



AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 4 September 2009

APPRENTICES – TIME TO INVEST IN NEW INCENTIVES

Statement by Mr Peter Anderson, Chief Executive

The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), Australia's largest and most representative business organisation, says the time is now right for industry and government to develop additional incentives to employers to encourage the employment and retention of apprentices.

With the Australian economy growing, investment in apprenticeships is a down-payment today to meet the skills needs of tomorrow's economic recovery.

Figures released by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) today show a significant drop during the March quarter in the number of employers taking on an apprentice compared to the same time last year. Comparing apprentice commencements for the March quarter 2009 with the March quarter 2008, the number of new commencements of a trade apprenticeship decreased by 22%.

The NCVER data suggests that it is the trades area in which apprentice commencements have been most hit by the economic downturn, including automotive, engineering, construction, electrotechnology and telecommunications - all areas that were in critical skills shortage before the global financial crisis and which will be an important prerequisite of the coming recovery.

Steps taken by the Government in February to provide incentives for apprenticeship retention now need to be built on. The Government should reform current incentives for apprentices to more closely reflect the actual cost of an apprentice to an employer. The incentives for Certificate III trades apprenticeships need to be increased across all streams. If incentives at all stages were to be increased to a total of \$14,000 (\$10,000 during the life of the agreement and \$4,000 on completion) then new apprenticeship take-ups would be kick-started.

For further information:

Mary Hicks	Director, Employ. Education & Training	02 6273 2311 / 0417 488 566
Brett Hogan	Director of Communications	03 9668 9950 / 0407 273 884

ACCI represents over 350,000 businesses in every State and Territory and all industries. Our network employs around 4 million employees, ranging from the top 100 companies to tens of thousands of small and medium businesses.

www.acci.asn.au

MR 104/09

LEADING AUSTRALIAN BUSINESS