

## **Press Release:**

### **SA Deans to launch *New Learning: A Charter for Australian Education***

Australia is now virtually alone in regarding education as a cost rather than an investment, according to the Australian Council of Deans of Education. At the South Australian launch of *New Learning: A Charter for Australian Education*, the Deans will argue that we risk losing our first-world status unless urgent action on education is undertaken. Outlining their comprehensive plan for revitalising Australian education, the Deans will focus on gearing up for the knowledge economy, tackling the public/private divide, and promoting high quality educators in every sector.

The new economy is, quite simply, built on knowledge. Recent events have highlighted the importance of human capital, yet Australian public investment is lower than our competitors in research and development, and in every education sector from preschool to adult and community education. Tinkering at the edges is neither acceptable nor affordable: if we are to compete with the world's best, a fundamental attitudinal change is required. The SA Deans will propose a radical plan for reshaping and expanding Australian education to reflect the realities of the new economy.

The Deans will also argue that the role of the public and the private needs to be redefined. The current debate over private school funding reflects a greater problem of buckpassing between the state and territory governments and the Commonwealth. A national framework of lifelong learning is required, as is a commitment to the provision of high quality public education. The Deans strongly condemn the inequality which pervades Australian education, from the public/private divide to the regional divide to the digital divide. They believe that a knowledge economy must provide quality education for all, and that serious inequalities must be addressed through targeted policies.

The resource squeeze has also affected educators. The decline in public investment in education over the past five years has left too much to too few, and our educators are now overworked, and often unable to fulfill key duties. Moreover, teachers, lecturers and instructors are seriously underpaid compared with other Australian professions, and compared with educators in other nations. The SA Deans will propose concrete measures to improve the conditions and numbers of teachers, including enhanced professional development opportunities, sabbaticals, and teacher exchange programs.

**The launch will be held on Monday 5 Nov. at 5 p.m. at the University of South Australia, Underdale Campus, Holbrooks Rd, Underdale, Bldg S, rm 143/144 (enter by carpark, front of campus).** Media, educators and other concerned citizens are all welcome to attend.

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