



Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

# A Shared Responsibility

## Apprenticeships for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century



# The Expert Panel

- Chaired by Mr Jim McDowell- CEO, BAE Systems Australia
- Representatives from industry, unions & academia
- Research undertaken by NCVET to inform recommendations
- Stakeholder engagement through critical friends



# The need for reform

- Skills shortages
- Sensitivity to the economic cycle
- Unacceptably low completion rates
- System complexity
- Misalignment with the workplace relations system



# Findings

- The current system is not fundamentally broken
- Effort should be focused on increasing completions
- Three core elements of an Australian Apprenticeship:
  - The employment relationship
  - High quality on-the-job and off-the-job training
  - Transferability of skills.



# The way forward

## A simpler, more user friendly and effective system

- The system can be baffling to those unfamiliar with it
- More effort must be applied to aligning jurisdictions (Rec 1)
- The system needs a National Custodian (Rec 1)
- Clarify and consolidate the roles of stakeholders (Rec 2)
- Increase national consistency in preparatory training (Rec 9)



# Quality employment relationships support completions

- Accredit all employers of apprentices and trainees and recognise those who excel (Rec 3)
- Ensure all apprentices and trainees have access to pastoral care and mentoring (Rec 4)
- Re-direct current standard employer incentives to fund structured support services (Rec 5)
- Provide additional support to apprentices and trainees who face barriers to participation (Rec 10)



## A responsive system

- Ensure effective return on government investment in Australian Apprenticeships
- Focus Government support on priority occupations (Rec 5)
- Protect and maintain the employment relationship, including during downturns (Rec 7).



# Investment in skills development

- Skills development is a shared responsibility
- Current Government investment is not targeted effectively
- Promote shared investment through the establishment of an Employer Contribution Scheme (Rec 6).





# Making Australian Apprenticeships valued

- The traditional strengths of the system can be built on
- Australian Apprenticeships are an undervalued career choice
- Ensure clearer links to and quality assure school-based VET programs (Rec 8)
- Targeted strategy to lift the status of apprenticeships and traineeships as a pathway to a valuable career (Rec 11).



# Wages, conditions and progression

- Promote a culture of competency-based progression (Rec 12)
- Improve the implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning and Recognition of Current Competence (Rec 13)
- Encourage and endorse a broad review of wages and conditions for apprentices and trainees conducted by Fair Work Australia (Rec 14).



# Responses

- The Australian Government has:  
ruled out an Employer Contribution Scheme

Australian Apprenticeship Centre contracts extended to 30 June 2012 to allow for wider stakeholder consultation.

- Stakeholder responses to date have been broadly supportive of the direction of other recommendations



# Next Steps

- The Government recognises the need for reform
- Consultation will be undertaken over the coming months to seek stakeholder views on the Expert Panel's report
- Consultation will inform a more detailed Government response to the recommendations.





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