

Media Release

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Investing in Skills and Productivity: Election Statement on Industry Training

A high quality industry training system is an essential part of lifting skills and productivity levels of New Zealand workplaces.

The Industry Training Federation today released an election statement with recommendations to all parties contesting this year's general election.

Federation executive director Jeremy Baker said Industry Training Organisations (ITOs) had identified five areas where improvements could be made so that they can make a greater contribution to New Zealand's development.

"Industry Training Organisations work closely with their industries to develop standards and qualifications that meet industries' needs, and arrange training for those skills. They also play a leading role in debate on industry's current and future skill needs," Mr Baker said.

"We hear a lot about the tight labour market, skill shortages and rising literacy and numeracy needs. Simply increasing the number of people involved in tertiary education is not enough to change that. We need a greater focus on the skill development of people already in the workforce, and ways to ensure their skills are used effectively."

The five key actions ITOs are recommending all political parties commit to are:

- Implement the New Zealand Skills Strategy
- Mandate a genuine single national qualifications system
- Simplify the industry skills system
- Give industry more say on skill development funding decisions
- Increase funding for industry skill development in proportion to other tertiary spending

“We are recommending practical and sensible changes that respond directly to industry needs, in ways that are an effective use of government funding. Industry training works well, but with these changes we can make an even bigger contribution to lifting skills and productivity.”

Mr Baker said parties’ policies for the election would be discussed at next week’s annual Industry Training Federation conference in Wellington. Prime Minister Helen Clark and Leader of the Opposition John Key are scheduled to give keynote addresses. In addition, spokespeople from six parties will appear together as part of a political panel.

Contact: Jeremy Baker (021) 377791

Election statement and factsheets attached