



Speech

Opening of Refurbished Facilities, Hunter Institute of TAFE

Tighes Hill Campus

21 July 2010

Sharon Grierson MP

Thank you. It's a great pleasure to be here today. I acknowledge that we meet on the land of the Awabakal people – the traditional owners and carers of this land and pay my respects to elders past and present.

I was originally representing Julia Gillard who was minister at the time this project was imagined but as you would be aware she's moved forward. So today I represent my good colleague and friend, the Federal Minister for Education, the Hon. Simon Cream MP, who sends his best wishes for a successful occupation of these wonderful new facilities.

I acknowledge the presence of the Hon. Verity Firth, NSW Minister for Education, and am pleased she could be here in person today to open this wonderful facility with me.

I also acknowledge Director, the State member for Newcastle Minister Mckay, the Lord Mayor, industry, community and education leaders, and TAFE staff and students.

Today we officially open the completed and extensive Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy refurbishment.

I'm told that part of the first floor has been refurbished to include two beauty salons, makeup and nail room; seminar room, stores and head teachers offices and staff room;

The whole second floor has been refurbished to include six hairdressing salons, call off rooms, on line training, stores and staff facilities; refurbished staff and student rest rooms on both levels; an upgrade of the stairs, roof repairs and replacement and sunscreens to both floors

That's an impressive makeover... and I'm sure it is the forerunner to many impressive makeovers to walk out these doors! So I wish the trainers, the trainees and the make-over subjects great success.

But this facility is only one feature gained from the funding that I wish to acknowledge today. All in all, Hunter TAFE received \$16 million in this round of capital works investment. With almost \$12 million funded under the Federal Government's National Training Infrastructure Program.

As well as providing this modern refurbished facility, the funding has helped with the relocation of TAFE faculties between buildings and with the refurbishment of nursing and aged care facilities.

It has improved the Campus for Digital Arts and Media studies at TAFE's Newcastle campus; funded the refurbishment of the Refrigeration & Climate Control Faculty in Building DF on this campus; and it has even seen the construction of a new court yard for staff and students to enjoy.

I congratulate all those who have been involved in this project. Clearly you have maximised the opportunity this funding has offered to deliver as many enhancements as possible.

I'm particularly pleased about that court yard as I know TAFE students can party hard – particularly for good causes.

With these improvements, we see Hunter TAFE continue to grow. Last year total enrolments for the TAFE tipped 59,000 students, and this year our TAFE has experienced an increase again of 5-6%. That's an impressive statistic.

From the Federal Government's prospective it is promising to see this sort of growth and is a reward for our belief that the way to address the impact of the global economic crisis was to invest in much needed infrastructure and sustaining employment. But to invest in the skills of the people of this nation we saw as imperative. More students successfully passing through these doors means more people in the workforce in the long run and a strong skill base to keep our economy moving forward.

Workforce participation in the Hunter is at record highs. Through partnership such as this one with the NSW government and Hunter TAFE the Gillard Government is making a concerted effort to improve vocational training options for our young people and ensure that in the downturn we don't leave a generation out in the cold when it comes to opportunity.

Last summer our successful Apprentice KickStart program employed 250 extra young apprentices in the Newcastle area alone, and our three Trade Training Centres in the Newcastle electorate, worth \$27 million, will benefit a dozen local schools. Both these programs have a high reliance on our TAFEs and I congratulate and thank the management and staff of TAFE NSW - Hunter Institute for the positive way they have embraced the challenges involved.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister announced that if re-elected, the Gillard Government will introduce the National Trade Cadetship program. This Program would see the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority work with industry to develop a cadetship program that recognises vocational education and training at schools.

Currently 41 per cent of students going into senior secondary certificates are enrolled in vocational education. But the training they do is often not recognised in the world outside and doesn't give them a start on that all important apprenticeship qualification. This program would address that problem

The Gillard Government is committed to ensuring that every student has the opportunity to have a first class education; that every student has the opportunity to gain real skills so that when they leave school, no matter if they choose university, a trade, or going direct into the workforce, they make a positive beginning to their working and adult life.

I look forward to officially opening these new facilities with Minister Firth and to the contribution they will make in moving forward the learning and quality of life of the student who study here.

Thank you