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MEDIA RELEASE

Apprentice employers welcome commencement incentives

Australia's largest network of employers of apprentices and trainees today welcomed the federal government's \$1.2 billion initiative to boost apprentice commencements.

The National Apprentice Employment Network (NAEN) said the measure will provide a much needed lift to apprentice and trainee sign-ups at a time when new enrolments have stalled.

Under the program, businesses that take on a new Australian apprentice or trainee will be eligible for a 50 per cent wage subsidy, regardless of geographic location, occupation, industry or business size.

The scheme will be open to employers for new or recommencing apprentices or trainees for the period up to 30 September 2021, and worth up to \$7,000 per quarter. It will be capped at 100,000 apprentices and trainees. Group Training Organisations are eligible for the subsidy

The Chief Executive Officer of NAEN Dianne Dayhew said the scheme will be welcomed by businesses and will provide financial support to help build the pipeline of skilled entrants into the workforce.

"There has been a sharp fall-off in apprentices and trainees in work during the COVID-19 crisis and there has also been a slowing of commencements as businesses have put their plans on hold.

"It is vitally important that we ensure openings for a new cohort of school leavers as well as those wishing to start a career through an apprenticeship or traineeship," Ms Dayhew said.

"It is also critical that we have a pipeline of skilled people coming through the system so that Australia isn't faced with a skills crisis when the economic recovery resumes," she said.

NAEN understands that the program is open to existing workers of a business, and cautions that there must be careful management and oversight to ensure that the wage subsidy is targeted at areas of genuine skills need.

The government's commencement incentive will be welcomed, and reflects one of the key recommendations contained in NAEN's policy paper, [Dealing with the Apprenticeship Emergency](#), based on feedback from group training organisations around the country.

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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