



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Standing Committee on Education & Training

Inquiry into Vocational Education in Schools

MEDIA ALERT

Issued: 4 June 2003

Chair: Kerry Bartlett MP
Deputy: Rod Sawford MP

Public hearing - Thursday 5 June 2003 - Canberra

**Taking emerging industries to the students -
Questacon and Australian Photonics working
together for vocational education in schools.**

Questacon and Australian Photonics will appear this Thursday at a public hearing of the House of Representatives Education Committee's inquiry into vocational education in schools.

Questacon in partnership with Australian Photonics has developed a national awareness program to inform secondary students about career opportunities in the expanding photonics industry. Questacon's role in supporting science and technology education uses outreach programs in regional and remote areas to motivate students to consider further education, careers and new businesses in science and technology.

Australian Photonics predicts that as the photonics industry matures the demand for technically trained support staff will grow. The **Photonics Institute** is working with the vocational education and training sector in developing TAFE qualification courses. For school students a Certificate II in Photonics is being offered in NSW as part of the Higher School Certificate.

PUBLIC HEARING

WHO: Questacon and Australian Photonics appears at the House Education Committee's inquiry into Vocational Education in Schools
WHERE: Committee Room 1R3, Parliament House, Canberra
WHEN: Thursday 5 June, 9.15am – 10am

BACKGROUND: The inquiry is examining the range, structure, resourcing and delivery of vocational education and training programs in schools, including teacher training, and the impact of vocational education on other programs.

It is also examining the differences between school-based and other vocational education programs, the acceptance within industry of resulting qualifications, vocational education in new industries and the accessibility and effectiveness of vocational education for indigenous students.

"Vocational education and training in schools is growing rapidly," says House Education Committee Chair, Mr Kerry Bartlett.

"We need to be sure we are maximising its potential to support young people to choose effectively from the range of post-school pathways available to them and to successfully make the transition from school to work or further education and training.

"The decisions that students make in school for the future, need to be based on the knowledge of what are the employment options, what industries are growing, and what skills are needed. Emerging industries such as photonics, appear to be working well with science educators and the VET sector to encourage and inform students about career opportunities in their industry."

For media comment: Kerry Bartlett, MP, Chair - House Education Committee, tel: (02) 6277 4637

For more information: Committee Secretariat, tel: (02) 6277 2121,
or visit the inquiry website at www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/edt/ves/index.htm