



5 May 2022

Kids not getting real-world skills training: KAP

EDUCATOR and Katter's Australian Party candidate for Leichhardt, Rod Jensen, says vocational education and training (VET) reform needs to be at the heart of addressing the nation's skill shortages.

With more than a decade under his belt as an educator in Queensland, Mr Jensen said his experience has led him to believe that the school system is not geared to providing pathways for non-academic and students with behavioral challenges into the workforce.

Mr Jensen's comments come following extensive touring of the Leichhardt electorate where a common theme he heard was employers complaining about skill shortages in places where there was also a significant number of unemployed youth.

"Travelling through communities there's been a lot of talk about the skill shortage and the idea that there's no workforce at the moment.

"But there's so many people out there hungry to do things.

"We really need to investigate the idea that school and the curriculum itself needs to be invested in.

"The notion that school is bringing students to industry in a VET course is just not happening anymore."

Mr Jensen said less than 20% of students undertaking a VET course do any kind of work-place training as part of the course, and this affects the courses' attractiveness to potential students and would-be employers.

"VET is supposed to be mainly hands-on and industry-based training but by far very few courses actually provide any kind of work experience."

Mr Jensen said reform in the VET arena is especially important for students who struggle academically and who would be more suited to a trade or technical speciality, but find themselves shunted into certificate I or II programs of questionable long-term value.



“Schools have got more commitments than ever before, they’ve got less funding for difficult behavioural issues, and therefore we have kids at school doing Certificate III in Sport and Recreation and how to put up a tent just to keep them interested.

“But it doesn’t lead anywhere, it doesn’t lead to a young person getting an apprenticeship because once you leave school and you’ve got your QCE you’ve still got to go do whatever is required to get an apprenticeship.

“I think there needs to be a really solid roundtable discussion about where education, and more importantly these schools as businesses, are taking young people through their journey of education.

“Increasing the number of school-based apprenticeships would be the first place I start. Currently only about 60% of apprentices finish their actual apprenticeships, which is a huge waste of the time and money invested in a young person who doesn’t follow through.”

-ENDS-

For media inquiries, please call 0456999511.