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MEDIA RELEASE

Extension of wage subsidy will boost skills training for thousands more apprentices and trainees

Australia's group training sector has welcomed the federal government's extension of the successful apprentice wage subsidy program that has seen thousands of new enrolments in skilled jobs.

The National Apprenticeship Employment Network (NAEN) said the decision to extend the Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements (BAC) 50 per cent wage subsidy will help to rebuild apprentice numbers and propel the post-COVID economic recovery.

The BAC wage subsidy was announced last October and was set to run until 30 September 2021 or until 100,000 new apprentice and trainee places were filled. The program has proven extremely successful, with the 100,000 available places filled in just five months.

Under the extension announced today the 100,000 cap will be removed and the program will continue under the original timetable until 30 September 2021.

Another welcome element of the extension will see businesses that have already registered, and those that will register and sign up a new apprentice or trainee after 5 October 2020, receive the 50 per cent wage subsidy for a full year.

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

"NAEN has argued for an extension and the government has listened. We think this is a sensible decision that reflects the need to restore the strength of the apprenticeship system and help rebuild numbers prevailing before the pandemic.

"COVID has changed the way we work and prepare for careers. There are many school leavers and mature age workers that have seen the appeal of apprenticeships and made a conscious decision to enter the skilled trades or traineeships.

"This extension of the scheme gives many more people the chance to pursue a vocational pathway, where once they may have chosen university or even taken a gap year while considering their future," Ms Dayhew said.

The need to boost commencements was a key consideration in NAEN's policy paper, [Dealing with the Apprenticeship Emergency](#), aimed at restoring apprentice numbers and 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