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# THE PRODUCTIVITY AGENDA

EDUCATION, SKILLS, TRAINING,  
SCIENCE AND INNOVATION

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# THE PRODUCTIVITY AGENDA:

## Education, Skills, Training, Science and Innovation

Australia's future depends upon how well we can harness the talent, skill, creativity and effort of our people. The productivity and workforce participation of the Australian population and the effective management and retention of human capital are critical to Australia's success and prosperity. The Government recognises that addressing issues of education, productivity and innovation will require investment in all levels of education, increased participation in the workforce and the implementation of best practices to stimulate and harness innovation. The productivity agenda remains critically important during the current global economic crisis. We must look for reforms now that will drive our next wave of economic growth.

Continued growth in productivity depends on investment in human capital, particularly in the area of skills development. In the current economic climate, governments and businesses need to remain committed to building skills, both to protect individual life-chances and to strengthen national resilience.

There will be some groups and places that are particularly vulnerable – such as workers made redundant, those who are already unemployed, particular regions and local communities, and young Australians. Harnessing the innovative potential of partnerships between community organisations, social entrepreneurs, local governments and employers can help to create jobs and opportunities for these groups. The discussions in the Productivity Stream at the 2020 Summit focused on two main themes: education and innovation. The Productivity Stream paid close attention to human capital, which Summit participants considered should be developed by targeting skills, early childhood development and by providing Australians with a world-class education system. The Productivity Stream also agreed that all Australians should be encouraged to realise their potential and that Australia should maximise wealth, excellence and equity by increasing productivity – with the goal of placing Australia at the leading edge of the developed world.

The Productivity Stream developed a broad range of ambitions, themes and ideas that have influenced and guided the Government's policy in this area, including:

- **Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan** – The Government's response to the global economic crisis has included significant investments in the future productive capacity of Australia through the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan announced in February 2009. The \$14.7 billion Building the Education Revolution component of the Plan will commence in 2008–09 and will provide new facilities and refurbishments in schools to meet the needs of 21st century students and teachers. The Government has also committed to provide tax breaks for small and general businesses buying eligible assets and provide a training and learning bonus to students and people outside the workforce who are returning to study.
- **National Curriculum** – The 2020 Summit supported the Government's approach to a National Curriculum and discussed a range of priorities. On 2 October 2008, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) established an interim National Curriculum Board to draft the curriculum in key learning areas. Following consultation with the states and territories, Commonwealth legislation was introduced to establish a new national education authority with responsibility for curriculum, assessment and reporting at the national level. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) will be operational in 2009 and will build on the significant work that has already been undertaken by the interim National Curriculum Board in developing a national curriculum.
- **Pathway into Teaching for top graduates (New pathway into teaching)** – Australian Governments are funding a new pathway to attract Australia's best graduates into teaching and placing them where they can make a difference. High performing graduates from a range of disciplines will be selected to undertake an intensive teacher training course, receive mentoring from experienced teachers and undertake further study as they complete their teaching qualification.

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- **Mentoring in the workplace: Golden Gurus** – Engaging skilled mature age Australians or ‘Golden Gurus’ to provide mentoring support to small businesses and the community was considered one of the top five ideas at the 2020 Summit. The Government agrees that as the population ages, mentoring will be a valuable way of passing on the skills and experience from retirees to the next generations. The Government is committed to developing a national Golden Gurus mentoring scheme to provide various opportunities for retired mentors to support a range of small business and community needs. This scheme is being developed during 2009.
  - **Business – School Connections** – The Government is committed to fostering greater linkages between business and educational institutions, which will supplement existing programs operated by the commonwealth, states and territories, and community organisations. The Government will be sponsoring a Business-School Connections Roundtable comprising representatives of business organisations, educational providers and the community sector. The Roundtable will oversee the development of a strategy to ensure all secondary schools benefit from a business connection as well as sharing experience on what is already working well for schools.
  - **National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development** – Through this agreement, the Government will provide approximately \$6.7 billion from 2009 to 2012–13. The states will deliver up to 1.15 million Vocational Education and Training (VET) course completions nationally over this funding period. The agreement sets out agreed COAG targets to halve the proportion of 20 to 64 year olds without qualifications at Certificate III level by 2020, and to double the number of higher qualification completions by 2020.
  - **Review of Australian Higher Education and the Review of the National Innovation System** – The final report of the Bradley Review of Australian Higher Education was released on 17 December 2008. The review considered a range of issues associated with higher education. The Government has released an initial response, with more detail to be announced at the time of the Budget in May 2009. A Review of the National Innovation System was completed in August 2008. The panel’s recommendations ranged across a number of key themes including innovation in business, strengthening people and skills and excellence in national research. The Government will respond to the review in the near future.
  - **Vocational Education Broadband Network** – The Government will create a single post-secondary high speed broadband network, connecting the Australian training system to a similar network to that currently serving universities. This will increase flexibility in the place and pace of learning, and offer speedy access to resources no matter where they are located.

The following tables provide the Government’s response to the ideas raised by the Productivity Stream at the 2020 Summit.

## Key ideas being taken forward by the Government

Topic	2020 proposed ideas	Government response
<p><b>Early Childhood Reform</b></p> <p>Also raised by: Communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support children’s development through increased investment in early intervention and childhood education.</li> <li>• Ensure universal free access to early childhood education.</li> <li>• Increase training and support for those who care for and educate children, including the ability to deal with child protection and abuse.</li> <li>• Make early childhood care and education centres integrated and more community-based to identify the most disadvantaged, but at the same time relevant for the community, all children and all parents.</li> <li>• Facilitate more extensive use of school infrastructure to provide care for pre-school children.</li> <li>• Develop stronger links between early childcare centres. Recognise that bilingual education is very important in Indigenous communities.</li> <li>• Increase the status, training and support for those who care for and educate children, including parents, foster parents, care workers, teachers, childcare providers. Recognise children as people so that they will become happy, healthy adults.</li> <li>• By 2020 every Australian should be in a position to believe that every child has the same capacity and talent to lead a fulfilling life.</li> </ul>	<p>In July 2008 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to the development of a broad national strategy for early childhood development during 2009. As a first step towards a national strategy, in November 2008 COAG agreed a National Partnership on Early Childhood Education which will provide \$970 million over five years. This includes \$955 million to achieve access to 15 hours a week early childhood education for all children in the year before school by 2013, to be delivered by four-year trained teachers and at a cost that is not a barrier to participation. An additional \$15 million will be provided for data development and evaluation.</p> <p>Through the National Partnership on Indigenous Early Childhood Development, joint funding of \$564.6 million over six years has been committed, including funding for 35 Children and Family Centres which will be established across Australia. The centres will deliver integrated services including early learning, child care and family support. The funding will also increase access to ante-natal care, teenage reproductive and sexual health services and child and maternal health services tailored to the needs of Indigenous Australians.</p> <p>The Australian Government is also investing \$114.5 million over the next four years to establish, as a first step, early learning and care centres, including six autism-specific centres. Where states and territories are interested in partnering with the Australian Government to create integrated service models, the Government will pursue opportunities to deliver a broader range of services within these centres. The Government will also work in partnership with other private providers to establish these centres.</p>

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<p><b>Children and Family Centres</b></p> <p>Also raised by: Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents' and Children's Centres – integrated, regionally based, health and wellness centres for children.</li> <li>Joining up initiatives in early life (testing, intervention) – integrated primary care centres for children.</li> <li>Childhood development should be supported through a place-based culture that offers integrated services and community support.</li> <li>Children one-stop centres.</li> </ul>	<p>In October 2008, COAG agreed the first National Partnership covering Indigenous Early Childhood Development. As part of the initiative, 35 Children and Family Centres will be established across Australia to deliver integrated services that offer early learning, child care and family support programs.</p> <p>At its July 2008 meeting, COAG agreed to the development of a broad national strategy for early childhood development. The strategy will set the direction for collaborative early childhood reform across the Commonwealth and states and territories. The strategy will be considered by COAG in 2009 and will include consideration of integrated service delivery approaches.</p> <p>The Australian Government is also investing \$114.5 million over the next four years to establish, as a first phase, early learning and care centres, including six autism-specific centres. Where states and territories are interested in partnering with the Australian Government to create integrated service models, the Government will pursue opportunities to deliver a broader range of services within these centres. The Government will also work in partnership with other private providers to establish these centres.</p>
<p><b>Early Childhood Development Assessment – Healthy Kids Check</b></p> <p>Also raised by: Rural</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Every child should be given an early development assessment, which could be funded through Medicare and delivered by early childhood centres.</li> <li>Conduct comprehensive physical assessments of all remote, rural and regional children aged four years to ensure early detection of potential behavioural and learning difficulties before the children start school.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree in-principle. The Government introduced the Healthy Kids Check (\$25.6 million over four years) on 1 July 2008 to ensure that every four year old has a basic health check to ensure they are healthy, fit and ready to learn when they start school. The Healthy Kids Check recognises many of the ideas raised at the Summit, and will promote early detection of lifestyle risk factors and delayed development, and provide guidance for healthy lifestyles and early intervention strategies.</p>
<p><b>Early Childhood – Impact Statement</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require that there be a 'children's development impact statement' for every policy and initiative.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree. This has already been addressed by the Government. All submissions that go before Cabinet now require a Family Impact Statement addressing three priority areas, including how proposals affect children's health, development and general wellbeing.</p>

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<p><b>National Curriculum</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create one national curriculum and rationalise curriculum development bodies with freed up funds going to children in schools.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree in-part. The Government is collaborating with the states and territories and is jointly developing an implementation plan to establish a high quality national curriculum. An interim National Curriculum Board was established and expert panels have commenced drafting a national curriculum in the four key learning areas (English, mathematics, science and history).</p> <p>Legislation to establish the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) was passed by Parliament on 27 November 2008. ACARA will be operational in 2009 and will build on the significant work that has already been undertaken by the interim National Curriculum Board.</p> <p>National curriculum in key learning areas will be implemented from 2011 in all Australian schools.</p>
<p><b>National Numeracy Standard</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce a national numeracy standard, similar to a literacy standard.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree. National benchmarks are important for improving numeracy and literacy. Following the successful introduction of national literacy and numeracy testing in 2008, national minimum standards have been set for reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation, and numeracy.</p> <p>The Government is working to deliver a National Action Plan on Literacy and Numeracy and has committed to provide \$577.4 million over four years to support schools to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes, starting with those schools and students most in need of help.</p> <p>On 29 November 2008, COAG agreed to the Smarter Schools – Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership.</p>

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<b>Developing Science and Maths Capabilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require more teachers to be science and mathematics literate, to enable them to excite kids with the subjects' potential.</li> <li>• Adopt a systemic approach to science and mathematics. Make sure our teachers are well trained to teach in the disciplines. We need to make it interesting and lucrative to enter these areas of study.</li> <li>• Ensure that education resources take account of long-term industry needs, especially through occupations and professions that can spawn further growth and productivity, for example science and mathematics graduates.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree. The Government has extended its \$625.8 million package of incentives to lift the number of maths and science students and graduates. Graduates who take up primary school teaching positions with specialist expertise in maths will be eligible for a refund of approximately half their HECS-HELP repayments for up to five years. The Government is also providing around \$63.6 million over four years to reduce compulsory HELP repayments for eligible maths and science graduates who work in related occupations, including teaching these subjects in secondary schools.</p> <p>Additionally, from 1 January 2009, student contributions for new students in maths and science have been reduced. The Council of Australian Governments is also supporting further development of teacher training for existing teachers.</p> <p>The Government's Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan includes \$1 billion to build up to 500 science laboratories or language learning centres in secondary schools.</p>



Photo courtesy of AusPic

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<p><b>Low Socio-Economic School Communities</b></p> <p>Also raised by: <b>Rural Communities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide one-on-one support and special education for students who fall behind.</li> <li>• Overcome the public–private divide by funding students according to need and encouraging more private investment in public and private schools through:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Student-centred funding</li> <li>– Funding according to need, where disadvantaged students attract more funding and support to ensure that they become a productive participant in Australian society</li> <li>– Further cross-sector collaboration</li> <li>– Integrated sources of funding attached to students and/or institutions. One option would be to rationalise the use of private investment and then use public investment to make up the shortfall.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Provide education assistance for young people at risk or from disadvantaged backgrounds.</li> <li>• Provide case conferencing with school teachers and health professionals to meet the needs of children with conditions that impair their learning (rural).</li> <li>• Develop a school ‘twinning’ program—for example, pairing schools from different regions.</li> </ul>	<p>The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has agreed to a number of National Partnerships in relation to low socio-economic status school communities. The Australian Government will provide \$1.5 billion over seven years to address the needs of disadvantaged schools, to be matched by states and territories. The Government will work with the states and territories on a range of reforms that will support the educational and wellbeing needs of students and schools in low socio-economic status communities.</p> <p>COAG has also agreed to a National Partnership on Literacy and Numeracy that will aim to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes for all students, especially those who are falling behind. The Commonwealth will invest \$540 million in this National Partnership, which will be complemented by state and territory investment. Research and data collection will be supported by funding of \$40 million. This includes an additional \$13 million for the collection and reporting of data through the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority for which funding of \$17.2 million was announced in the last Budget.</p> <p>The Dare to Lead Project, funded by the Government, drives change in schools through a coalition of school leaders who influence improvements in Indigenous education. The project’s Partnerships Building Success direction for 2009–2012 has been supported by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and through the inclusion of colloquial reviews in sister school arrangements expect to increase the achievements in Indigenous student outcomes.</p>

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<b>Education Research</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better evidence: education policies should be guided by the principle of ‘what works?’, and underpinned by rigorous and scientific evaluations.</li> <li>• Test and trial new ideas for education similar to the clinical trials adopted for disease. This would be founded on a science-based commitment to find out what works. Australia would also need to establish a gold standard for evaluation of public policy initiatives.</li> <li>• Using research results from six countries about how schools dramatically improved in disadvantaged settings, examine and apply the critical success factors.</li> <li>• Establish an independent national agency to collect and publish trends in education and the workforce across the sectors.</li> <li>• By 2020 we should be regarded as one of the world-leading countries in education.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree in-principle. There is already considerable work underway with regards to evidence-based education policy through the Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations, the Australian Research Council and the Australian Council for Educational Research. The National Centre for Vocational Education Research also administers the National Research and Evaluation Strategy to ensure that future decisions and policies on Vocational Education and Training are well founded. States and territories and independent school bodies also routinely trial new ideas and evaluate their impact.</p> <p>The new Australian Curriculum Assessment Reporting Authority will provide the public with information on each school in Australia including data on each school’s performance, and national literacy and numeracy testing results.</p> <p>The Australian Bureau of Statistics collects and publishes statistics on education, as well as developing data standards to promote quality and comparability of data.</p>

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<p><b>National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP)</b></p> <p>Also raised by: Communities Security</p>	<p>Incorporate Asia literacy into Australian society to increase the knowledge of Asian and regional languages and societies to enhance Australia’s global engagement and intelligence. This could be done by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boosting the teaching of Asian languages in primary and secondary schools</li> <li>• Mainstreaming language education</li> <li>• Recruiting foreign language teachers from local communities and overseas</li> <li>• Reinvigorating professional teacher training, including for native speakers and our ethnic communities</li> <li>• Developing a comprehensive national Asia literacy strategy at all levels of the education system by 2020. This should be backed by funding at least equivalent to the former National Asian Languages and Studies Strategy for Australian Schools</li> <li>• Ensuring by 2020 that Australia will no longer be the worst-ranked OECD country for second-language skills and that it is positioned to benefit from the economic reality of an increasingly Asia-centric world</li> <li>• Ensuring by 2020 every child in Australia can speak a language other than English and will learn about the contribution of other cultures to Australia</li> <li>• Ensuring that Australians directly experience Asia.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree in-principle. The Government has committed \$62.4 million to implement the National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP) over 2008–09 to 2010–11, in recognition of the importance of Asian languages and studies in equipping young Australians with the skills to compete in the globalised economy of the future.</p> <p>The NALSSP commenced on 1 January 2009 and provides opportunities for school students to become familiar with the languages and cultures of four of Australia’s Asian neighbours, namely China, Indonesia, Japan and Korea.</p> <p>Through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) processes, all governments have committed to the NALSSP and an aspirational target that, by 2020, at least 12 per cent of all students exit Year 12 with a fluency in one of the target Asian languages. NALSSP focuses on increasing both student demand and teacher supply.</p> <p>In addition, the Government’s recent Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan includes \$1 billion to build up to 500 science laboratories or language learning centres in secondary schools.</p> <p>The second phase of the National Curriculum will also include language education.</p>
<p><b>Mentors for our Students</b></p> <p>Also raised by: Communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create mentoring programs for young people to address gaps in education. Volunteer mentoring programs are beneficial to both young people and older people.</li> <li>• Extend the ‘Golden Guru’ mentoring concept beyond business by engaging experienced retired members of the community in schools.</li> <li>• Build a male mentoring program into schools to educate young men.</li> </ul>	<p>The Government has committed \$5 million over four years to establish a pilot volunteer mentoring program. This program will give recently retired professionals and tradespeople the chance to pass on their knowledge and skills to secondary students in Australian schools. Grants of up to \$50,000 each year will be available to 25 communities on a competitive basis to establish the pilot program through existing Local Community Partnerships. Funding will meet training and associated costs for mentors.</p> <p>The states and territories also have a range of programs in this area.</p>

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<p><b>Additional Schooling Support for Indigenous Students</b></p> <p>Also raised by: Indigenous</p>	<p>A new education framework should be established. The following could be included in the framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of high quality education, including boarding schools and hostels</li> <li>• Access to away-from-home foster families to stay with at weekends for students away from home</li> <li>• Funding through ABSTUDY, private school scholarships, government funding and community schooling</li> <li>• Encourage high-performing young professionals to work as teachers alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators in remote schools</li> <li>• Expand ABSTUDY to all post-secondary Indigenous students to facilitate engagement with education and ultimately the workforce</li> <li>• Introduce 500 'Mabo Scholarships' for Indigenous students in research and higher level degrees similar to the Endeavour scholarships.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree in-principle. The Government is introducing a range of new support mechanisms for Indigenous education options. In 2008, the Government committed \$20 million over three years from 2009–10 as a contribution towards secondary scholarships for Indigenous students to attend boarding schools. The funds will be managed by the Australians Indigenous Education Foundation, with additional funds which more than match the Government contribution expected to be raised from corporate, philanthropic and private sources over the life of the initiative.</p> <p>The Government is also providing \$10 million to leverage private and state funding for six existing Clontarf Academies, six new academies from 2009–10, and a further three new academies from 2010–11. The additional funding represents the first stage of a long term commitment by the Government to helping the Clontarf Foundation to expand its network of academies throughout Australia. This initial \$10 million investment will enable Clontarf to expand its services in Western Australia, the Northern Territory and other interested states.</p> <p>In the 2008–09 Budget, the Government also committed \$28.9 million over four years to construct and operate three new boarding colleges for Indigenous secondary students in the Northern Territory.</p> <p>The National Education Agreement agreed by COAG in November 2008 includes a focus on outcomes for Indigenous students, with a particular focus on literacy and numeracy. Enhanced arrangements for teaching and school leadership are being considered through the Improving Teacher Quality and Low Socio-Economic Status National Partnership Agreements, including increased opportunities to gain qualifications that form part of pathways into teaching for Indigenous education workers.</p>

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<p><b>Additional School Infrastructure</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build infrastructure that integrates a wider range of services and encourages shared community use.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree. The Government recognises the value of targeting school infrastructure to wider community use and services.</p> <p>The \$14.7 billion Building the Education Revolution component of the Government's Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan will commence in 2008–09 and will provide new facilities and refurbishments in schools to meet the needs of 21st century students and teachers.</p> <p>All of Australia's 9,540 schools will benefit from the immediate funding for major and minor infrastructure projects. It is a condition of funding for major infrastructure projects in primary schools (such as halls and libraries) that schools make these facilities available for community use at no or low cost.</p> <p>Another example of the Government's work in this area is the Local Schools Working Together Pilot Program, for which the Government will provide \$62.5 million over four years. The pilot will fund 25 projects across Australia to build facilities that will be shared between government and non-government schools. The projects will be located in high population growth areas where there is a lack of such facilities to support curriculum options and in circumstances where schools have the capacity to share facilities effectively.</p>
<p><b>Teaching Workforce – Improving Teacher Quality</b></p> <p>Also raised by: Economy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reward excellence in teaching.</li> <li>• Celebrate the vocation and contribution of teaching.</li> <li>• Create a national education and qualification accreditation system and increase education funding.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree in-principle. The Government is committed to rewarding excellence in teaching and attracting high quality teachers. The Government has allocated \$550 million to the Smarter Schools – Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership and will work together with the states and territories to deliver reforms to attract, train, place, develop and retrain quality teachers and school leaders. Reform will focus on a number of areas, including new professional standards, recognition and reward for quality teaching – including for top graduates and mid-career changers, and national accreditation of pre-service teacher education courses.</p>

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<b>Teaching Workforce – New Pathway into Teaching</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a national program to attract talented graduates and career switchers into teaching, and reward teachers for working in national priority areas, including disadvantaged communities, remote areas and in shortage subjects.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree. Australian Governments are funding a new pathway to attract Australia’s best graduates into teaching and placing them where they can make a difference. High performing graduates from a range of disciplines will be selected to undertake an intensive teacher training course, receive mentoring from experienced teachers and undertake further study as they complete their teaching qualification.</p>
<b>Teaching Workforce – Teachers in Remote Schools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have high-quality teachers go to remote schools for a term to mentor groups of less-experienced teachers.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree. The Smarter Schools Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership agreed to by COAG provides two initiatives that address this issue specifically: improved reward structures for teachers and leaders who work in disadvantaged Indigenous, rural/remote and hard to staff schools; and improved inschool support for teachers and leaders, particularly in disadvantaged Indigenous, rural/remote and hard-to-staff schools.</p> <p>In addition, there are a number of state rotation schemes currently in place that move teachers in and out of remote areas, and non-government organisations supporting teachers in remote schools.</p>

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<p><b>Business – School Connections</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create partnerships between Australia’s top companies and schools, VET institutions and higher education providers.</li> <li>• Encourage connectivity between schools, universities and business. Research should be connected to schools and business.</li> <li>• Build formal partnerships between industry, business and schools. For example, mentoring for success by top 100 companies.</li> <li>• Adults should talk to children about success. The top 100 companies should connect with schools through mentor and work experience arrangements.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree. The Government is committed to fostering linkages between business and educational providers. The Government will be sponsoring a Business-School Connections Roundtable that will comprise representatives of business organisations, educational providers and the community sector. The Roundtable will oversee the development of a strategy to ensure all secondary schools benefit from a business connection as well as sharing experience on what is already working well for schools.</p> <p>Some aspects of this idea will also be addressed through the existing School-Business Linkages Program. The Government provided \$6.4 million over four years to strengthen partnerships between schools and businesses and improve vocational education and training in schools. The program will also develop a Job Ready Certificate for students and help to provide students with relevant work placements and industry experience.</p> <p>The involvement of business is also a key feature of the new pathway into teaching for top graduates being established under the Quality Teaching National Partnership. Business partners will be involved with graduates throughout the two-year program, helping to build local business-school connections.</p> <p>There are also a range of relevant state programs.</p>

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<p><b>Review of Australian Higher Education – Bradley Review</b></p> <p>Also raised by: Rural</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove the rigidity in funding arrangements.</li> <li>Fund change management and leadership programs in remote, rural and regional Australia and develop a national strategy for rural education including a ‘tertiary access allowance’ and higher education loan waivers.</li> <li>Provide clear educational pathways and partnerships for young people to gain access to quality higher education.</li> </ul>	<p>The Review of Australian Higher Education (Bradley Review) which was released in December 2008, examined the future direction of the higher education sector, its fitness for purpose in meeting the needs of the Australian community and economy, and the options for ongoing reform.</p> <p>The Government has provided an initial response to the report detailing a number of reforms in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Future structural reforms for the higher education sector, which focus on a student-centred, demand driven system.</li> <li>Reforms to Vocational Education and Training (VET), which focus on developing a national tertiary education system with clear pathways for students</li> <li>Enhanced equity in tertiary education, with a focus on improving the accessibility of tertiary education for all Australians</li> </ul> <p>More detail will be announced at the time of the Budget in May 2009.</p>
<p><b>Centres of Excellence</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop Centres of Excellence based on PhD-level studies.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree. A number of Centres of Excellence are already in existence. The Australian Research Council provides funding for these centres.</p>
<p><b>Review of Australian Apprenticeship incentives</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restructure incentive arrangements for apprenticeship training as the lever to overcome skills and labour market shortages.</li> </ul>	<p>In addition to current incentives, in February 2009 the Government announced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$145 million to assist apprentices and trainees who have lost their job to complete their training with another employer or a group training organisation</li> <li>\$9.7million to assist apprentices and trainees to continue their training through a registered training organisation.</li> </ul> <p>From 1 July 2009, the Australian Apprenticeships Access Program will provide an additional 3,650 pre-vocational training and support places to young people aged 19–24 years. The \$30.2 million expansion of this program will support at-risk jobseekers to pursue apprenticeships or training.</p> <p>This funding will assist in overcoming long term skill shortages.</p>

Topic	2020 proposed ideas	Government response
<p><b>National Reform of VET</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend HELP to all students in post-secondary education.</li> <li>• Introduce a new form of government funding targeted at the local level and contingent on collaborative relationships.</li> <li>• Make employers take responsibility for skill development and in turn have the ability to access a flexible, demand driven training system.</li> <li>• Ensure the workplace and education outlets connect with the community.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree in-principle. In November 2008, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) committed to a new National Agreement on Skills and Workforce Development. Under this agreement, the Commonwealth will provide approximately \$6.7 billion in funding and the states and territories will deliver up to 1.15 million Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses. The agreement includes targets to halve the proportion of 20 to 64 year olds without qualifications at certificate III level by 2020, and to double the number of higher qualification completions by 2020.</p> <p>COAG also agreed to a National Partnership to target areas of skill shortage and emerging skill needs. Through this partnership, the states have agreed to deliver 506,750 qualifications commencements for job seekers and existing workers over four years. The Commonwealth will fund all places for job seekers and 50 per cent of places for existing workers.</p> <p>States and territories engaging in significant reform of VET may be eligible for Commonwealth support to ensure that cost is not a barrier to students accessing training.</p> <p>An ambitious and significant package of reforms has been announced by the Victorian Government which aims to dramatically increase the number of people able to access training and upgrade their skills. In light of these reforms, the Commonwealth will support Victoria in the introduction of an Income Contingent Loan (ICL) scheme, commencing in July 2009, for government-subsidised diploma and advanced diploma students. This measure represents the expansion of HELP into the VET sector. It is expected that more states will follow.</p> <p>In addition, the Government has recently announced a number of VET reforms as part of the initial response to the Review of Australian Higher Education. These reforms will focus on developing a national tertiary education system with clear pathways for students.</p>

Topic	2020 proposed ideas	Government response
<b>VET and Skills Shortage Scholarships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver merit based scholarships to vocational education and training and higher education institutions in skills shortage areas.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree in-principle. Higher education scholarships in skills shortage areas, whilst not necessarily merit based, are being implemented through the National Priority Scholarships – one of the new scholarship categories created under the \$238.6 million Scholarships for a Competitive Future Program to assist students from low socio-economic backgrounds, particularly those from rural and regional areas and Indigenous students, with the costs associated with higher education.</p> <p>The Productivity Places Program also offers vocational education and training places to job seekers and existing workers in skill shortage areas. On 29 November 2008, COAG agreed to a National Partnership for the delivery of training under the Productivity Places Program. Through this agreement, the states have agreed to deliver an additional 506,750 qualifications commencements for job seekers and existing workers over four years.</p>

Topic	2020 proposed ideas	Government response
<p><b>Workforce Participation – National Employment Standards</b></p> <p>Also raised by: Communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regulate the labour market for all workers, without artificial concepts of master-servant. Industrial relations regulation is based on legal concepts that are no longer relevant and does not fit the shape of the labour market of today (eg. independent contractors).</li> <li>Rostered-day-off time should be banked for parents to take a day off when the family needs it.</li> </ul>	<p>The Parliament has passed legislation introduced by the Government to create a new workplace relations system. The Fair Work Act 2009 broadly deals with the proposed ideas. Legislation preventing the making of new Australian Workplace Agreements commenced in March 2008. The Fair Work Act provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A safety net of ten legislated National Employment Standards for all employees in the national system including the facilitation of flexible working arrangements by providing parents with right to request a change to working arrangements where they have a child under school age or child with a disability under the age of 18</li> <li>A simple modern award system that provides flexibility and stability and industry specific terms and conditions. Modern awards also include a provision which enables the tailoring of working arrangements to meet the needs of employers and employees through individual flexibility agreements</li> <li>An enterprise-level collective bargaining system focused on promoting productivity</li> <li>Unfair dismissal laws, which balance the rights of employees to be protected from unfair dismissal with the need for employers, particularly small business, to fairly and efficiently manage their workforces</li> <li>A new institutional framework comprising, Fair Work Australia, (the new independent umpire to oversee the new workplace relations system) and the Fair Work Ombudsman to provide practical information and advice and ensure compliance with workplace laws.</li> </ul>

Topic	2020 proposed ideas	Government response
<p><b>National Disability Strategy</b></p> <p>Also raised by: Communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that people with disabilities have the same opportunities and supports as everyone else in the community.</li> <li>• Universal access principles for people with disabilities should pervade all social policy planning.</li> </ul>	<p>The Government is undertaking a range of activities in this area, including developing a National Disability Strategy with the states and territories.</p> <p>The Government agrees that people with disabilities must have access to the same rights as the broader community. In November 2008 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) committed to a new National Disability Agreement, under which the Commonwealth will provide \$5.3 billion to state and territory governments for specialist disability services. Under the agreement, all governments are committed to helping people with a disability achieve economic and social inclusion, have the opportunity to live as independently as possible, and to support their families and carers.</p> <p>On 18 July 2008, the Government ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which entered into force on 16 August 2008 and in December 2008, tabled a National Interest Analysis proposing that Australia accede to the Optional Protocol to the Convention. The Joint Standing Committee on Treaties reported its views on 12 March 2009 and recommended that Australia accede to the Optional Protocol.</p> <p>The Government is also developing a National Mental Health and Disability Employment Strategy to help people with disability and mental illness to participate in the economy by finding and retaining jobs. The <i>Setting the Direction</i> paper for the strategy was released jointly by the Minister for Employment Participation and the Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children's Services on 22 December 2008. It outlines the directions the Government is taking, and will take, to increase employment for people with disability.</p>
<p><b>Workforce Participation – National Skills and Workforce Development</b></p>	<p>By 2020 we should have a workforce where anyone in work can participate to a level they want:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All barriers are removed</li> <li>• The workplace and all education outlets connect with the community</li> <li>• We have a truly dynamic workforce, reflecting the requirements of the world</li> <li>• Creativity is supported.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree in-principle. On 29 November 2008, the Council of Australian Governments committed to a new National Agreement on Skills and Workforce Development which sets out the commitment between the Commonwealth and the states and territories to work towards increasing the skill levels of all Australians, including Indigenous Australians.</p>

Topic	2020 proposed ideas	Government response
<p><b>Workforce Participation – Workforce Development</b></p> <p>Also raised by: Rural</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct more research into what skills are needed (workforce development for science and mathematics education).</li> <li>• A skills audit of remote, rural and regional areas to identify labour and skills shortages and provision of training opportunities in communities where there are labour and skills shortages.</li> <li>• Improved professional development opportunities.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree in-principle. Skills Australia will provide the Government with recommendations on current and future skills needs to inform the Government's decisions in relation to skills development.</p> <p>The Government recognises that equipping workers and businesses with green skills will be essential if Australia is to take the opportunities presented by a transition to a low carbon economy. The Skills for the Carbon Challenge program incorporates an audit identifying industry's green skill needs.</p> <p>In February 2009 the Government committed \$298.5 million investment in employment services to ensure that any Australian worker made redundant will receive assistance to help them get back into the workforce.</p>
<p><b>Business Skills Planning</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help businesses plan for their skills needs by taking more responsibility for ensuring that their skills needs are met.</li> </ul>	<p>In November 2008 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) committed to a new National Agreement on Skills and Workforce Development. Under this agreement, the Australian Government will provide approximately \$6.7 billion in funding and the states and territories will deliver up to 1.15 million Vocational Education and Training courses.</p> <p>The Government also recognises that equipping workers and businesses with green skills will be essential if Australia is to take the opportunities presented by a transition to a low carbon economy. The Skills for the Carbon Challenge program will accelerate industry's and the tertiary education sector's response to climate change by investing in training infrastructure and providing incentives for industry to take up green skills.</p>

Topic	2020 proposed ideas	Government response
<p data-bbox="240 349 414 434"><b>Mentoring in the workplace – Golden Gurus</b></p> <p data-bbox="240 488 399 546">Also raised by: Rural</p>	<p data-bbox="451 349 863 465">Create a scheme in which opportunities are provided for retired people to act as mentors in the workplace, incorporating remote, rural and regional Australia.</p> <p data-bbox="451 477 842 562">The ideas raised regarding mentoring in remote, rural and regional Australia included the following:</p> <ul data-bbox="451 573 890 1261" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="451 573 810 631">• Funding should be provided for business coaches</li> <li data-bbox="451 642 890 728">• People should be encouraged to create their own opportunities through a mentoring and coaching initiative</li> <li data-bbox="451 739 890 891">• Partnerships between different industry sectors should be established including provision of business mentoring schemes between urban and remote, rural and regional Australia</li> <li data-bbox="451 902 890 1048">• Establish a mentoring exchange program between urban and remote, rural and regional Australia that targets students, trainees, young people, professionals and business people</li> <li data-bbox="451 1059 890 1261">• Creation of a ‘flying business-mentoring squad’ of successful business people who volunteer their time to provide business and management coaching on the ground to small to medium businesses in remote, rural and regional Australia.</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="451 1272 855 1357">The Golden Guru idea of retired people as mentors in the workplace could be implemented in the following way:</p> <ul data-bbox="451 1368 863 1742" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="451 1368 863 1406">• Voluntary scheme with no joining fee</li> <li data-bbox="451 1417 863 1476">• Trainers would be paid \$150 per day with costs borne by the employer</li> <li data-bbox="451 1487 863 1572">• Provide training and support in three streams – trades, professional, and middle management</li> <li data-bbox="451 1583 826 1668">• A database would be deployed to enable matching of the need of businesses with trainers</li> <li data-bbox="451 1680 842 1742">• Developing countries could access the program.</li> </ul>	<p data-bbox="914 349 1326 696">Agree in-principle. To help meet the challenges of our ageing population and pass on valuable experience from retirees to new generations, the Government is committed to developing a national Golden Gurus mentoring scheme. As discussed at the Summit the scheme will provide opportunities for retired mentors to support a range of small business and community needs. The scheme is being developed during 2009.</p>

Topic	2020 proposed ideas	Government response
<p><b>Pacific Development – Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme</b></p> <p>Also raised by: Rural Security</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a workforce and skills program that enables foreign workers to come to remote, rural and regional Australia for up to two years, to work under an Australian industry instrument.</li> <li>Develop links with Australia’s overseas aid programs to offer aid recipients work opportunities in Australia as an opportunity to develop skills, earn wages to support their family and community and promote cross-cultural understanding. The scheme would also offer Australian employers the capacity to fill jobs.</li> <li>A rights-based labour mobility initiative for South West Pacific, including East Timor.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree. The Government announced the Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot Scheme on 17 August 2008. This three year scheme will examine the viability of a seasonal worker program, with a focus on the horticulture industry. The Government is conducting the pilot to examine whether a seasonal worker program could contribute to regional economic development objectives and also assist Australian employers.</p>
<p><b>Indigenous Economic Development Strategy</b></p> <p>Also raised by: Indigenous</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a national awards scheme for organisations proactive in training and employing Indigenous people.</li> <li>Improve the skills of local people, particularly Aboriginal people, before importing labour.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree in-principle. Under the proposed reforms to the Indigenous Employment Program, a high profile program will be created that recognises and supports significant achievements in Indigenous employment.</p> <p>On 29 November 2008, COAG agreed to a five year National Partnership on Indigenous Economic Participation. The Commonwealth and state governments will invest \$228.8 million to assist up to 13,000 Indigenous Australians in obtaining employment.</p> <p>The Government is also developing a wider Indigenous Economic Development Strategy to provide a framework to guide Government investment and to work with Indigenous Australians and the corporate sector to increase Indigenous participation in employment and business. This strategy is expected to be finalised in late 2009.</p> <p><i>The full list of related ideas can be found in the Indigenous Stream.</i></p>

Topic	2020 proposed ideas	Government response
<p><b>National Broadband Network (NBN)</b></p> <p>Also raised by: Rural Economy Creative</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connecting Australia: Use new technologies to foster new working environments that dissipate the ‘tyranny of distance’ both within and beyond Australia.</li> <li>• Build and enable the use by all Australians of a world class broadband system to foster full participation in the digital economy.</li> <li>• Roll out a competitive national broadband network across Australia.</li> <li>• Establish a national digital fund to continue to expand Australia’s broadband.</li> <li>• Improve technology infrastructure and increased access to technology.</li> <li>• Provide broadband access for remote, rural and regional Australia.</li> <li>• Rethink the investment strategy for the roll-out of broadband – there is some concern that the development of a national broadband network by the private sector has been sub-optimal. On the other hand, reliance on public investment requires careful consideration because it entails highly sophisticated planning and investment and direct knowledge of the market. The unwinding of government monopolies in infrastructure in the early 1980s provides a useful benchmark.</li> <li>• The government should issue bonds to superannuation fund managers to fund the broadband network roll-out. Bonds could be issued for up to 1 per cent of superannuation funds under management and funds raised could be used to invest in broadband. The government would need to ensure that the scheme provided a return to investors.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree. The Government has announced it will establish a new company that will invest up to \$43 billion over eight years to build and operate a National Broadband Network (NBN) delivering superfast broadband to Australian homes and workplaces.</p> <p>Every person and business in Australia, no matter where they are located, will have access to affordable, fast broadband at their fingertips.</p> <p>The Government’s investment in the company will be funded through the Building Australia Fund and the issuance of Aussie Infrastructure Bonds (AIBs), which will provide an opportunity for households and institutions to invest in the NBN.</p> <p>The Schools Summits also recognised the importance of connecting regional areas to the internet, and the Australian Broadband Guarantee (ABG) program complements the rollout of the National Broadband Network in rural areas by providing safety net broadband services to all Australian households that are unable to access metro-comparable broadband services. An additional \$270.7 million over four years was allocated in the 2008–09 Budget to continue the ABG program.</p> <p>In addition the Government is preparing a ‘Digital Economy – Future Directions’ Paper in consultation with industry. The paper will provide a roadmap of how the Government and industry can collaborate to maximise the participation of Australians in the digital economy.</p> <p>Further, the Government’s Vocational Education Broadband Network will create a single post-secondary high speed broadband network, connecting the Australian training system to a similar network to that currently serving universities. This will increase flexibility in the place and pace of learning, and offer speedy access to resources no matter where they are located.</p>

Topic	2020 proposed ideas	Government response
<p><b>Continued ... National Broadband Network (NBN)</b></p> <p>Also raised by: Rural Economy Creative</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The rural, economy, creativity and productivity streams proposed that the Government should assess the case for vertical separation of the national broadband network owner from retail carriers and carriage service providers.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree in-part. The Government has established a company that will invest up to \$43 billion to build and operate a new super fast national broadband network.</p> <p>The network will be a wholesale-only, open access network that offers equivalent access terms and conditions for all access seekers. The Government will encourage private sector investment in the new network but measures will be put in place to ensure that the equivalence arrangements are not compromised.</p> <p>The Government has also announced that in the transition period to the full rollout of the new network, it will give consideration to stronger measures to ensure access seekers receive equivalent access terms on Telstra's existing fixed-line network.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fibre-to-the-home should be the key technology goal of government.</li> </ul>	<p>The Government has announced that it will establish a company that will invest up to \$43 billion to build and operate a new super fast national broadband network.</p> <p>The Government's objective is that the national broadband network achieve 90 per cent coverage to homes, schools and workplaces using optical fibre (fibre-to-the-premises or 'FTTP') and remaining coverage to be delivered through wireless and satellite technologies, within this funding envelope.</p>
<p><b>Review of Australia's Future Tax System</b></p> <p>Also raised by: Creativity Rural Economy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the tax system to encourage collaboration.</li> </ul>	<p>The Government agrees with the need to review taxation issues and is undertaking a comprehensive review of Australia's tax system to position Australia to deal with the demographic, social, economic and environmental challenges of the 21st century. The review's terms of reference have been heavily influenced by ideas from the 2020 Summit. The final report is due by the end of 2009.</p> <p><i>The full list of related ideas can be found in the Economy Stream.</i></p>

Topic	2020 proposed ideas	Government response
<p><b>Environment – Low-emissions Energy</b></p> <p>Also raised by: Sustainability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct further investment into research, development and deployment to enable a low-emissions energy revolution.</li> <li>• Create a national clean energy portfolio of several flagship projects – in ‘natural advantage’ categories such as agriculture, clean coal and renewable sources of energy.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree. Reflecting many of the ideas raised at the Summit, the Government has already announced a number of new initiatives to develop a low-emissions economy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme, which will commence in 2010, will create incentives for low-emissions technology</li> <li>• The Government has made a commitment to 20 per cent renewable energy by 2020 through the expanded national Renewable Energy Target</li> <li>• The National Low Emissions Coal Council and Carbon Storage Taskforce have commenced development of the \$500 million National Low Emissions Coal Initiative</li> <li>• Australia is leading a Global Carbon Capture and Storage Initiative, committing \$100 million per annum to accelerate the development and deployment of carbon capture and storage technology</li> <li>• The \$500 million Renewable Energy Fund is supporting the development, commercialisation and deployment of renewable energy in Australia</li> <li>• The \$150 million Energy Innovation Fund is supporting critical clean energy technology research in areas such as solar power</li> <li>• The \$3.9 billion Energy Efficient Homes Package will deliver up to \$1,600 in ceiling insulation to home owner-occupiers or a rebate on the costs of installing a solar hot water system. It will also provide help for renters, with a rebate of up to \$1,000 for landlords on the costs of insulating rental properties. This package will result in ceiling insulation for around 2.7 million homes. The Australian Government has also allocated \$240 million over four years to establish a Clean Business Australia partnership with Australian business and industry for tackling climate change.</li> </ul>

Topic	2020 proposed ideas	Government response
<p><b>National Waste Policy</b></p> <p>Also raised by: Sustainability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a closed-loop economy to create a zero-waste society—a manufacturing system that deals with its own waste, minimising its ecological footprint.</li> <li>• Recognise the need to reduce landfill, perhaps through providing credit for landfill avoidance, reducing the cost of recycling, everything produced being recycled as far as possible, and resource recovery with waste as a feedstock for other industries. This would reduce energy costs. Consider the ‘Factor 10’ concept to reduce resource consumption (that is, reduce our impact by a factor of 10 by 2020 and support collaboration and cooperation by a factor of 10).</li> <li>• Transform the ecological footprint of the built environment by taking the lead on national planning, building and product standards to minimise waste and energy consumption in our homes and in our neighbourhoods.</li> </ul>	<p>The Government is giving priority to the development of a National Waste policy, which is scheduled to be released in 2009.</p> <p>The Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme will also cover landfill sites, creating new incentives for efficient waste management.</p>
<p><b>Rural Investment, Industry and Infrastructure</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a trigger for investment in rural and regional communities that will intervene when those communities are in danger of spiralling into reduced employment, investment and development.</li> <li>• Continue to develop industry and infrastructure in remote Australia and broaden the labour market. Provide an incentive to small to medium-sized enterprises to develop in rural and regional areas. Provide tax incentives to employees to work there.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree in-part. A number of existing programs support rural and regional communities and work towards the objectives of this idea. These include the Better Regions Program, the Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program, Caring for our Country Program, Tourism Development Program, Mobile Connect Program and the Community Heritage Grants Program.</p> <p>The Government has also launched the Innovative Regions Centre (IRC) which will work with regions around Australia, to increase the innovative capacity of local firms and the regional economies.</p> <p>Tax issues will be addressed through the review of Australia’s Future Tax System.</p>

## Ideas the Government will consider further

Topic	2020 proposed ideas	Government response
<b>Science, Maths, Business and Arts Connections</b>  Also raised by: Creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Science and maths connections: inspire student enthusiasm and improve science and maths education by connecting scientists and others with teachers, especially in our primary schools.</li> <li>Connect scientists, business and the arts with the education system.</li> <li>Expand the current limited program of artists in residence at schools which are now confined mainly to private schools.</li> </ul>	<p>This proposal is directly related to the Scientists in Schools (SiS) program. Around 800 scientist-teacher partnerships have been formed as at end November 2008.</p> <p>The arts component is being partially addressed by the existing Artists in Residence program.</p> <p>The benefits of further expansion of these programs will be considered in the future.</p> <p>There are also a range of state and territory, and philanthropic programs already in place which aim to address these ideas.</p>
<b>Business – PhD Connections</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adapt PhD training to improve the capacity and willingness of PhD students to move between sectors. The current approach to PhD training does not facilitate movement between academia and business and back again. This could be complemented by identifying and removing barriers to movement within the innovation system. One approach could be to have joint appointments to universities and organisations such as CSIRO or other bodies here or overseas.</li> </ul>	<p>The final report of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Innovation enquiry into Research Training and Research Workforce Issues in Australian Universities was released on 1 December 2008. The report included a number of recommendations in relation to attracting students to research training, funding and support for research students, and research careers.</p> <p>PhD arrangements already vary between institutions and have a focus on flexibility in some cases. For example, National ICT Australia (NICTA) funds around 300 PhD students in ICT, facilitating movement of PhD students in ICT between academia and business and back again. PhD students will also be able to use the Researchers in Business initiative, which will help place young researchers from universities or public research agencies into businesses.</p>

Topic	2020 proposed ideas	Government response
<p><b>Community Corps – Support for Volunteer Work</b></p> <p>Also raised by: Communities Rural</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a new form of national service for young people to travel through the country, visiting a variety of places and performing some sort of community service while in that location.</li> <li>Allow community service to reduce a person's HECS/HELP debt.</li> <li>Allow tertiary graduates to have their higher education loan debts reduced by seeking voluntary or paid employment in remote, rural and regional areas.</li> </ul>	<p>The Australian volunteering spirit is one of our biggest strengths and we need to foster, promote and recognise it.</p> <p>The government is not currently proposing either a new form of national service or reductions in higher education debts and notes that both proposals would be likely to have significant resource implications for government. That said, it considers that these options do have merit and will take them into account when further developing proposals to boost the volunteer sector.</p> <p>Job Services Australia (which will replace Job Network from 1 July 2009) has a work experience stream and will encourage job seekers to participate in volunteer and other community work to build their work skills</p>
<p><b>Workforce Participation – Paid Maternity Leave</b></p> <p>Also raised by: Communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce a national, paid maternity leave scheme to operate alongside expanded access to early childhood care as a whole package to promote workforce participation.</li> <li>Consider system-wide improvements to early childhood and schooling, including paid maternity leave.</li> <li>Provide paid leave for parents and carers.</li> <li>Twelve months' paid parental leave, three months' quarantined for mother, one month for father. Increase the opportunity for parents to be on parental leave at the same time.</li> <li>Provide a minimum payment for one parent to stay at home, because two incomes are needed to buy a home.</li> <li>Provide 12 months paid parental leave for all parents. France does this for three years.</li> <li>Provide 24 weeks of paid, universal parental leave.</li> <li>Encourage workplace flexibility.</li> <li>Implement flexible working strategies for families and the community sector.</li> <li>Provide a tax incentive if parents choose to remain at home rather than work.</li> </ul>	<p>The Government asked the Productivity Commission to examine ways the Government can improve support to parents with newborn children, specifically in the area of paid maternity, paternity and parental leave. The final report was provided to the Government on 2 March 2009. The Government is considering its response.</p> <p>The National Employment Standards due to commence on 1 January 2010 will entitle full-time employees to 10 days of paid personal/carer's leave each year (pro-rated for part-time employees). These standards will not limit the amount of accrued paid carer's leave that an employee may take each year as is currently the case.</p> <p>The Government will also provide \$12 million over the next three years to encourage small businesses to pursue practices that help employees to balance their work and family obligations.</p>

Topic	2020 proposed ideas	Government response
<b>Flexible Project Based Working Structures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As a no-cost option, change the structure of the workplace to support those struggling to participate, such as carers and Aboriginal people. This could involve a move from the 9 to 5 Monday to Friday hours to a more project-based approach. The Productivity Commission has shown that 70 per cent of jobs could be more project based. This employment pattern could tap into a variety of skills, such as nursing, construction and legal skills.</li> </ul>	<p>Through its Social Inclusion Agenda, the Australian Government is working to find new ways to address disadvantage, remove barriers to participation, increase opportunities, build capacity and ensure that services are accessible and provide effective support for all.</p> <p>In addition, the Government has implemented a workplace relations system, underpinned by a strong safety net that allows employers and employees to negotiate working arrangements which best meets their individual needs.</p>
<b>Learning for Life Account</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a learning for life account for every Australian into which government and others can make payments. The funds could be spent on a variety of things such as education, training, parental leave, childcare and superannuation contributions. The accounts will have the capacity to go into deficit and will exist throughout the person's life.</li> </ul>	<p>The Government may consider a proposal in relation to Learning for Life Accounts at a later stage. However, any such proposal must be considered in the context of existing funding arrangements and be targeted at the provision of additional benefits.</p>

Topic	2020 proposed ideas	Government response
<p><b>Response to the Review of the National Innovation System</b></p> <p><b>Also raised by: Health</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a coherent National Innovation Agenda to drive Federal and State government policies on innovation and creativity.</li> </ul> <p><b>Education and research</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instigate a fundamental change in education to support innovation and entrepreneurship from the earliest years of schooling.</li> </ul> <p><b>Funding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thinking Big: Accelerate Australian innovation by undertaking ambitious 'megaprojects' and establishing associated post-graduate schools in excellence.</li> <li>• Introduce 'guidance principles' for the Government's approach to encourage R&amp;D and innovation rather than micro-management of processes and funding.</li> <li>• Aim to double investment in R&amp;D by 2020.</li> <li>• Increase public and private sector combined investment in R&amp;D to 3.6 per cent of GDP and keep it at that level until Australia is among the top investors in R&amp;D in the OECD.</li> <li>• Commit to a long term national R&amp;D expenditure that is substantially above the OECD average as a fraction of GDP.</li> <li>• Encourage more private investment into key productivity-generating areas, especially through better design of markets.</li> <li>• Base government procurement on specification of expected performance. Such advanced contracts could be a useful means of driving innovation.</li> <li>• Use the tax system to encourage collaboration.</li> </ul>	<p>The Review of the National Innovation System was undertaken by an expert panel chaired by Dr Terry Cutler and was completed in August 2008. The report from this review – <i>Venturous Australia: Building Strength in Innovation</i> – was released on 9 September 2008.</p> <p>The Review considered many aspects of the National Innovation System, including education, funding for research and commercialisation and strengthening innovation culture.</p> <p>The Government will respond to the review in the near future.</p> <p><i>Related ideas on health innovation can be found in the Health Stream.</i></p>

Topic	2020 proposed ideas	Government response
<p><b>Continued ...</b></p> <p><b>Response to the Review of the National Innovation System</b></p> <p><b>Also raised by: Health</b></p>	<p><b>Innovation culture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a national institute for innovation and creativity.</li> <li>• Reduce the fear of failure. There is sometimes a culture within industry and community which inhibits innovation.</li> <li>• Encourage innovation through having the education system support the creative arts. By encouraging imagination, the creative arts are fundamental to engendering creative capacity and innovation. All parts of the economy need to embrace innovation: some firms face the difficulty that downstream intermediaries or retailers might not accept innovative new products.</li> <li>• Release latent value in the innovation system by re-examining our curriculum architecture, working with business, and developing patterns of thinking that can cope with the envisaged conditions of 2020.</li> <li>• Improve collaboration between public and private business, industry and research to foster innovation to OECD levels.</li> <li>• Remove barriers to the flow of knowledge generated within the research sector by fostering open approaches to access and dissemination.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Innovation Summer School</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish an 'Innovation Summer School' for students during their holidays to inspire creativity.</li> </ul>	<p>There are a number of programs already in place that reflect the intention behind this idea, such as the Australian Institute of Nuclear Science and Engineering winter school for undergraduate students and the Questacon Smart Moves Invention Convention, which provides intensive training in entrepreneurship for a group of 30 young Australians each year.</p> <p>The Government may consider expanding on the current programs as a longer term initiative.</p>

Topic	2020 proposed ideas	Government response
<b>Australian Diaspora</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobilise the intellectual resources of the international diaspora network of Australian expatriates and former foreign students.</li> <li>• Mobilise the Australian diaspora. Look at whether government funding could be used to develop a system to encourage the diaspora to contribute more to Australian innovation. A broader view of the diaspora could include those who have studied here.</li> <li>• Develop a ‘pipeline’ for Australians abroad to transmit their knowledge and experiences back to Australia. Consider scholarships to encourage Australian researchers to return to Australia, even if only temporarily.</li> <li>• Use clusters (similar to California’s Silicon Valley) to encourage international connections for R&amp;D and innovation personnel.</li> <li>• Create and organise an alumni network of both Australians living overseas and former foreign students.</li> </ul>	<p>There are a wide range of existing non-government networks already contributing to these ideas, through universities, expat associations and online networking groups. In response to ideas articulated at the 2020 Summit, the Government may consider further work in this area.</p>
<b>Reform of the National Access Regime</b>  <b>Also raised by: Economy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The infrastructure imperative is to create a regulatory and institutional framework to allow timely and efficient investment, especially in key export areas. A specific priority is a simpler, national regime for third party access to give up-front regulatory certainty and to promote competitive pricing and adequate returns.</li> </ul>	<p>The Government is developing a package of reforms for the National Access Regime (Part IIIA <i>Trade Practices Act</i>) to enhance the regime. The reforms are being overseen by the COAG Business Regulation and Competition Working Group as part of its Competition Reform Agenda under the National Partnership Agreement to deliver a Seamless National Economy agreed by COAG on 29 November 2008.</p>

Topic	2020 proposed ideas	Government response
<p data-bbox="240 349 414 439"><b>National Energy Efficiency Strategy</b></p> <p data-bbox="240 495 399 546">Also raised by: Sustainability</p>	<ul data-bbox="451 349 890 524" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transform the ecological footprint of the built environment by taking the lead on national planning, building and product standards to minimise waste and energy consumption in our homes and in our neighbourhoods.</li> </ul>	<p data-bbox="917 349 1347 786">The Government is committed to a sustainable future for our cities and towns and a number of processes are currently underway that deal with improving energy efficiency. For example, the Government is prioritising sustainable urban design issues through the creation of the Major Cities Unit within the Infrastructure portfolio. COAG has also agreed to develop a National Strategy for Energy Efficiency to accelerate energy efficiency efforts across all governments and to help households and businesses to prepare for the introduction of the national Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS).</p> <p data-bbox="917 797 1334 1030">In addition, the \$3.9 billion Energy Efficient Homes Program will deliver free ceiling insulation and installation for Australian home owner occupiers and provide support for installing insulation in private rental properties. This package will result in ceiling insulation for around 2.7 million homes.</p>

## Ideas others may progress

Topic	2020 proposed ideas	Government response
<b>Workforce Participation – Flexibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workforce participation is interactive, and people can work from home or wherever they choose and move in and out of the workforce.</li> </ul>	<p>The Australian Government is implementing a workplace relations system, underpinned by a strong safety net, which allows employers and employees to negotiate working arrangements which best meets their individual needs.</p> <p>The level of flexibility in working arrangements for each individual workplace would be better addressed by employers.</p>
<b>Windows on Workplaces</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage employers to provide good jobs in safe, healthy and productive workplaces, and empower employees to choose their preferred workplaces by facilitating the dissemination of information about employment experience, for example work-life-balance and family friendliness.</li> </ul>	<p>Employers are required by law to ensure workplaces are safe and healthy. The business sector already has strong incentives to have a productive workplace and market their workplaces accurately to potential employees, either directly or via commercial employment service providers. Commercial employment service providers could facilitate this kind of information.</p>
<b>Business Community Council</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require every business of a certain size to have a community council, like a sustainability council. This council would provide advice on the principles of the business, inform its stakeholders of company values, support worker transitions into and out of the workforce, and consider the needs of the community.</li> </ul>	<p>This is a matter that would be better progressed by individual businesses and communities. Many large businesses already undertake a range of these activities. The Government may consider further promotion of community links with business, along with related work on philanthropy and community development.</p>

## Ideas with no further action at this time

Topic	2020 proposed ideas	Government response
<b>Education – Private Investment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrated sources of funding attached to students and/or institutions. One option would be to rationalise the use of private investment and then use public investment to make up the shortfall. Private involvement is not necessarily for profit but for broader economic return.</li> </ul>	The Government is implementing the commitment it made during the 2007 election to continue the existing funding arrangements for all schools for 2009–2012. The Government has given an undertaking to review these arrangements with an open and transparent process which is anticipated to conclude in 2011. Limiting private investment may not be desirable.
<b>Education – Productivity Levy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a productivity levy to include incentives to business in return for partnerships in education, and business to institute a ‘skills pledge’, recommitting to skilling their workforce.</li> </ul>	Disagree. The Government does not consider that a productivity levy would improve existing arrangements.
<b>Definition of Productivity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a comprehensive definition of ‘productivity’.</li> </ul>	The concept of productivity varies by sector and context. A comprehensive definition of productivity does not appear necessary in the context of the ongoing work the Government is doing to evaluate and address productivity within the nation.

Topic	2020 proposed ideas	Government response
<b>Life-long Learning and Working</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Life Learning centres: Service centres supporting working age Australians with their family and career needs.</li> <li>• Expand the Prime Minister's idea for a one-stop shop for early childhood services to encompass 'life learning centres' in suburbs and regional centres. People could continue to use the centres beyond childhood to seek out information, including on returning to the workforce and life-long learning opportunities.</li> <li>• Support life-long learning to assist in career management, helping address the digital divide and rapid changes in the workplace and preventing further marginalisation of people.</li> <li>• Working people's hubs would use existing resources more effectively to provide community-based centres for people of working age. The hubs would provide advice on employment, training, career management, health and housing services. This would be through provision of information, support, case management and income support. It would be available to all aged from 16 to 76 years and would in particular support those marginalised from the workforce – such as the 2.2 million men with health problems impeding their access to work, carers and women returning to work and education. It would assist in providing individualised responses for these citizens whose needs do not match the current education, training and work structure.</li> </ul>	<p>While these ideas could cover a range of approaches to providing important community services, the Government will not be establishing life-learning centres at this stage. A comprehensive range of these services are already available through state and territory services and through Centrelink.</p>
<b>Internationally Mobile Labour Market</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enable the free movement of labour from the Asia-Pacific Region into Australia, underpinned by Australian workplace standards.</li> </ul>	<p>Not supported at this time.</p>
<b>Work in the Bush</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide incentives for people to work in rural and regional Australia by supporting people to re-locate from areas of few jobs to areas where there are labour shortages.</li> </ul>	<p>Assistance with relocation costs to move to take up employment opportunities is available to eligible job seekers under the current Job Network Job Seeker Account and, from 1 July 2009, through the Job Services Australia Employment Pathways Fund. The Indigenous Employment Program can also consider funding proposals for projects that include job seeker relocation to access work including rural work.</p>

Topic	2020 proposed ideas	Government response
<b>R&amp;D – Commercialisation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage scientists to stop doing R&amp;D and spend a year implementing the ideas they have developed.</li> </ul>	<p>The Review of the National Innovation System considered support for commercialisation through a range of mechanisms. The Government is currently considering its response to the review. Scientists are often, but not always best placed to lead commercialisation and the most effective options should be considered in each case.</p>
<b>R&amp;D – Type 1 Diabetes Cure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a cure for type 1 diabetes using stem cell technology. It was noted that diabetes affects about 5 per cent of Australians, of whom about 150 000 are young people. Diabetes is an area of research where success is highly likely by 2020, and the rewards would be significant in terms of health outcomes and export potential. Venture capital should find this research very attractive. It was argued that the government needs to provide the research support infrastructure in order to attract the venture capital and researchers to the project. Participants thought that failure to invest will see overseas competitors develop the science, technology and patents, resulting in Australia importing this later at higher cost.</li> </ul>	<p>The National Health and Medical Research Council is responsible for setting priorities for this kind of research. Existing funding schemes and criteria are also being considered in the Government's response to the Review of the National Innovation System.</p>
<b>R&amp;D Funding – Accountability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require only 80 per cent of public R&amp;D funding to be accountability based. The remainder should be trust based in order to free some of our best scientists of having to prepare grant applications and enable them to spend their time doing research instead.</li> </ul>	<p>Disagree. The Government will consider the most appropriate funding models in responding to the Review of the National Innovation System. The Government does not believe that current accountability requirements on public funds should be changed.</p>

