



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.

21 February 2011

Apprenticeship reform model for the future

Group Training Australia (GTA), representing the single largest network employing apprentices and trainees, today welcomed the independent report into the future of the Australian Apprenticeships System as a far-sighted and balanced approach to the necessary reform of the sector.

The report, *A Shared responsibility – Apprenticeships for the 21st Century*, highlights many of the challenges and obstacles that can stand in the way of apprentices and trainees who play a key role in the development of Australia's skills needs.

The group training network has a long history in the engagement and development of apprentices and trainees, and believes that the expert report has highlighted a number of critical issues that group training has also identified, and sought to address over many years.

The Chief Executive Officer of GTA, Jim Barron said the importance of mentoring, support and pastoral care for apprentices and trainees is something that is a hallmark of group training's approach, and is vital to a successful outcome for all parties.

"The report's focus on 'shared responsibility' has been demonstrated as one of the critical components in a mutually beneficial outcome, involving government, apprentices and trainees, employers, and training providers."

"Many of the key features that the report has identified as best practice in this area have long been embodied and implemented as part of the successful group training model," Mr Barron said.

GTA looks forward to contributing to the consultation process on the report, including consultations on the future of Australian Apprenticeships support services, and notes in particular the Minister's decision to extend the contract for the current Australian Apprenticeship Centres for a further twelve months.

GTA welcomes the report's focus on ways of improving apprentice completions which are at an unacceptably low level. This is a complex issue with multiple causes which GTA has addressed extensively in reports and policy positions to Government.

We also welcome the focus on both sides of the employment equation, with employers being encouraged and supported in taking on apprentices and being provided with specialist advice and information on their roles and obligations.

"One of the most important single lessons from group training's experience is the absolute need to work closely with host employers to assist them to both fulfil their roles, and to ensure that they get the best return on their investment in training.

“Field officers employed by group training oversee not only the progress of the apprentice or trainee but also the effectiveness of the employer in meeting their requirements and reaping the benefits.

“We strongly believe that Australia’s unique group training model, with shared responsibility between the group training organisation, the host employer, the apprentice or trainee, and the special focus on mentoring and pastoral care, should be supported by government as a best practice approach to future apprentice training and skills development,” Mr Barron said.

GTA’s recent reform blueprint, *“Looking Ahead: the future for group training – an economic and industry analysis”*, set out a comprehensive way forward for the organisation in the key area of workforce development as a means of driving higher level skills.

GTA also welcomes the expert panel’s recommendation to redirect current government employer incentives for training to those areas that have “tangible and enduring” value to the economy, including traditional trades and high growth sectors.

The role of VET in Schools is of increasing significance as a pathway to an apprenticeship or traineeship, and GTA welcomes the report’s recommendation of a more formal approach to the regulation of this area. GTA looks forward to playing its part in the National Trade Cadetships work experience program which will assist many more school students to experience the value of a career in the trades.

.....

Group Training Australia is the national peak body representing the network of over 150 Group Training Organisations (GTOs) employing apprentices and trainees throughout Australia. GTA was recently awarded the Council of Small Business Organisations of Australia (COSBOA) Small Business Champion Award 2010.

Media Contact:

Bob Bowden, Foresight Communications, 02 9241 2811, 0412 753 298, bbowden@bowmac.com.au