



Group Training Australia

The Largest Employer Network of Apprentices and Trainees

MEDIA RELEASE

GTA is the national peak body representing the network of over 150 Group Training Organisations (GTOs) employing apprentices and trainees throughout Australia.

3 May 2011

Action required to transform skills vision into reality

Group Training Australia (GTA), representing the single largest network employing apprentices and trainees, today welcomed a major new report by Skills Australia which examines options for boosting Australia's skilled workforce.

The report, *Skills for prosperity: a roadmap for vocational education and training*, says extensive reforms are needed for the vocational education and training (VET) sector to deliver the skilled workforce capable of securing Australia's economic prosperity.

The Chief Executive Officer of GTA, Jim Barron said the report recognises the far-reaching steps that will be necessary across multiple sectors in order to generate some five million skilled workers over coming decades.

"The report reflects the growing recognition that, on current settings, the VET system is unlikely to deliver the sheer number of workers necessary in a growing economy. It recognises the need for new ways of funding, structuring, and regulating the broad VET system to deliver higher-level skills that are more in line with the needs of industry."

While welcoming the thrust of the report, GTA believes there is more that can be achieved in the field of skills enhancement by exploring the model of intermediaries such as group training with their long-established record of achievement in advancing apprenticeship and traineeships.

"Our approach is aimed at three things – commencements, progression and completion – all of which are vital in getting skilled people into fulfilling jobs with host employers. Group training is very good at doing the simple things well."

"The group training network's long history of providing mentoring and employment support services to apprentices and trainees demonstrates the effectiveness of an integrated strategy in producing young people with the skills needed in a modern workforce."

The report's focus on the issue of workforce development represents a landmark step in raising the fundamental importance of deeper level skills across the entire workforce.

GTA supports the establishment of an Enterprise Skills Investment Fund, which will amalgamate several existing funding streams, and provide a financial incentive for enterprises to undertake the further development of human capital.

GTA's recent report, *Looking Ahead: the Future for Group Training*, identified the issue of workforce development as a key driver of productivity, and a path through which group training organisations can become more adaptable and responsive in a dynamic economy.

Mr Barron said that for the report's recommendations to have real impact, it will require leadership at the political level to ensure that the findings were translated from the 'whiteboard' to the field.

"We look to both sides of politics to take on board these findings, and roll up their sleeves to ensure that the vision becomes a reality."

Mr Barron also supported the report's recommendation that apprenticeships and traineeships be brought under Commonwealth authority.

"This reflects the recognition of apprenticeships and traineeships in a national context, and the efficiencies that could be achieved by streamlining current arrangements across the states and territories."

A review of the role and effectiveness of Australian Apprenticeship Centres is also supported. There is considerable unease with the way in which the system currently operates, and a real opportunity for an approach that would achieve better outcomes for apprentices, trainees and employers.

Concerns over the current VET-in-schools programs have seen Skills Australia recommend a review to promote improved quality and efficiency. GTA believes VET-in-schools plays an important part in establishing a career pathway.

"The National Trade Cadetships, to commence from 2012, will provide students with work-readiness skills, and the chance to build a promising career."

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