

APPRENTICESHIPS AND TRAINEESHIPS - DELIVERING ON POTENTIAL

The Australian apprenticeship system has a long history of being an effective vehicle for employment-based learning and remains an important pathway for skills formation. Apprenticeships usually focus on developing trade skills at the certificate III level. Unfortunately, it is no longer producing the outcomes wanted and expected and in which substantial public funds are invested.

The Commission has identified three areas where the apprenticeship and traineeship system is significantly underperforming:

- attraction, recruitment, and selection of apprentices and trainees.
- the quality or 'value' of the training received.
- low completion rates.

The Commission has identified six priority areas where changes are required to better meet the needs of young people and employers.

1. Raising the profile and reputation of apprenticeship and traineeship pathways.
2. Improving access to apprenticeships and traineeships.
3. Improving the quality of apprentice and trainee recruitment.
4. Improving completion and retention of apprenticeships and traineeships.
5. Ensuring the training process is relevant, current, and flexible to meet the needs of young people and their employers.
6. Enhancing incentives for employers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1: That the Australian, state, and territory governments fund a national campaign to raise the profile and reputation of apprenticeships and traineeships targeting young people in school, school careers advisors, teachers, and parents.

RECOMMENDATION 2: That state and territory governments expand fee-free pre-apprenticeship programs in TAFE institutes.

RECOMMENDATION 3: That state and territory governments fund TAFE institutes and other non-profit VET providers to work with employers to develop innovative models of training for rural, regional and remote apprentices and trainees.

RECOMMENDATION 4: That employers develop better practices of selecting and recruiting apprentices and trainees.

RECOMMENDATION 5: That all Australian governments invest in initiatives to support employers improve the identification, selection and matching of apprentices and trainees to their businesses.

RECOMMENDATION 6: That age-related wage rates be abolished, and minimum apprentice and trainee award wages be increased to at least the current rates for apprentices and trainees over the age of 21 years.

RECOMMENDATION 7: That all Australian governments review their concessions to ensure that apprentices and trainees are receiving the concessions they need and that applying for concessions is easy.