



# Weekly Briefing For Member Schools

A9210 ABN 44 711 074 857

20 Garden Street, South Yarra VIC 3141

Phone: 03 9825 7200 Fax: 03 9826 6066

Email: [aisv@ais.vic.edu.au](mailto:aisv@ais.vic.edu.au)

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## COAG Meeting

*Communiqué, Council of Australian Governments, 30/04/09; Media Release, The Hon Kevin Rudd MP & The Hon Julia Gillard MP, 30/04/09; Media Release, The Hon Kevin Rudd MP, 30/04/09; Media Release, The Hon Julia Gillard MP, 30/04/09; Joint Press Conference, The Prime Minister, State Premiers and Chief Ministers, 30/04/09; The Advertiser, Mark Kenny, 01/05/09; The Age, Katharine Murphy & Andrew Darby, 01/05/09; The Australian, Matthew Franklin & Patricia Karvelas, 01/05/09; Australian Financial Review, Louise Dodson & Alexander Symonds, 01/05/09*

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has agreed to the proposal of the Prime Minister, the Hon Kevin Rudd MP, to implement a *Compact with Young Australians* that will guarantee an education or training place for every Australian less than 25 years of age. The Compact is based on three core principles:

- That anyone under the age of 17 years must be in full-time school, training or work, with a mandatory requirement for all young people to participate in schooling or an approved equivalent until they complete Year 10;
- That anyone under the age of 20 years who is not working will be provided with a training place in a government-subsidised Year 12 or equivalent Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualification with the first priority, subject to admission requirements and course availability; and
- That anyone under the age of 25 years who is not working will be guaranteed a training place in a government-subsidised qualification to ensure that they have the necessary skills to become part of the economic recovery.

The Compact will be implemented for 15 to 19 year olds by 1 July 2009 and by 1 January 2010 for 20 to 24 year olds.

In order to implement the Compact, COAG also agreed that the Centrelink Youth Allowance would not be available to people under the age of 21 years who were without a Year 12 or equivalent qualification and who were not undertaking some form of work, education or training. The families of young people in the same situation would also be ineligible to receive Family Tax Benefit A. Prime Minister Rudd indicated that he would not permit young people made jobless by the current recession 'to do nothing', and stated that 'if young people or their parents want to receive government benefits the quid pro quo is that the young person is working or earning a year 12 equivalent qualification...We cannot allow, and we will not allow as governments, the skill and training needed by a growing and modern economy to skip a generation because of the global recession.' The Australian Government estimated that 135,000 young people will receive higher qualifications as a result of the Compact and that 58,500 young people currently in receipt of the dole would be required to undertake accredited training.

COAG also agreed that, because of the introduction of the Compact, its goal to improve Year 12 retention rates would be moved forward. COAG had previously agreed that, by 2020, 90 per cent of Australians aged between 20 and 24 years of age would have completed Year 12 or its equivalent. At this week's meeting, it was agreed that the states and territories would endeavour to meet the target for 90 per cent of students to have achieved Year 12 or a Certificate II qualification by 2015. By 2020, COAG expects that 90 per cent of students will have achieved Year 12 or a Certificate III qualification. The Australian Government indicated that it would allocate up to \$100 million as reward payments under a National Partnership agreement for the achievement of improved performance by states and territories against the target. The Premier of Queensland, The Hon Anna Bligh MP, argued that the program was vital to ensure that young people did not 'fall through the cracks'.

In addition to the *Compact with Young Australians*, COAG also agreed to implement a *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children, 2009-2020*. The framework, which is designed to implement a long-term, national approach to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children, aims to improve information sharing and data consistency on children at risk of harm, as well as implementing workforce development projects designed to improve the capacity of services that work with families and children to identify children at risk early and to respond appropriately.

COAG also outlined proposed future reforms to VET policy. The meeting agreed that a work plan to implement the National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development, designed to improve outcomes for all learners, would be tabled at COAG's

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next meeting in July 2009. Possible models of a regulatory body to oversee registration and accreditation of VET providers, courses and qualifications are to be presented at the COAG meeting in September 2009.

Finally, COAG announced that it had agreed to support the formation of a new Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment (MCTEE) and a Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA), which would focus on school and pre-school education.

*Note: The AISV Weekly Briefing is also available on the AISV web site, including back issues. The AISV web site is at <http://www.ais.vic.edu.au>*

To obtain further information on any of the above matters, please contact AISV

Ph: (03) 9825 7200 Fax: (03) 9826 6066

Email: [aisv@ais.vic.edu.au](mailto:aisv@ais.vic.edu.au)

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Authorised by Michelle Green, Chief Executive, Association of Independent Schools of Victoria, 20 Garden Street, South Yarra, VIC, 3141