

News Release

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Premier Mike Rann

&

Hon Jane Lomax-Smith

Minister for Education
Minister for Mental Health and
Substance Abuse
Minister for Tourism
Minister for the City of Adelaide

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SCHOOL RETENTION HIGHEST IN 15 YEARS

More young South Australians are staying in high school to complete Year 12, with the State's government school retention rate reaching its highest level since 1994.

New retention rate figures for 2009, released at a Secondary Principals' Summit in Adelaide, show that 77.5% of students were retained in State schools from Year 8 to Year 12.

Premier Mike Rann says it's the best result in 15 years and the State's high school principals and teachers can take full credit for the achievement.

"Young people who stay at school to complete Year 12 are giving themselves the best chance of a bright and successful future," Premier Rann says.

"That's why it's been an absolute priority of the Labor Government to help more young South Australians to stay in school for longer.

"One of our biggest school retention success stories has been our Innovative Community Action Networks (ICAN) initiative.

"Pioneered by Monsignor David Cappo and the Social Inclusion Board, ICAN has helped more than 80% of its 8000 participants to remain learning or earning since 2004.

"These are young people who include those who had either dropped out of school, training or work altogether or were on the verge of doing so.

"With the help of \$30m in Commonwealth funds, we're now expanding that program to benefit up to 8000 young South Australians per year by 2013, including students in Years 6 and 7.

"We've also reformed high school education in South Australia to give students academic skills as well as high-level job skills to take them straight from school into training or work.

"Our \$29.5m Trade Schools for the Future initiative is giving more than 1140 students a head start into a career through a school-based apprenticeship.

"The new \$54.5m South Australian Certificate of Education is underway and the State's current cohort of Year 10 students will be the first to graduate in 2011.

"On top of this, we're introducing industry-endorsed programs in areas of strategic importance to the State, such as defence and manufacturing, in each of the State's high schools."

Education Minister Jane Lomax-Smith says the Rann Government’s ‘School to Work’ reforms to improve the job skills of school students will have a long-term benefit for the State.

“Our high schools are evolving to have a greater focus on real skills for real jobs to help us build a strong and skilled workforce for local jobs in defence, mining, bioscience and construction.

“It’s great to see this translating into more young people staying in school and giving themselves the best hope of capitalising on future job opportunities here in South Australia.

“I’d like to thank the people who work at the frontline in our schools – teachers, principals and school services officers – for their daily work to help all students achieve their potential.”

Social Inclusion Commissioner Monsignor David Cappo welcomed the news that school retention rates continue to rise.

“This is great news for our State and great news for these young people who are improving their chances of living successful and productive lives.

“Through our ICAN initiative, dozens of new programs have been introduced to offer young people alternatives to school that fulfil their interests and ambitions.

“I am proud of this program and its achievements and look forward to seeing the program expand to help even more young people over the next four years.”

The Rann Government raised the school leaving age to 16 from the start of 2003 and made it compulsory for young people to learn or earn until age 17 from 2009.

South Australian State apparent school retention rates over time:

Year	Year 8 to 12 FTE Retention Rate
2009	77.5%
2008	75.3%
2007	74.5%
2006	72.4%
2005	72.4%
2004	70.0%
2003	68.2%
2002	69.5%
2001	68.9%
2000	67.6%
1999	67.2%
1998	68.0%
1997	68.2%
1996	71.6%
1995	76.5%
1994	88.9%