



AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

MEDIA RELEASE

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SCHOOL LEAVERS TO BENEFIT FROM APPRENTICESHIP BOOST

Statement by Mr Peter Anderson, Chief Executive

The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), Australia's largest and most representative business organisation, welcomes today's announcement by the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Employment Participation on improvements to the Jobs Fund to kick start apprenticeships over the forthcoming summer period.

"Initiatives like these are practical and responsive to our labour market needs. They minimise the risk of skill shortages arising from the shortfall in apprenticeship enrolments during the current economic downturn."

"They support the forward-thinking way many employers have addressed employment matters as demand has fallen. Employment levels have been better than expected as employers have made their best endeavours to retain existing staff, while waiting for greater economic certainty before hiring new apprentices.

The incentives announced today are a considerable boost. The \$100 million announcement supports an additional 21,000 apprentice commencements by boosting the first year bonus payment to employers of traditional trades apprentices from \$1500 to \$4850 or an additional \$2,350. After a period of nine months employers will be eligible for a further \$2500 payment.

This will support youth employment in occupations such as carpenters, welders, cooks, electricians, joiners, and hairdressers, which form part of the National Skills Needs List and are still in short supply. \$20 million of the \$100 million will support 5,000 pre-apprenticeship places to give young people the skills they need to successfully complete a trade.

Given the current economic circumstances, the \$80m provided for 21,000 apprenticeships is conservative but realistic. It will boost opportunities for school leavers to access an apprenticeship.

ACCI encourages the employer community to take advantage of these additional allowances and bring forward business decisions to hire new apprentices.

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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.

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