



## **AUSTRALIAN APPRENTICESHIPS REFORM**

The Australian Government is transforming the Australian Apprenticeships system to increase completion rates for apprentices and trainees and deliver the skills we need for the future. As part of this reform process, the Government is undertaking the following steps:

- *National harmonisation of apprenticeship regulation, rules and pathways*
  - National harmonisation will reduce barriers to apprentice labour mobility, increase consistency of pathways into apprenticeships across states and territories and reduce costs for businesses, particularly national providers.
  - The Government is working with state and territory governments to harmonise the differing Australian Apprenticeships arrangements across the country.
  - The Government will establish an Industry Consultation Group to keep industry informed of progress and provide input into this process.
- *Streamlining support services*
  - The Government will fundamentally reform the Australian Apprenticeships Support Services system over the next few years. The Government will work with states and territories to create a one-stop shop for Australian Apprenticeships, making it easier for businesses and apprentices to gain the support they need and reduce the current confusion and duplication in the system.
  - The Government is already taking steps to streamline support services by utilising e-business technology under the new Australian Apprenticeships Support Services contract, which will come into effect from July 2012.
- *Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Program reform*
  - Simplification and better targeting of the Government's \$1.1 billion incentive payments program to ensure these payments are most effective will lead to improved outcomes for apprentices and enable the Government to better respond to Australia's growing skills challenge. The Government has commissioned an independent review of apprenticeship incentive payments.
- *Wages and conditions for Australian Apprentices*
  - A review of apprentice and trainee wages and conditions by Fair Work Australia is warranted, and the Government will actively contribute to the review.
  - The Government will support an approach that recognises the importance of competency-based wage progression and which will encourage more experienced Australians to undertake an Australian Apprenticeship.



- *Australian Apprenticeships Ambassadors*
  - The Australian Apprenticeships Ambassadors program will work to raise the profile of Australian Apprentices in the community with the endorsement and advocacy of well-known Australian figures, including Mr Kevin Sheedy AM, Mr Neil Perry and Mr Andrew Ryan.
  
- *Mentoring support*
  - The Government recognises that, consistent with a recent expert panel report, providing more effective support through mentoring and pastoral care for apprentices and employers is one of the best ways to improve completion rates.
  - The Government has initiated the \$101 million Australian Apprenticeships Mentoring Package to fund initiatives driven by industry that will provide targeted mentoring support to thousands of Australian Apprentices.
  - Program guidelines have now been released and the program is open to receive applications for funding.
  
- *Accelerated Apprenticeships*
  - The Australian Apprenticeships system needs to reflect the changing nature of the labour market, and a one-size-fits-all approach to apprenticeships doesn't work anymore.
  - That's why the Australian Government introduced the \$100 million Accelerated Australian Apprenticeships Package, which will support the delivery of high-quality, competency-based vocational education and training.
  - Program guidelines have now been released and the program is open to receive applications for funding.
  
- *National Apprenticeships Program*
  - The Australian Government has committed \$2 million for the National Apprenticeships Program, an industry-led adult apprenticeship project that will see 1000 semi-skilled workers gain full trade qualifications over 18 months.
  - A recent partnership between Bechtel Australia and the Australian Government will see 400 semi-skilled workers complete a formal qualification and employed in the construction of three Queensland LNG plants.
  
- *Australian Skills and Quality Authority (ASQA)*
  - In 2011, the Australian Government created ASQA to regulate Australia's vocational education and training sector. ASQA regulates courses and training providers to ensure nationally approved quality standards are met.