



MEDIA RELEASE

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Industry and Unions support apprentice incentive

The Chairs of the Australian Apprentices Taskforce today welcomed the announcement by Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard of a major \$100 million lift in incentives for employers to take on young people as trades apprentices this summer and for increased pre-apprenticeship programs.

The Australian Apprentices Taskforce was established earlier this year by COAG (Council of Australian Governments).

Co Chairs, Simone Wetzlar (Executive General Manager People, Thiess Pty Ltd) and Julius Roe (National President Australian Manufacturing Workers Union) said today that "the Taskforce has found that trade apprenticeship commencements have reduced by around 25% due to the Global Financial Crisis".

"Last time this happened in the early 1990s it took more than a decade for numbers to recover. Youth unemployment also remained stubbornly high.

"The Taskforce has consulted widely with industry, unions, trainers and group training companies. They overwhelmingly supported the need for an adjustment to incentives to take on and retain trades apprentices and that the quality and number of pre-apprenticeship opportunities should also be strengthened."

The Taskforce recommended in July that Governments should utilise the stimulus spending on infrastructure projects to also lift apprenticeship numbers by allocating 10% of labour hours to the employment of apprentices and upskilling workers and this recommendation was accepted by COAG and is being implemented by Governments.

Further recommendations from the Taskforce to strengthen the trade apprenticeship system to improve the quality of the training experience for young people and to lift commencement and completion rates will be considered by COAG before the end of 2009.

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