A Smarter, More Skilled Territory

A Bill making it compulsory for all students up to 17 to attend school, undertake training or be in a job has been introduced into the Northern Territory Parliament.

The Education and Training Minister Paul Henderson said the Education Amendment (Youth Participation) Bill also makes it compulsory for Territory students to complete Year 10.

Currently Territory students can leave school the day they turn 15 – regardless of whether they have finished the full year of schooling.

“These changes are about producing smarter, more qualified and more productive Territorians,” Mr Henderson said.

“Today’s world is becoming more and more competitive. If Territory teenagers are going to make something of themselves, they must complete secondary school or get the skills to allow them to enter the workforce.

“No Territory teenager should be wasting their potential by leaving school under-educated, under-qualified and without training or job options.

“The centrepiece of our Smart Territory strategy is getting more students to complete Year 12, get the marks to enter university or get an apprenticeship or further training.

“In line with those aims, my Government has enhanced the NT Certificate of Education to recognise training subjects and increased VET and school-to-work programs.

“This Bill further supports the Smart Territory strategy to tackle rising youth unemployment, create a strong workforce and improve future prospects.”

The Education Amendment (Youth Participation) Bill honours a commitment made at a Council of Australian Governments (COAG) meeting earlier this year.

All states and territories agreed to a national approach to be implemented by January 1, 2010.

The Education Amendment (Youth Participation) Bill will be debated at the November Sittings of Parliament.

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