high-demand sectors. Career advisers play a vital role in assisting students and families to understand the structure, benefits, and employment outcomes of vocational pathways. This includes navigating training packages, qualification levels, entry points, and the often complex relationship between training and work.

Strong engagement with industry further enhances the effectiveness of career education. Career advisers build partnerships with employers, training providers, and industry bodies to create opportunities for students to engage with real workplaces, learn about current and future skill needs, and gain a better understanding of evolving job roles. These experiences enable students to make more informed decisions and strengthen connections between schools and local economies.

Career advisers work closely with parents and carers, who are often the most influential voices in a young person's life. They ensure that families are informed and engaged in career discussions, and they support them in considering the full range of study and training options available.

Achieving a genuine balance between university and VET isn't just about enrolment targets or funding announcements. It's about providing every young person with access to the support, education, and accurate information they need to choose the path that's right for them. That journey starts in schools.

If the government is truly serious about its ambitions, it must acknowledge and adequately support qualified career advisers and comprehensive, integrated career education as central to the solution.

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