

SKILLSWEST CAREERS EXPO

Statement by Minister for Education and Training

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Minister for Education and Training) [10.02 am]: I rise to inform the house that more than 10 000 secondary students, graduates and career changers are expected to attend the SkillsWest Careers Expo this weekend at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre. Now in its tenth year, the SkillsWest Careers Expo brings together employers and training organisations under one roof, giving visitors a unique opportunity to speak with industry experts about career paths and vocational education and training. A key attraction this year is the dedicated TAFE science, technology, engineering and mathematics hub in the Try a Skill zone, where attendees can experience hands-on activities in new and emerging technologies. Visitors can pilot a plane using virtual reality, try their hand at cybersecurity and deflect a hacking attempt, use computer-aided design software to build a 3D ship and become a crime scene investigator agent for the day, analysing a hair sample using laboratory technology. I look forward to attending this Friday and seeing firsthand the students interacting with the many activities in the Try a Skill zone that may assist them in exploring future career options. The SkillsWest Careers Expo will also host 10 WorldSkills competitions, testing some of the state's most talented apprentices and trainees in a battle of skills such as bricklaying, plastering, heavy automotive mechanics, refrigeration and plumbing. A vocational pathway is a great option for secondary students and career changers, and 75 per cent of the fastest-growing occupations in Australia require STEM-related skills. A recent report by the Grattan Institute found that vocational diplomas in construction, engineering and commerce typically lead to higher lifetime incomes compared with that of many university graduates. The SkillsWest Careers Expo is a unique opportunity to promote the growth and diversity of the VET sector. I encourage visitors, especially secondary school students, to experience everything on offer and chat with the highly skilled trainers, employers and apprentices.