



# **Mike Baird MP**

## **Premier of NSW**

### **Minister for Infrastructure**

### **Minister for Western Sydney**

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Friday 20 February 2015

### **FOCUS ON MATHS, SCIENCE AND LANGUAGES FOR TOMORROW'S JOBS**

A re-elected Baird Government will retrain 320 teachers as specialists in maths and science as part of a number of changes to ensure our students are fully equipped to take up jobs in the State's fastest-growing occupations.

NSW Premier Mike Baird and Minister for Education Adrian Piccoli announced the initiative today and said steps would also be taken to boost the number of students learning languages in our schools.

"We need highly qualified, engaging teachers to encourage more students to study science and mathematics at the highest possible level at school," Mr Baird said.

"Employers are demanding these skills so it is vital we improve the quality of science, technology, engineering and mathematics teaching – known as STEM studies.

"Research shows that three-quarters of the fastest-growing occupations in Australia require STEM knowledge and skills – that means a strong foundation in these areas is essential for NSW students.

"Additionally, to ensure our students are learning in state-of-the-art facilities we will invest \$20 million to upgrade 50 science labs in NSW public schools.

"The NSW Liberals & Nationals Government has created more than 126,000 new jobs over the last four years, and under this plan we will equip our students with the skills they need to succeed."

Minister for Education Adrian Piccoli said it is important that students see the excitement and potential of learning about maths and science.

"Under this plan, we will retrain up to 320 public school teachers as specialists in maths and science, including offering scholarships, study leave and a guarantee of future employment," Mr Piccoli said.

"Additionally, I have directed the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards to work with universities to include a specialist languages, science or mathematics strand within initial teacher education degrees for primary school teachers."

A re-elected Baird Government will also take steps to increase the number of students studying languages at school.

“Asian countries are our largest trading partners so it’s essential we offer students a range of incentives to study languages,” Mr Piccoli said.

“The first-ever NSW Languages Advisory Panel has been established to provide practical solutions that increase the opportunities for students to study languages but also increase the supply of suitably qualified language teachers.

“One of the first tasks of the new Panel will be to review the access to, and suitability of, HSC language courses, beginning with Chinese.

“The Panel will consider whether HSC students who study a language should receive ATAR bonus points.”

Minister for Citizenship and Communities Victor Dominello said learning a language is an extremely valuable skill.

“As we forge closer ties with Asian countries we need to look at ways of encouraging more students to learn a language while at school,” Mr Dominello said.

“This is an outstanding plan which will encourage more students to study languages and also increase the number of skilled language teachers in our schools.”

A re-elected Baird Government will also develop partnerships with universities, training organisations, business and industry to mentor and stretch high ability students. Under the proposed changes, school students with high ability would be able to study tertiary subjects while at high school.

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