

A Job, Any Job or Training

INOUE Conference

“Best Practice in the Delivery of Employment Services”

30th November 2017

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Ireland's economic script is being re-written

To foster **dynamic and resilient growth outside Dublin** ('effective' regional development) reducing the extreme and damaging concentration of economic activity and employment on the country's Eastern corridor

e.g., *Ireland 2040-Our Plan, Regional Action Plans for Jobs*, etc.

To develop **stronger indigenous enterprises** – for better 'balance' in the economy , to prepare for significant changes in how US multinationals are taxed, to prepare for Brexit

e.g., *Enterprise 2025, Innovation 2020, Harvest 2020*, etc.

To meet growing structural threats to the **quality of jobs** and **inclusiveness of labour markets** in *all* advanced countries. Recovery has 'brought us back', but to the challenges of a new phase in globalisation.

e.g., *OECD Skills Strategy 2012, OECD Employment Outlook 2017*, etc.

... and key elements in it point to an enhanced role for the FET sector

- Dynamic and resilient regions require **autonomy** and capabilities at the regional level to identify and supply the skills that most strengthen the regional economy (e.g. the Mid-West Regional Skills Forum)
- Stronger indigenous enterprises mean raising the **demand** for skills *and* their **utilisation** (including, and especially, ICT skills) in sectors such as construction, agri-food, hotels & tourism, etc.
- The interdependence between a dynamic regional economy and **'place making'** raises the importance of having diversity and high quality in locally traded services
- **Productivity and job quality** are linked, especially in services. Yes, 'jobs must pay' but for both workers *and* employers , without on-going subsidy to either
- An **inclusive labour market** means avoiding 'bifurcation...between a relatively low-skilled, relatively low-paid, customer-facing leisure sector... disconnected from a relatively professionalised, high-skilled internationally trading sector'

The *National Skills Strategy 2025* and *FET Strategy 2014-2019* hit most of the right notes

- Skills matter as much or more than 'educational attainment – 'what you can do' must improve 'across all qualifications and experience level'
- More direct routes to quality employment are needed for young people not choosing higher education including, but not only, new apprenticeships
- Skills are needed to boost productivity and pay at all levels, including on the lower rungs of the job ladder
- A step-change in how Ireland upskills those in work can no longer be postponed
- FET and HE must be understood - and function - as a continuum, with continuing two-way flows
- Unemployed jobseekers should get skills to 'find the best possible jobs'. ETBs are on the front line where low pay, uncertain hours, etc. etc. are concerned

Thank you!