



16 December 2010

## Independent school to open in 2011 in Wollongong to support dis-engaged

### WEA Illawarra to operate Alesco Learning Centre for years 9 and 10

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*(photo/interview opportunity 11am Friday 17<sup>th</sup> Dec at 50-52 Auburn St)*

Supporting young people who are not suited to mainstream schools to learn and grow as they complete their school certificate is the primary focus for a new venture to be undertaken by the WEA Illawarra in 2011.

According to Gareth McKeen; CEO for the WEA, *“The best way to describe the Alesco concept is that we will focus on students who are round pegs in square holes in mainstream schools, helping them to continue their schooling and avoid further disengagement from education. “We are looking for students who can reflect on their past learning experiences and are willing to embrace change”*

The school will cater for years 9 and 10 in 2011 with the aim that years 11 and 12 can be added in the future. Two classes of 15 per class will operate under a model that provides mutual respect, independence and a less formal environment. Alesco Learning Centre Illawarra is registered by the NSW government and the students will study core subjects from the School Certificate curriculum.

*“Each applicant will be invited to attend an interview where we will find out about them as an individual, their support network, whether Alesco Learning Centre will be the right environment for them, and how we can best support them to achieve their education goals,”* said Louisa Raft, Manager Alesco Learning Centre.

*“If you are making an active choice to work towards your School Certificate because you see it as an important step towards your future education, training or employment goals, then we would like to hear from you.”* said Ms Raft. Smaller class sizes will allow the opportunity to identify a student’s strengths and work to improve the areas in which they lack confidence.

Alesco recognises that positive educational outcomes cannot be achieved independently so strong relationships with youth health and welfare providers will ensure extra support is available.”

Gareth McKeen comments *“This is an exciting development for the WEA as it complements our adult education focus and our mission to support individuals to engage in learning”*

Application forms for young people aged 15-18 years wishing to enrol in year 10 in 2011 are now available by calling the Alesco Learning Centre Illawarra on 4226 1622 or e-mail [alesco@weaillawarra.com.au](mailto:alesco@weaillawarra.com.au). An information session will be held in mid January 2011.

**Media contact :** Gareth McKeen (CEO) or Louisa Raft (Alesco Manager) on 4226 1622

