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MEDIA RELEASE

Poor apprentice completions must be addressed at Jobs and Skills Summit

The current low rate of completions for apprentices and trainees is something that can, and should, be addressed at the Jobs and Skills Summit in Canberra this week.

The National Apprenticeship Employment Network (NAEN), which represents the employers of approximately 25,000 apprentices and trainees, strongly supports efforts to lift apprentice completions and help boost the pipeline of skilled people needed for current and future jobs.

Currently, the completion rate for apprentices is only about 55%.ⁱ

“This is completely unacceptable and we can do a lot better,” the Chief Executive Officer of NAEN, Dianne Dayhew said.

“We have seen a big increase in apprentice commencements over the past couple of years following the employer wage subsidy, but unless we can lift the rate of completion, many of these new entrants are likely to drop out,” Ms Dayhew said.

Group training organisations (GTOs), which NAEN represents, are achieving significantly higher completion rates than through direct employment.

A recent study found that GTOs in NSW are achieving completion rates of up to 74% – approximately 15 percentage points higher than for those that employ apprentices directly.ⁱⁱ

A 2019 report by NCVET found that “GTO completion rates are substantially higher than for small and medium direct employers.”ⁱⁱⁱ

What distinguishes group training is that GTOs employ apprentices and trainees and place them with ‘host’ businesses where they receive mentoring and support from the GTO. Apprentices and trainees can also be ‘rotated’ to a different host business if work dries up or if broader work experience is required.

“Group training achieves better completion rates and provides a safety net for apprentices and trainees so that they have the best chance of success,” Ms Dayhew said.

“Many GTOs are achieving completion rates above 80% because their dedicated field officers put great effort into working with both apprentices and employers to address any problems.

“GTOs also put considerable effort into recruitment, selection and in making good matches between apprentices and trainees with host employers.

“We know that the first year of an apprenticeship is the most critical. Many of the recent wave of new apprentices have been engaged by employers with little or no experience with the apprenticeship system.

“The priority should be on doing everything possible to enable these new apprentices to stay on and complete, otherwise we are going to face a cancellation cliff, where many new entrants are likely to drop out.

“This would be a huge waste of investment in apprenticeships and a terrible loss for young people and for employers who have put their faith in workplace training.”

See [NAEN’s Jobs and Skills Summit Briefing](#).

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The National Apprentice Employment Network is the national peak body representing the network of over 100 Group Training Organisations (GTOs) employing more than 20,000 apprentices and trainees throughout Australia. www.naen.com.au

ⁱ NCVER, August 2022 ‘[Completion and attrition rates for apprentices and trainees 2021](#)’.

ⁱⁱ AEN NSW & ACT, and Social Outcomes, May 2022, ‘[The GTO Advantage: The Value Proposition Report on Group Training Organisations](#)’.

ⁱⁱⁱ NCVER, October 2019 ‘[Completion rates for group training organisations and direct employers: how do they compare?](#)’