

Media Release

\$100mil Apprenticeship Kickstart Program Welcomed

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Today's announcement by the Deputy Prime Minister that up to twenty-one thousand young people will be assisted by the Apprentice Kick Start program has been welcomed by the nation's foremost Group Training Organisation, Skill360 Australia. According to Skill360 Australia's Chief Executive Officer, it will be of great benefit to young people considering their career choices.

"This announcement comes just at the right time for this year's school leavers who are about to enter the workforce and who are apprehensive about what the future holds," said Troy Williams, Chief Executive Officer of Skill360 Australia.

The Deputy Prime Minister's announcement follows government research showing that the number of people starting trades apprenticeships had dropped by more than twenty percent during the economic downturn. In some regions it is approaching forty percent according to Skill360 Australia, the nation's foremost industry-based not for profit provider of apprenticeship and vocational training services.

"Initiatives such as these that put young people into work are welcomed by Skill360 Australia. Not only does it do the right thing by twenty-one thousand young people, it provides our economy with the skills that it will require when the economic recovery gets fully underway," Mr Williams said.

According to Skill360 Australia many companies are finding it difficult to recruit qualified trades people, even in the current economic climate.

"Despite the current economic downturn which has seen unemployment rise to more than 12% in some parts of the country, a shortage of skilled tradespeople is still evident in some industry sectors," Mr Williams said.

Mr Williams said that this shortage stemmed from a less than satisfactory investment by business in vocational education and training over past years, part of the reason that the Deputy Prime Minister's announcement is good news for employers.

"This investment gives hopes to young people wanting to pursue a career in traditional trades like butchers, bakers, bricklayers, carpenters, electricians, hairdressers and pastry cooks. We are looking forward to working with local businesses to create jobs in these areas," Mr Williams concluded.

The Deputy Prime Minister's announcement also included \$20million extra for pre-apprenticeship funding designed to facilitate the entry of young people into apprenticeships, something welcomed by Skill360 Australia.

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