



## **Speech**

### **Opening of New Training Facilities at Hunter Community College**

20 July 2010

**Sharon Grierson MP**

I am very pleased to be here today to officially open this building extension for the Hunter Community College. I'd like to begin by acknowledging the Awabakul people, traditional owners of this land, and in particular I'd like to thank elder Laurel Williams for her words today. I'd also like to acknowledge Hunter Community College Council President, Megan Lugg; College Executive Officer, Christine Murphy; Hunter School of Performing Arts Principal, Bryan Campbell; and Deputy Principal, Richard Jennings.

This extension was made by possible a grant of \$143,518 from the Gillard Labor Government, invested under the Teaching and Learning Capital Fund (TLCF) for Vocational Education and Training (VET): Investing in Community Education and Training (ICET) Funding.

Under this program, we have seen over \$4.2 million invested for seven projects across the Newcastle electorate but this project was certainly unique.

It is a modest building, but I think it represents far more than a physical place – it represents that community strength, purpose and commitment that we have to learning, sharing, and being part of the good things in our society. And looking around, I can tell so much work has gone into its construction, and that every dollar involved was put to good value. I congratulate the Project Manager on a job well done.

Of course, this funding program has provided direct investment into the Newcastle economy, supporting local jobs while improving vocational education facilities. We now know the Economic Stimulus Plan successfully stopped Australia heading into a recession during the Global Financial Crisis. The Program has provided direct investment into the Newcastle economy, supporting local jobs while improving vocational education facilities.

We now know the Economic Stimulus Plan successfully stopped Australia heading into a recession during the Global Financial Crisis. We know that it saw over \$150 million invested into the Newcastle economy alone, across literally thousands of different projects. We know programs like the Apprentice Kickstart saw 250 extra young apprentices employed in Newcastle over the last summer, with more to come. We know that the recent Maitland Jobs Expo created almost 600 new jobs in

the Hunter.

We know that our local economy is now going from strength to strength – with unemployment levels below state and national averages and workforce participation rate at record highs.

But what we know today, and what is here for us all to see, is that the Economic Stimulus Plan wasn't just about saving the economy. It is about moving Australia forward, and building a better future. We can see the tangible, physical benefits of the plan today in this extension, which will continue to benefit vocational training in Newcastle for years to come, long after the economic crisis has abated.

We've seen three Trade Training Centres worth \$27.8 million that will be constructed in Newcastle schools –servicing a dozen local schools in total – that will provide real training options for young people in Newcastle. Tomorrow I will be opening a new hairdressing and beauty training facility at Tighes Hill TAFE, worth almost \$16 million.

I must also congratulate Hunter Community College on celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, which we also celebrate today. Over these 75 years the College has provided generations of Novocastrians with invaluable skills and vocational training options. This new facility will assist the College in continuing to provide the high level of service it has offered to the local community.

I trust that the next 75 years will be just as successful!