

News Release

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Premier Mike Rann

&

Hon Jane Lomax-Smith

Minister for Education

Hon Jennifer Rankine

Minister for Families and Communities

Minister for the Northern Suburbs

Hon Paul Caica

Minister for Employment, Training & Further Education

Tuesday, 16 September 2008

ICAN WORKS FOR STRUGGLING STUDENTS

The Rann Government has today launched a \$10.5 million package of school retention measures ahead of the compulsory education age rising to 17 from next year.

Premier Mike Rann and Social Inclusion Board Chair Monsignor David Cappo released details of the *ICAN Works* strategy to coincide with Community Cabinet in the northern suburbs.

Premier Rann says the new *ICAN Works* alliance brings together three existing successful programs to help create brighter futures for young South Australians.

The three *ICAN Works* programs to receive an injection of \$10.5m over the next four years are:

1. Innovative Community Action Networks (Department of Education and Children's Services) which operate in four areas of the State, including the northern suburbs, to help students who are at risk of leaving school early to remain 'learning or earning'.
2. Alternative Learning Options (Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology) which help to build the self-confidence and skills of young people aged 15 to 19 so they can take up training and job opportunities.
3. Assertive Management Program (Families SA) which provides educational support and other help to young people under the guardianship of the Minister to help them remain engaged in their schooling.

"Our government put the spotlight on school retention after being elected to government in 2002, initially funding a \$28.4m school retention initiative and raising the school leaving age to 16.

"That work over the last six years has helped to take the State's school retention rate to its highest level in 12 years, with 74.5% of students staying in State schools from Year 8 to Year 12.

"We have an \$84m *School to Work* strategy that includes 10 Trade Schools for the Future, a new South Australian Certificate of Education and higher compulsory education age of 17.

"The *ICAN Works* programs we are announcing today will work alongside these initiatives to support young people at greatest risk of dropping out of learning or earning.

"By investing in the futures of our youth, we are investing in the future of our State. We have picked the best and most successful school retention programs to take us forward."

Monsignor Cappo says *ICAN Works* is an “excellent example of social innovation”.

“We know these programs work. We know that they help young South Australians to find a purpose in their life and aspire to a successful future.

“The traditional school system does not suit everyone and the *ICAN* programs provide young people with alternative options.

“Since 2004, *ICANs* have had an 82% success rate in reconnecting young people with education, training and employment.

“As an example, over the past 18 months, more than 200 students in these programs have undertaken short courses at Northern Sound System.

“Many of the students who have participated in these shorts courses have gone on to complete Certificate I or Certificate II in the music industry foundation course.”

Education Minister Jane Lomax-Smith says the Rann Government is unwavering in its efforts to increase school retention rates in South Australia.

“Staying at school and completing the SACE gives our young people the best possible chance of achieving success in their life,” Dr Lomax-Smith says.

“The increase in the compulsory education age next year has been timed to coincide with new opportunities through trade schools, school retention programs and the new SACE.

“We know there are students in our schools who suffer severe disadvantage and have many personal pressures to overcome.

“These initiatives support them to achieve their SACE and have the same opportunities in life as their peers.”

Northern Suburbs Minister Jennifer Rankine says she is pleased the northern suburbs are a focus of the *ICAN Works* strategy.

“The northern suburbs has tremendous job opportunities going forward and it makes sense to have today’s students ready to take up those jobs.”

Employment and Training Minister Paul Caica says: “As a State, we cannot afford to have young people dropping out of school early with no hope of a successful future.

“It’s great to see three government agencies working closely together to make sure that young people in need of support do not slip through the net at any stage of their lives.”

Media note: Today’s launch will be held at Northern Sound System (73 Elizabeth Way, Elizabeth) from 11.45am until 12.30pm.