



MEDIA STATEMENT

LJILJANNA RAVLICH MLC

**Shadow Minister for Commerce; Small Business; Government Accountability;
Tourism; Training**

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Skills shortage shines light on Barnett Government's neglect

The latest Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) prediction that Western Australia will be more than 210,000 workers short by 2020 has emphasised the Barnett Government's neglect of the training portfolio since forming Government, Shadow Training Minister Ljiljanna Ravlich said today.

Ms Ravlich said the severe skills shortage was a result of the Barnett Government's abandonment of the State's training agenda.

"Training Minister Peter Collier has shown more interest in creating and re-branding departments rather than developing a skilled workforce ready for the job opportunities that are set to arise from new boom," she said.

"Workers will be needed in all industries across the entire State, including construction and mining and the services industry.

"Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard told a CCI event last week that since September 2008, 38,000 people had become disengaged with training in Western Australia, including 15,000 teenagers and 23,000 young adults."

Ms Ravlich said a recent Australian Education Union survey revealed many TAFE colleges in Western Australia were forced to turn down prospective students because of lack of resources and availability.

"Mr Collier's inaction in the area of training and the inordinate amount of time it has taken for him to come up with a workforce development plan, let alone implement it, confirms that 'Workforce Development' is simply an empty title," she said.

"The Federal Labor Government has stepped in twice because of the failings of Mr Collier, by supplying 56,000 new training places and the Skills for Sustainable Growth Strategy.

"Just last week the Rudd Government announced the redevelopment of Pilbara TAFE's Pundulmurra Campus at South Hedland as well as a new Green Skills Training Centre at Central TAFE in Perth.

"Given the importance of training to the State's economic agenda, it is astonishing that after two years in Government, Mr Collier is yet to release a policy, despite promising it would be made a priority.

"Western Australian current and future apprentices and trainees deserve better and should be concerned that he is more interested in bringing in overseas workers than he is in training Western Australians to enjoy the benefits of the boom."

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