

17 June 2009

Dear Colleagues

INVITATION TO RESPOND to the Australian Apprentices Taskforce Discussion Paper- by 10 July 2009

As you may have heard, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) at its meeting on 30 April 2009 agreed to the establishment of a trilateral time-limited taskforce between members of the COAG Skills and Workforce Development subgroup and industry, with agreed industry co-chairs, to undertake urgent work supporting participation in Australian Apprenticeships during the current economic downturn, with an action plan to be provided to COAG in July 2009.

In response to the COAG communiqué, the Australian Apprentices Taskforce has been established under our direction.

We have taken the brief time available to seek your valuable ideas and input to help shape our Taskforce's urgent work in supporting participation in Australian Apprenticeships during the economic downturn. Strong business, industry and government partnerships are key to addressing the challenges of engaging and retaining Australian Apprentices to foster a more resilient economy.

The attached Discussion Paper has been developed as a stimulus tool to gain feedback from interested parties, to help shape the Taskforce's forward planning and implementation strategy for engaging and retaining Australian Apprentices.

Our focus is particularly on measures which will help to maintain the numbers of apprentices in training, including measures to sustain apprentice employment, and to support apprentices who are retrenched to stay in their trade.

The Discussion Paper identifies some action areas and proposals categorised into three broad areas: Maximising commencements and increasing completions; Retaining apprentices through the downturn and Supporting out of trade/retrenched apprentices.

Please distribute the Discussion Paper as you feel appropriate and forward your responses to the Taskforce Secretariat by Friday 10 July. The Taskforce will consider all input and develop proposals for further consideration and testing with employers and apprentices.

Thank you for your time in considering this important initiative.

Yours sincerely

Simone Wetzlar
Executive General Manager
People, Health, Safety & Environment
Thiess Pty Ltd

Julius Roe
National President
Australian Manufacturing Workers Union

Discussion paper seeking urgent input and ideas to shape the forward plan and implementation strategy to support the engagement and retention of Australian Apprentices.

This information is being collected for consideration by the
Australian Apprentices Taskforce

This industry-led taskforce is co-chaired by Ms Simone Wetzlar, Executive General Manager – People, Health, Safety and Environment, Thiess Pty Ltd and Mr Julius Roe, National President of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union. Membership includes employer representatives from the Engineering Employers Association and the Australian Dairy Industry Council; and employee nominees from the Construction Forestry Mining Energy Union and Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Association; and Commonwealth and State government representatives. Liaison with all States and Territories and consultation with relevant experts and stakeholders is strengthening development of actions.

For consultation 17 June 2009 to 10 July 2009

Contact details

Responses should be sent to:

Australian Apprentices Taskforce Secretariat



Preferably by email: **AAT_Secretariat@deta.qld.gov.au**

Or

By facsimile: 07 3237 9775

Or

c/- Sue Fergusson
Executive Director, VET Policy Development
Department of Education & Training
PO Box 15033
CITY EAST QLD 4002



By COB

FRIDAY 10 JULY 2009

Discussion Paper

Purpose of this paper

At its meeting on 30 April 2009, COAG stated that:

All governments further recognised that during an economic downturn Australian Apprentices are more vulnerable. As an industry-led system, all governments acknowledged the need for governments and industry to work cooperatively to support Australian Apprentices.

COAG therefore agreed to the establishment of a time-limited taskforce, including industry membership, to undertake urgent work to support the engagement and retention of Australian Apprentices.

This paper has been prepared to support the deliberations of the Australian Apprentices Taskforce which is seeking urgent input and ideas from key stakeholders and associated networks to assist with this work.

The paper provides background information on the economic outlook, likely impacts on apprentice engagement and retention and current measures and efforts by Australian Governments to support apprentices.

It includes sets of stimulus questions and seeks new ideas and feedback on possible strategies to mitigate the impact of the current economic downturn on apprenticeships and traineeships. Section 6 of this paper provides guidance for developing responses.

Timeline

COAG agreed the Taskforce will be time-limited and will focus on urgent and immediate actions. It is envisaged the Taskforce will progressively develop proposals for action and where possible implement actions during July to December 2009.

1 Economic Outlook

Since mid-2008 a global financial crisis (GFC) originally stemming from a collapse of sub-prime lending in the US, has now broadened into a global economic recession:

- 💧 the economic outlook of Australia's major trading partners has been progressively downgraded, with Japan, Europe and the US now all in recession;
- 💧 Asian merchandise exports and global steel production have both fallen substantially since October 2008, driving major falls in Australian commodity prices;
- 💧 global equity markets have almost halved in value; and
- 💧 where scarce credit is available, very large yield spreads (300-500 basis points) on interest rates have created extremely difficult credit conditions for business.

For Australia, these difficult global economic conditions are reflected in reduced exports of bulk commodities, reduced business and dwelling investment, and slowing of both consumer spending and employment growth. In the 2009 Commonwealth Budget introduced in May, the Treasury has forecast:

- 💧 negative economic growth of ¼%;
- 💧 a decline of 18½% in business investment; and
- 💧 an increase in unemployment of 2¼% to 8¼%.

These adverse conditions are now being reflected in the real domestic economy, with the Australian Industry Group (AIG) Performance of Manufacturing Index falling to an historical low of 30.1, well below the 50 point mark separating expansion from contraction. A large proportion of firms cited weak domestic and overseas orders. Some also pointed to a lack of credit; project cancellations; weak demand from the automotive sector and competition pressures¹.

2 Likely Impacts on Apprenticeship Engagement and Retention

Given the very difficult credit conditions and sharp reduction in commodity exports, forecasts suggest the greatest impacts of the downturn will fall on construction, manufacturing and mining industries. These industries employ the greatest share of construction and engineering occupations, including apprentices.

There is evidence from past downturns that trade apprentice numbers are likely to be adversely affected. The National Industry Skills Committee (NISC) has compiled a report on apprentice and traineeship trends over the past two economic downturns in Australia². In both the early 1990's recession and the 2001 downturn, the numbers of trades apprentices in training fell, although the early 1990's recession was much more severe and the fall in contracts was 25%. The numbers of apprentices in training did not recover to pre-recession levels until 1997, and this is likely to have impeded the recovery.

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) has compiled analysis of likely impacts on apprenticeships and traineeships during the downturn, and concludes there is already considerable evidence of impacts on apprentices, but not on trainees³. NCVER finds trade apprenticeship commencements in the December quarter 2008 have fallen substantially on the corresponding quarter in the previous year in a number of areas, especially construction, automotive, and electrotechnology and telecommunications. These trades experienced an average fall of 19.3%.

The implementation of strategies that both maximise commencements and support the retention of apprentices and trainees in employment and training now are essential for medium and longer term recovery and growth in the Australian economy.

1 PMI April 2009 Australian Industry Group

2 National Industry Skills Committee, 2008 Employment & Skilling Implications of the Australian Economic Slowdown, TVET, Melbourne

3 Karmel, T & Misko, J 2009 Apprenticeships and traineeships during the downturn, NCVER, Adelaide

3 Current Measures and Efforts by Australian Governments to Support Apprentices

Effective apprenticeship training takes place in a market environment that is heavily dependent upon the actions of both the demand and supply side of the equation. This makes the system highly sensitive to shifts in price relativities in the labour market, economic fluctuations in general, and shifts in technology and Government policy.

Attachment 1 sets out the detail provided by the Commonwealth, States and Territories on measures to specifically support apprentices. All jurisdictions make significant investments in measures to support Apprentices. Measures include:

- 💧 significant wage subsidies and tax rebates paid to employers;
- 💧 subsidies paid to apprentices and trainees to offset specific costs such as travel and accommodation, living away from home and uniforms and tools;
- 💧 information, placement, referral, mentoring and advocacy services;
- 💧 market intermediation through group training organisations, enabling a wider range of more specialised employers to host apprentices; and
- 💧 additional assistance to support participation of groups under-represented in the relevant occupations.

Australian Government Budget 2009

The Australian Government's May 2009 budget provided \$3.8 billion investment in Australian Apprenticeships over four years. This is in addition to providing \$155 m for Securing Apprentices measures and the \$20 m for the Skills for Sustainability Incentive for Australian Apprentices. Extensive support continues to be provided by States and Territories and the Commonwealth.

Generally these arrangements or their precursors have been in place for many years, and of themselves, have not prevented significant reductions in apprentice numbers in past downturns.

The Australian government's May 2009 budget provided \$3.8 billion investment in Australian Apprenticeships over four years. This is in addition to providing \$155 m for Securing Apprentices measures and the \$20 m for the Skills for Sustainability Incentive for Australian Apprentices. Extensive support continues to be provided by States and Territories and the Commonwealth.

The Budget announcement represents a strategic reconfiguration of financial support for the nearly 430,000 people currently undertaking an Australian Apprenticeship and their employers. In addition to the reconfiguration, the changes involve the extension of eligibility for some existing employer payments and greater administrative streamlining. For example, the \$3,800 Tools for Your Trade payment for Australian Apprentices in selected trade occupations, agricultural Australian Apprentices and, if in rural and regional Australia horticultural Australian Apprentices. This payment will replace the Apprenticeship Wage Top-Up payment, the Commonwealth Trade Learning Scholarship and the Tools for Your Trade voucher. The Commonwealth estimates that these new arrangements will increase the number of Australian Apprentices eligible to receive this support by up to 14,000 people annually.

Some previous programs were discontinued in the budget, after low take-up rates, overly complex administration (in particular, administrative burden on employers and Apprentices, which could have impacted on take-up), and overlaps with other programs. In particular:

- 💧 The Apprenticeship Training (Fee) Voucher program was discontinued, after it was found to be an underperforming program with a low take up rate and has been largely superseded by the Productivity Places Program, which funds the cost of training and qualifications at Certificate II and above. Low take up rates meant that only \$4.5 million was spent under this program in 2007 08 and only \$15.0 million is expected to be spent in 2008 09.
- 💧 The Increased Opportunities for School based Apprentices in the Trades program will be abolished from 1 July 2009, given that take up rates for this program were low and there are a number of other overlapping programs that provide targeted assistance for school based apprentices including the Group Training Australian Apprenticeships Targeted Initiatives Program, the Joint Group Training Program, Australian Technical Colleges and other State and Territory Government programs. In addition, the Government has previously provided significant new funding to assist school based apprentices, including under the Trade Training Centres in Schools program which provides \$2.5 billion over 10 years; and the Schools Grants for on the job training measure which provides \$98 million over four years for grants to schools to enable students to undertake on the job training for one day a week for 20 weeks.

4 The completion of apprenticeships and traineeships

From an economy wide perspective, the extent of non-completion has long been seen as a problem. This raises the question of the extent that the causes are related to individual characteristics such as age, ethnicity, social background and prior education, or to environmental factors that occur in particular types of apprenticeship. The costs of non-completion are believed to fall more heavily on employers given their concentration in the early part of the training contract period where drop outs are more frequent. There are also costs that accrue to the public funding authorities in terms of training subsidies and to individuals in terms of disruption to their skill acquisition.

There have been a number of explorations of reasons for non-completion. Data from NCVER⁴ indicates that two-thirds of non-completers cite employment-related issues (including leaving jobs or changing careers, losing jobs and redundancy, and poor interpersonal relationships with bosses and colleagues). Non-completers are also far more likely to have been dissatisfied with pay, and with on-the-job training.

In research using the Direct Entry Level Training Administration database (DELTA) for a submission to the Fair Pay Commission in 2006, it was found that the rate of cancellation for apprentices aged 14 and over from traditional apprenticeships was 49.4%. Further, apprentice wages only had an impact on cancellation in the first year of a training contract, with this variable insignificant in explaining cancellation in latter periods. Another study⁵ indicates that 20-24 year olds, relative wages appear not to be important in explaining the risk of cancellation at any stage of the apprenticeship.

4 Apprentice and Trainee Destination Survey (NCVER, 2008)

5 Trendle, B 2007 Working Paper 44: The labour market and apprenticeship retention in Queensland's traditional trades Variation, Department of Education and Training, Brisbane

A more significant factor in cancellation was reported to be recent changes in the structure of training provision that have disrupted continuity. In particular, where private training providers closed during the contract period, students tended to quit rather than transfer to other providers.

Harris et al⁶ found the major success factors for completion included:

- 💧 strong personal commitment by the apprentice to the training contract;
- 💧 strong social support network including family, partner friends;
- 💧 an initial placement that provides the individual with what they need to start and continue in the apprenticeship;
- 💧 satisfaction with prior experience of the vocational or occupational area;
- 💧 supportive workplace supervisors and managers;
- 💧 a workplace culture which is supportive;
- 💧 opportunities to participate in some form of structured training;
- 💧 reliable transport;
- 💧 availability of alternative career paths; and
- 💧 value placed on the qualification.

Apprentices form a group of retrenched workers that require specific consideration because of the nature of the training contract and existing training entitlements provided by States and Territories through User Choice arrangements. In most cases States and Territories have measures in place to support apprentices who are stood down or terminated, including retrenched apprentices.

6 Harris R, Simons M, Symons H & Clayton B (2001) 'Factors that contribute to retention and completion in apprenticeship and traineeships' in N Smart (ed) Australian Apprenticeships: research Readings, NCVER, Adelaide

5 Possible Strategies to mitigate the effects of the downturn

The proposed strategies are intended to ensure that Australia will be well positioned to take advantage of a recovery in the world economy as well as mitigating the effects of the downturn on individuals and enterprises. The aim is to maximise the number of employers taking on or continuing to train apprentices now as well as to support apprentices and trainees to complete their training to enable increased productivity in an improved employment market. A joint approach by all levels of government and industry is essential for achieving this aim.

The Taskforce notes these proposals are untested and may or may not be viable following consideration of any practical implementation issues or funding concerns. The Taskforce is operating on a premise of developing new and additional options against a background of existing effort. The Taskforce has developed a list of possible action areas and wishes to consult with stakeholders on these issues.

5.1 Maximising commencements and increasing completions



Maintain or increase apprentice and trainee employment and training including possible reforms to improve apprentice and/or employer take up of training and improve completion of apprenticeship and traineeship qualifications.

Improve the opportunities for young unemployed, at risk youth and existing workers without post school qualifications to achieve access to an apprenticeship

Stimulus Questions:

- 💧 Should particular industry areas be targeted eg areas most adversely affected by the downturn?
- 💧 How can take up be encouraged in the areas where it can best lead to higher qualifications in the workforce, where it best meets industry and economy needs, where it will best lead to improved job security and career path for employees?
- 💧 How to ensure effective implementation of the policy around competency based progression and completion previously endorsed by COAG in the context of the GFC to maximise completions?
- 💧 How to ensure that school-based apprenticeships are completed and translate into employment?
- 💧 How to improve the opportunities of finding an apprenticeship particularly for at risk young people?
- 💧 What possible and practical options are available to reform the pre-apprenticeship system to make it more consistent, effective, transparent, in order to achieve better articulation and credit arrangements to an apprenticeship (including for example pay articulation), and clearer outcomes including with respect to foundation knowledge (for example necessary literacy and numeracy)?
- 💧 What are the resource implications of pre-apprenticeship reform across governments and industry?
- 💧 What additional measures might be considered/introduced by State and Federal Governments in response to the GFC?

Indicative action areas identified for further exploration include:

- assess Commonwealth and State/Territory programs to ensure that they are simplified, and focussed on retention, new commencements and completions of apprenticeships and traineeships.
- consideration of a common portal or entry point for those seeking an apprenticeship and those employers seeking apprentices.
- a communications strategy supported by governments and industry and focussed on the critical importance of developing Australia's skills base for the future and the advantages of apprenticeships/traineeships for individuals, enterprises and Australia's economic strength.
- support for enterprises repositioning or restructuring as a result of the economic downturn to employ apprentices and trainees as part of their solution. This should be industry focussed and integrated into existing industry support/mentoring services.
- a nationally consistent approach for apprentices to defer or suspend their training contract if required, and support to re-enter the system with full credit.
- examine the implementation of competency based completion and progression, industry by industry, or targeted to industries of highest priority, to ensure processes and systems are in place to maximise benefits to apprentices and employers.
- promote best practice pre-apprenticeship/pre-employment programs, targeted for the unemployed, at risk youth and workers without post-school qualifications with an emphasis on employment outcomes for participants.
- work with the schooling sectors to identify strategies for increasing numbers of school-based apprentices, improving their completion rates and supporting transition into work.
- mechanisms to ensure employers of apprentices and trainees in all states have access to a payroll tax rebate scheme.
- promote best practice examples of recognition processes for existing skills, including development of specific Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) tools for critical areas at risk.

5.2 Retaining apprentices through the downturn



Provision of immediate support for at risk apprentices to retain their employment and complete their qualifications

Stimulus Questions:

- 💧 What further steps could improve the capacity of group training companies to retain apprentices?
- 💧 How can the problem of early completion at the time of downturn leading to early unemployment be addressed?
- 💧 What immediate support or incentives might be effective to encourage employers to retain apprentices during the downturn?
- 💧 What approaches could encourage early intervention and case management?
- 💧 Are there particular measures required for apprentices who have almost completed their qualifications but who lose their job?
- 💧 Is there scope for a consistent approach to minimum standards for the support and protection of apprentices and trainees at the state level in the current economic situation?
- 💧 Is there scope for some minimum standards for approaching requests for apprenticeship cancellation to ensure all possibilities for completion of the apprenticeship are exhausted?

Indicative action areas identified for further exploration include:

- possible national agreement by industry that cancellation of an apprenticeship in a business that is experiencing a downturn is a last resort.
- mechanisms to ensure that consistent business-related suspension arrangements and protections for apprentices and trainees are in place and promoted amongst employers.
- examine ways to enable and promote more flexible delivery of training, so that apprentices and trainees can complete off job training in down time and increase productivity post-completion (eg skills for sustainability). RTOs and employers should work with individual apprentices/trainees to update training plans supported by more flexible delivery, including e-learning options.
- investigate options for targeted mentoring services for at risk apprentices/trainees and their employers - including direct indentured arrangements and GTOs – with strategies to keep the apprentice/trainee in employment and training, eg accelerated completion, alternative on-job experience.
- examine ways in which retired tradespersons could be a key resource to support apprentices at risk.
- support large employers of apprentices to develop customised solutions to maximise the retention and continued training of their apprentices/trainees.
- investigate payment of an investment bonus to employers at the end of the second and third years of their apprenticeship to encourage ongoing employment.

5.3 Supporting out of trade/retrenched apprentices

Terms of Reference

Assist apprentices and trainees who have lost their jobs to continue their training and complete their qualifications

Stimulus Questions:

- 💧 How will prospective employers be linked with out-of-trade apprentices?
- 💧 Do current arrangements allow sufficient continuity options for increased numbers of out-of-trade apprentices?
- 💧 Do current intermediaries have sufficient capacity to place increased demand?
- 💧 What actions can be taken to enable and support more flexible off-job training?

Indicative action areas identified for further exploration include:

- enable RTOs to continue flexible off job training for retrenched apprentices, including tracking and liaison with state regulators. States could agree to:
 - waive (or defer) the training fee
 - continue to pay travel and accommodation allowances and concessions
- investigate other intermediaries in the system that could facilitate access to employment opportunities for out of trade apprentices/trainees, including for example local government or community projects.
- explore eligibility requirements for Commonwealth benefits such as Youth Allowance and New Start to ensure income support is available for retrenched apprentices and trainees while continuing to train.
- develop a national communication strategy to maximise the take-up of these options for apprentices and trainees and therefore the retention and ongoing development of skills.
- strengthen intermediaries such as GTOs, including offering increased funding flexibility.

6. Next Steps

In this consultation, the Taskforce is seeking stakeholder feedback on the suggested initiatives and on additional actions that will mitigate the impact of the economic downturn on apprentices and trainees.

In developing responses, the Taskforce would appreciate stakeholders regard for:

- 💧 identifying any additional priorities or opportunities for action that should be considered by the Taskforce;
- 💧 priority of high impact proposals identifying those that will make the most difference in increasing or sustaining the actual numbers of apprentices and trainees employed and completing;
- 💧 indicative actions able to be implemented across government and industry;
- 💧 whether actions are short or long term and whether they require tripartite agreement; and
- 💧 whether strategies should be targeted, for example at particular industries (mining, construction, engineering etc); at particular groups (unemployed, at risk youth, workers without post-school qualifications etc); at apprentices or trainees or both; or applied differentially across states.

The process may raise questions which require longer term system reform.

In order to support its work, the Taskforce has put in place strategies to monitor the impact of the economic downturn and implementation of mitigating strategies on the training and employment of trainees and apprentices.

Commonwealth, States & Territories responses

Current support and GFC specific initiatives for apprentices/employers

Appendix 1: Commonwealth programs

Current initiatives (Commonwealth): Program Name	Objectives
Apprenticeship Wage Top-up*	To address skills shortages
Support for Mid-Career Apprentices*	To encourage workers to upgrade their skills in a trade experiencing skills shortages
Apprenticeship Training (Fee) Vouchers*	To address skills shortages.
Commonwealth Trade Learning Scholarship*	To assist eligible Australian Apprentices in skills shortage area, working for small or medium sized enterprise or a Group Training Organisation.
Tools For Your Trade voucher Initiative (\$800)*	To ensure Australian Apprentices have the necessary tools to meet their employment needs
Tools For Your Trade cash payment*	To provide financial support to Australian Apprentices
Living Away From Home Allowance	To provide additional financial support where an Australian Apprentice has to move away from their parental home to participate in an Australian Apprenticeship.
Disabled Australian Apprentice Wage Support	To encourage employers to provides Australian Apprenticeship opportunities to people with disabilities
Assistance for Tutorial, Interpreter and Mentor Services for Disabled Australian Apprentices	To assist Australian Apprentices with disability to reach their full potential as a skilled worker and to ensure that they are not excluded from participation in the program.
Rural and Regional Skills Shortage Incentive	To boost training in rural and regional Australia
Commencement, Recommencement and Completion Incentives (for Certificate II, III and IV level qualifications)	To address national skills needs and encourage employers to engage people undertaking Australian Apprenticeships
Commencement, Recommencement and Completion Incentives for Diploma and Advanced Diploma qualifications *	To address industry requirements for a more highly skilled workforce.
Innovation Incentive	To build Australia's competitive advantage in both emerging and traditional industries.
Mature Aged Worker Incentive	To provide support to mature aged workers looking to improve their skills to obtain work.
Australian School-based Apprenticeships Incentive	To provide a pathway from school to an Australian Apprenticeship.
Productivity Places Program	Provision of 85,000 training places in areas of skill shortages
Skills for Sustainability Incentive	To provide funding for a pilot Skills for Sustainability Incentive Program, as part of the <i>Skills for the Carbon Challenge</i> initiative, to provide support for up to 5,000 Australian Apprentices in selected skills shortage trade occupations undertaking a threshold of sustainability skills related training.
Youth Allowance (including Austudy for over 25s and ABSTUDY)	To address national skills needs and encourage people to enter Australian Apprenticeships
The <i>Trade Training Centres in Schools</i> Program	To enable all secondary schools across Australia to apply for funding to construct and operate Trade Training Centres providing students with Certificate III or above qualifications in trades experiencing skills shortages or in emerging industries.
Joint Group Training Program	To provide Group Training Organisations (GTOs) with funds to develop strategies and initiatives which encourage and improve the commencements and completions in Australian Apprenticeships in line with nationally agreed priority areas across skills, clients and geographic locations. Funding is provided on a 1:1 basis between the Australian and State/Territory Governments
Group Training Australian Apprenticeships Targeted Initiative Program	To provide Group Training Organisations (GTOs) with funding to encourage innovation and growth in Australian Apprenticeships. The program funds GTOs to employ Australian Apprentices, in priority areas across client groups, regional or industry areas, that would not otherwise happen without intervention.
Group Training in the Trades Program - Pre-vocational component	To provide pre-vocational training in the trades to assist people to articulate into an Australian apprenticeship.
Fast Track Apprenticeships Program	Funding is provided to Registered Training Organisations to work with employers and industry to develop and implement apprenticeship pathways that reduce the time taken to complete entire apprenticeships (not just off-the-job components) in a way that ensures quality and meets the skills and training needs of industry, employers and apprentices.
Australian Apprenticeships Access program	To provide 9,500 ongoing pre-vocational training and support places per annum.

Additional initiatives (Commonwealth): Program Name	Objectives
Securing Apprenticeships and Traineeships initiative	To support out-of-trade Australian Apprentices to remain connected to the workforce and to maintain their investment in training. To increase the national skills base through successful completion of Australian Apprenticeships training
Securing Apprenticeships and Traineeships Through Registered Training Organisations initiative	To support out-of-trade Australian Apprentices to continue to complete their off-the-job training requirements through a Registered Training Organisation.
Training and Learning Bonus	Financial support to assist with costs of the 2009 academic year.
National Partnership on the Nation Building and Jobs Plan	Australian Apprentices are retained or commenced through a commitment by jurisdictions to give priority in contracting and tendering arrangements for government funded infrastructure construction to businesses that have a demonstrated commitment to adding or retaining trainees and apprentices.
The Australian Apprenticeships Access Program *	To provide in 2009-10 an additional 5,500 tailored pre-vocational training and support places to help vulnerable job seekers gain an apprenticeship or move into further training.

* Changes announced in Budget on 12 May 2009

Appendix 2: New South Wales programs

Current initiatives (NSW): Program Name	Objectives
Ben Chifley Scholarships	To support apprentices in country NSW who are struggling to make ends meet. 10 Scholarships are awarded per year for apprentices in first, second and third year (a total of 30 Scholarships each year)
\$200 Gear Up Allowance	Assist apprentices to purchase appropriate and safe clothing, including uniforms and protective equipment
\$100 rebate on an apprentice's car registration	Assist apprentices with costs of a vehicle, which is often needed to attend a worksite or off-the-job training
Travel concessions	Assist apprentices and trainees with train, rail & ferry travel costs to and from work and formal training
Vocational Travel and Accommodation Assistance (VTAS)	Subsidies and allowances are provided to apprentices and trainees to assist them in meeting costs incurred for travel and accommodation related to off-the-job training with a registered training provider

Additional initiatives (NSW): Program Name	Objectives
Continuing Apprentices Placement Service (CAPS)	The objectives of the service are to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide an avenue for employers to register their willingness to take on a partially completed apprentice or trainee provide committed apprentices and trainees the opportunity to continue their apprenticeship or traineeship provide a one-off relocation allowance for apprentices and trainees needing to move to or from a regional area to continue their apprenticeship or traineeship have a positive impact on apprenticeship and traineeship completion rates increase the numbers of apprenticeships and traineeships and enhance the skills of industry and individuals to reduce skills shortages extend existing links with key client groups consistent with implementation of the NSW Skills Centres strategy
NSW Public Sector Apprenticeship Strategy	To boost jobs for young people and the NSW economy 4,000 additional apprenticeship places through state government agencies over four years 2000 cadetships in NSW public sector agencies

Appendix 3: South Australia programs

Current initiatives (SA): Program Name	Objectives
Drought Apprentice Retention Program	Support apprentices in drought affected areas to remain connected to the workforce and to maintain the investment in training
Apprentice/Travel & Accommodation Subsidy	Assist apprentices/trainees in regional/remote SA to access off job training.
User Choice	Support the training of apprentices and trainees to broaden and enhance South Australia's skills base.
Traineeship and Apprenticeship Information Service	Support the training of apprentices and trainees to broaden and enhance South Australia's skills base.
Joint Group Training Funding Program	To support the retention and employment of apprentices employed by Group Training Organisations
Out of Trade Register	To support out-of-trade apprentices and trainees to remain connected to the workforce and to maintain the investment in training.

Additional initiatives (SA): Program Name	Objectives
Expanded web enabled Out of Trade Register	To support out-of-trade apprentices and trainees to remain connected to the workforce and to maintain the investment in training
10% Plan	To support the retention and employment of apprentices and trainees
Joint Group Training Funding Program	To support the retention and employment of apprentices employed by Group Training Organisations
Apprentice/Trainee Support Initiatives	To support the retention and employment of apprentices and trainees
Payroll Tax Rebate Scheme	Support the training of apprentices and trainees to broaden and enhance South Australia's skills base.
Career Start	Support the training of apprentices and trainees to broaden and enhance South Australia's skills base.
Aboriginal Apprenticeship Program	Support the training of Aboriginal apprentices and trainees to broaden and enhance South Australia's skills base
Apprentice and Trainee Workcover Level Exemption	Support the training of apprentices and trainees to broaden and enhance South Australia's skills base.

Appendix 4: Western Australian programs

Current initiatives (WA): Program Name	Objectives
ApprentiCentre	To provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mentoring and support; apprenticeship and traineeship training contract registration and management ; and coordinated access to services in WA relating to apprenticeships and traineeships.
Aboriginal School Based Training Program	To assist indigenous Western Australian School Students to access a pathway into apprenticeships and traineeships.
School Apprenticeship Link	To assist Western Australian School Students to access a pathway into apprenticeships.
Free Certificate IV in Training and Assessment Program	To provide employers and supervisors with skills to build and improve training skills so they can provide apprentices and trainees with a quality training experience.
Apprentice Edge Card	To reward apprentices and trainees with discounts at a number of WA retailers as part of a strategy to raise awareness of services offered by ApprentiCentre.
Fast Track Apprenticeships	To enable workers have their current skills and industry experience formally recognised allowing an accelerated progression through the relevant trade apprenticeship.
ApprentiCentre Jobs Board	To provide a service to connect potential employers with potential apprentices and trainees. Employers can advertise vacancies and potential apprentices/trainees can register for suitable vacancies.
Priority Start Building Policy	To require employers tendering for state government building and infrastructure work to employ apprentices and trainees.
Payroll Tax Exemption	To exempt employers from payroll tax in relation to apprentices and trainees.
Joint Group Training Program Funding	To provide Group Training Organisations with funding for targeted outcomes for apprenticeships and traineeships based on priority areas.

Additional initiatives (WA): Program Name	Objectives
Securing Out of Trade Apprentice Initiative	To re-engage cancelled or suspended apprentices with a Group Training Organisation for a 12 week placement with a host employer to complete their apprenticeship. Funding of \$1800 for a 12 week period. To support GTOs in attempts to re-engage their apprentices where a host placement cannot be found after a four week period. Funding of \$1800 for a 12 week period.
Temporary rebate of workers' compensation premiums.	To help to maintain the development of a skilled workforce needed when the State's economy returns to growth.
Critical Response Team	To provide additional support for employers and employees affected by the economic downturn.

Appendix 5: Northern Territory programs

Current initiatives (NT): Program Name	Objectives
Apprentice Travel and Accommodation Allowance	To offset travel and accommodation costs for apprentices attending block training away from their home locality
Occupational Shortage Employer Incentives	To encourage the employment and retention of additional apprentices/trainees within identified occupational shortage areas
Disadvantaged Groups Employer Incentives	To encourage the employment and retention of additional apprentices/trainees from disadvantaged groups
Workwear/Workgear Bonus Scheme	To assist eligible Northern Territory apprentices and trainees with costs they incur buying workwear, safety gear and other work related necessities during the first year of their apprenticeship or traineeship.

Additional initiatives (NT): Program Name	Objectives
Joint Group Training funding Program	To encourage the employment, retention and completion of apprentices and trainees employed through group training arrangements
Employment of Public Sector Apprentices and Trainees	To employ an additional 100 apprentices and trainees in the public sector.

Appendix 6: Tasmanian programs

Current initiatives (TAS): Program Name	Objectives
Fee Cap - \$990	Stimulate demand by reducing cost to employers and apprentices
Travel allowances	Support apprentices and trainees
Training consultancy	Support apprentices and trainees and employers
Literacy and numeracy support	Support apprentices and trainees
Payroll-tax rebate on apprentice wages	Stimulate demand by reducing cost to employers
Building and construction training levy (a hypothecated tax on users of building services used in part for employment subsidies.	Stimulate demand by reducing cost to employers through subsidies
Out of Trade register	To assist people return to trade
Skills Response Unit	Respond to closures, retrenchments etc

Additional initiatives (TAS): Program Name	Objectives
Targeted industry intelligence	Awareness of closures, downsizing and flow-on effects
Case management	Placing apprentices and trainees
Liaison and collaboration with economic development agencies and DEEWR	Awareness of vulnerabilities and coordinated response action
Group training monitoring	Awareness and response
Assessment services (Tasmanian Skills Institute)	Assist displaced apprentices make transitions

Appendix 7: Victorian programs

Current initiatives (VIC): Program Name	Objectives
Apprentice/Traineeship Completion Bonus Program	To provide an incentive to employers to encourage apprentices and trainees to complete their training.
Apprentice Trade Bonus	To provide financial support to first year apprentices in traditional trades to partially offset the low wages paid to first year apprentices in many industries

Additional initiatives (VIC): Program Name	Objectives
Apprentice/Traineeship Completion Bonus Program plus new Early Completion Bonus	To provide an incentive to employers to encourage apprentices and trainees to complete their training, plus an additional incentive payment to encourage early completion.
Out of trade list	To assist out of trade apprentices find another employer.
Change to TAFE program delivery guidelines	To allow unemployed apprentices to complete their qualification.
Additional funding to Group Training Association of Victoria	Additional funding has been provided to Group Training Association of Victoria so it can provide Skills Victoria with monthly reports on out of trade apprentices and regional trends
Apprentice retention projects	To assist in apprentice retention: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding pre-apps – Stage 1 • Materials and other support for employers and apprentices • Additional support to help place out of trade apprentices • Trialling new models of apprenticeship delivery

Appendix 8: Australian Capital Territory programs

Current initiatives (ACT): Program Name	Objectives
National WorldSkills Australia Competition.	Showcase the talents of ACT Australian apprentices and test their abilities against competitors in various industries and businesses
Workforce Initiatives	Support the design of a skills Development Centre and other initiatives in ACT Health to meet its training and research needs.
Building Maintaining ACTPS Capacity	Attract and retain workers, enhance leadership skills and accountability, improve graduate recruitment, entry level traineeships and strategies for older workers
Customised Student Support Program	Fund the CIT Vocational College to develop customised learning programs
ACTPS Executive Development and Future Leaders Program.	Support succession planning and the development of educational leaders at all levels of the ACT Public service.
Supporting jobs	refurbish existing schools as early childhood schools
Supporting quality training	provide professional development to RTOs through various forums
Student Connect	A pilot to connect international students with employers through formalised regular work experience
ACT Public Service Attraction and Retention Framework	reflect the ageing workforce and need for entry level recruits
Professional development for midwives and nurses.	ACT Health to offer a graduate one year transition to practice
Expansion of InTACT's ICT Traineeship Program	Support building skills in the ICT sector
COAG's Reform Agenda	Continued active participation in working groups and on committees
Expansion of CIT's scholarship program	
Steering Advisory Group	To advise on careers education and student transitions
<i>Bringing Nurses Back to the Workforce</i>	ACT Health provides a refresher program, the Commonwealth Program:
<i>Return to Work Grants</i>	To fund women to return to work through support for attending short courses, paying for childcare to attend interviews, funding for the purchase of equipment, clothing or text books
<i>Silver Lining Kits</i>	Were developed and distributed as part of the Silver Lining Project.
Careers Guidance pilot program	To train teachers to deliver career advice in 2008, with
Skills development Centre at The Canberra Hospital.	Promote skills
CIT's Trade Skills Centre	For plumbing pre-vocational and Building and Construction programs
"Roundtables"	Discuss issues impacting on business and industry sectors and to insulate the ACT economy and Canberra business against the impact of the global financial downturn.

Additional initiatives (ACT): Program Name	Objectives
Australian Government's Productivity Places Program (PPP) Phase III	To assist in addressing skills shortages
Fyshwick Trades Skill Centre	Develop feasibility study and design
Supervision of apprentices and trainees	Distribute a <i>Supervising your apprentice or trainee</i> pack to employers to assist them provide appropriate supervision in the workplace
Engagement with community about VET	Purchase advertising space in B2B magazine highlighting department sponsored VET events/forums
COAG Communiqué on Jobs, Training and Youth Transitions in the ACT	Create a position to manage the Government's response to the Communiqué to support young people during transitional stages through education, training and employment to maximise educational outcomes and qualifications and in turn increase the opportunities to be engaged in the workforce.
"Green" Job Opportunities	New "green" job opportunities are emerging as many sectors respond to climate change. In 2009 the Government will seek to identify opportunities that may exist in this area

Appendix 9: Queensland programs

Current initiatives (QLD): Program Name	Objectives
User Choice	User Choice is a program that provides public funding to RTOs and works in conjunction with the apprenticeship and traineeship system. User Choice allows employers, together with their apprentices/trainees to negotiate directly with RTOs to arrange training to meet their specific needs
Queensland Training Information Service	Is a system for clients to search or browse for information on apprenticeships and traineeships approved by the Training and Employment Recognition Council for delivery in Queensland, including details on supporting courses and qualifications, restricted callings and preferred suppliers (RTOs).
Train-to-retain	An initiative to ensure a quality training experience in a safe and supportive workplace providing benefits to employers and industries by creating more productive workplaces.
Travel and Accommodation Subsidy	The Apprenticeship and Traineeship Travel and Accommodation Subsidy (TRACC) is provided to apprentices and trainees (other than school-based as they obtain subsidies through Education) to assist in offsetting the costs incurred in attending structured training.
Payroll Tax	Employers employing apprentices and trainees are exempt from paying payroll tax.
Financial Assistance Apprentices Trainees	Apprentices and trainees whose training contracts are cancelled may be supported financially to attend a training organisation to assist them to re-enter a training contract.
10% policy	An initiative which supports the retention and employment of apprentices and trainees within the construction industry.
Training Queensland Customer Centre	The provision of information on the apprenticeships and traineeship system within Queensland via: Dedicated web site 1800 number
Construction Skills Queensland	Construction Skills Queensland acts as a single point of contact to help attract, recruit, train and retain workers, therefore ensuring a sustainable workforce with the rights skills in the right place at the right time.
Training Ombudsman	The Training Ombudsman's office considers and investigates complaints from apprentices, trainees and employers who believe they have been treated unfairly or unreasonably.

Additional initiatives (QLD): Program Name	Objectives
Apprentice and Trainee package: Maintaining the Effectiveness of Queensland's Apprenticeship and Traineeship System During the Global Financial Crisis	The package of initiatives is focussed around four key strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> maintaining apprentice and trainee commencement levels early intervention to retain apprentices and trainees assisting apprentices and trainees that have been cancelled, and upskilling recently completed apprentices and trainees.
Trade Training Taskforce	The Trade Training Taskforce brings together key industry and government stakeholders to develop and implement urgent measures that ensure apprentices and trainees in training, and those who have lost employment or are at risk of losing employment, are supported to complete their training The Taskforce is responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> developing and progressing a package of strategies that support apprentices and trainees during the current labour market environment involving employers, unions and other key stakeholders in discussions determining and monitoring the implementation of the package discussing with the Commonwealth Government how best to co-ordinate joint activities monitoring implementation progress and reporting to the Minister for Education and Training.
Construction Skills Queensland	Implementation of a pilot program in the Sunshine Coast/Wide Bay region in which industry supports employers, apprentices and trainees.
Stand Down/Suspension	Development of a procedure which allows stood down/suspended apprentices to participate in training, allowing progression through their apprenticeship
Training Queensland Regional Staff	Regional staff are providing additional assistance to apprentices and trainees affected by the GFC. This assistance provides support and encouragement for further employment opportunities or training that will assist in the progression through the apprenticeship or traineeship.
Register of Apprentices and Trainees at risk or cancelled due to GFC.	A register of apprentices and trainees who have been stood down or whose training contract has been cancelled has been established and is being managed by the Department of Education and Training. This database is being used to actively case manage those apprentices and trainees back into work or training leading to work.
Institutionally Based Pathway	A pathway for apprentices allowing late 3 rd and 4 th year apprentices to complete their qualification outside of their apprenticeship.
Targeted retention strategies action.	Key service delivery areas, i.e. regional officers of the department, skilling Solutions Queensland, Centres of Excellence, Group Training Organisations and other key stakeholders have been engaged to work collaboratively on targeted retention strategies for apprentices and trainees.
Introducing a Gap Year in Apprenticeships	Provision to suspend an apprenticeship/traineeship as a last resort to avoid cancellation of the training contract.