

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **\$2.2 BILLION SKILLS BUDGET TO BOOST NSW WORKFORCE**

The NSW Government is investing \$2.2 billion in skills development and training programs to deliver the skilled workforce to meet our State's industry and jobs growth needs.

The 2017-18 Budget continues the NSW Government's investment in skills, with targeted support for the TAFE NSW modernisation program, new TAFE capital building works, training and job opportunities for unemployed young people and continued focus on increasing apprentices and trainee opportunities.

"From disadvantaged groups to those looking for a career change, the NSW Government's investment in skills is helping to transform the lives of people all around the state," said Deputy Premier and Minister for Skills, John Barilaro.

"The NSW Government's investment is fundamental to providing the skills we need to grow the economy of NSW.

"NSW continues to lead the nation on quality Vocational Education and Training (VET) with the strongest growth of any state or territory in apprenticeship approvals, up 17 per cent in 2016 and a 10 per cent rise in commencements in the first three months of this year, compared to the same period the previous year."

NSW Budget highlights include:

- \$1.7 billion for TAFE NSW
- \$759 million for skills development and training programs, including training through TAFE NSW and registered Smart and Skilled providers
- \$65 million over three years for the Youth Employment Program to assist young people into employment
- \$19 million over three years for the Disability Sector Scale Up program which grows the workforce as part of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) rollout
- \$15 million over four years for the AgSkills strategy, working in partnership with Cotton Australia and the Grains Research and Development Corporation, to attract new workers and retain and up-skill workers
- \$12 million in 2017-18 for Smart and Skilled Fee-Free Scholarships for 200,000 students including victims of domestic violence and disadvantaged groups
- \$8 million over four years for the Infrastructure Skills Legacy Program (ISLP) to increase apprentices, trainees and Aboriginal people employed on NSW Government funded infrastructure projects

Assistant Minister for Skills Adam Marshall said the NSW Government's commitment to TAFE NSW will be bolstered by an additional \$33.9 million over last year's budget, for capital works projects.

"TAFE NSW plays a critical role in supporting the State's economic and social priorities, and that requires modernising and adapting services to deliver better outcomes for students," Mr Marshall said.

"The NSW Budget includes \$131.0million of capital expenditure, an increase of \$33.9 million on the 2016-17 budget, in order to support seven new major capital projects and continued work on 26 existing projects."

Planned capital projects for 2017-18 include Stage 2 of TAFE NSW's Connected Learning Centres. The additional new state of the art education facilities will follow Stage 1 already under construction in Quirindi, Glenn Innes, Coonabarabran and Tenterfield.

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