



Rees to raise school leaving age to give students a better chance of a job

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The NSW Government will raise the school leaving age to ensure NSW students have a world-class education and improved opportunities to go to University or secure employment.

From 2010 all students in NSW will complete Year 10.

In addition if a student is under 17 and wants to leave school after Year 10, they will need to be in vocational training, an apprenticeship or paid employment for more than 25 hours per week.

“The evidence is clear – a good education means better chances in life,” Mr Rees said.

Benefits of increasing the school age include:

- **Better wages over a lifetime** -- On average early school leavers will earn lower wages over a lifetime and are more likely to be unemployed for periods of their lives (Source: Access Economics 2006);
- **A better chance of employment** -- According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, early school leavers are two-and-a-half times more likely to be unemployed;
- **A stronger economy** – the NSW economy stands to gain an estimate of up to \$2.7 billion if early school leaver numbers are halved by 2050 (Source: Applied Economics); and
- **A better trained workforce** – those who complete school are more likely to pursue further study/training.

“We have a first-rate education system in NSW,” Mr Rees said.

“We need a flexible, skilled and educated workforce to drive our economy.

“With the fragile global economy we have to be smarter and more skilled to compete – and I want NSW students to be frontrunners.

“I am determined to ensure that our students have the education and the skills to take on the world.

“This change is about setting students in NSW up for life.

“Whether they choose to go on to university or vocational training or go straight into the workforce they will have the backing of a world-class education.”

The NSW Government will introduce legislation to change the school leaving age which is currently 15.