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MEDIA RELEASE

Prime Minister’s training overhaul provides the opportunity to advance apprenticeships

The National Apprenticeship Employment Network (NAEN) today welcomed the Prime Minister’s plan for redrawing the national skills and training system to better prepare for a post-COVID recovery.

The Chief Executive Officer of NAEN Dianne Dayhew said Australia’s training system has performed well, but it’s time to look at how it can be overhauled to deliver the skills needed in an economy emerging from a severe downturn.

“Apprenticeships and traineeships will be at the forefront of this change because the types of skills that employers need will evolve quickly and require fast-paced, adaptable learning,” Ms Dayhew said.

“Australia’s apprenticeship system is world class but we also need to look at how it fits with the needs of young people starting their careers, and employers who want the most up to date skills.

“There is frustration with the different approaches to skills training across state and territories. This has created varying funding and licensing models, diverse availability of courses, inconsistent affordability and inefficiencies in delivering crucial skills development.

“The varied funding models also make it difficult for emerging qualifications to be offered consistently. For new qualifications and skills, training providers won’t deliver courses where it is uneconomic unless they access appropriate funding.

“It also makes it difficult to engage industry in national workforce development strategies, where their employees would get the same access to training across state and territory borders. This needs to change if Australia is to keep up with future skills needs.

“For young people embarking on an apprenticeship or traineeship, it can sometimes be a complex and daunting task, requiring a level of knowledge that is challenging,” Ms Dayhew said.

We welcome the Prime Minister's commitment to elevate reform of vocational education and training (VET) as a national priority for the post-COVID era.

NAEN acknowledges the Prime Minister's commitment to skills training, noting it was the first area that was targeted for assistance by the government in its COVID-19 response.

The group training sector has been playing a key part in supporting apprentices and trainees through this period, working with government to develop and implement the small business wage subsidy and JobKeeper programs.

NAEN is also operating the [Apprentice and Trainee Re-engagement Register](#) which connects apprentices and trainees displaced from small businesses during the pandemic with employers who have vacancies.

Group training organisations (GTOs) employ some 25,000 apprentices and trainees across Australia who are placed with host businesses. Apprentices and trainees can be rotated to different host businesses if for instance, work dries up, or wider experience is needed.

The group training network welcomes the government's commitment to reform of the VET sector, building on the findings of the Joyce Review and the commencement of the new National Skills Commission on July 1.

We think this is the right time to streamline the national training system while ensuring that apprenticeships and traineeships continue as a hallmark of skills development for young people.

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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 apprentices and trainees throughout Australia.
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