



13 September 2024

Hon Andrew Giles MP
Minister for Skills and Training
PO Box 6022
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Via email: minister.giles@dewr.gov.au

Dear Minister,

On behalf of the Australian Industry Group (Ai Group), Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) and the Business Council of Australia (BCA), we are writing to highlight the importance of an appropriately balanced Australian Apprenticeships Incentive System (AAIS).

We understand that the final report of the Strategic Review of the AAIS has been provided to you for consideration.

Our organisations, which represent the breadth of Australia's businesses large and small, believe there are key actions the Government can take to improve apprenticeship commencement and completion rates. These include providing incentives to both employers and apprentices to commence, providing incentives to apprentices to see their contracts through to the end, and providing support to both parties to improve their experience throughout the apprenticeship journey.

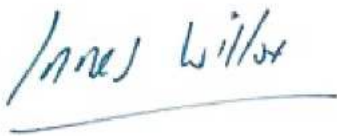
We believe the following six recommendations will boost commencements and completions and ultimately will increase the number of qualified workers available to help overcome Australia's critical skills crisis.

1. Recalibrate the incentives system to continue to encourage commencements while providing increased support for completions:
 - a. Provide commencement and completion incentives to apprentices.
 - b. Provide commencement incentives for employers engaging an apprentice.
2. Provide additional incentives for employers to attract and retain apprentices in underrepresented cohorts:
 - a. Mature-age apprentices
 - b. Women in male-dominated industries/trades and men in female-dominated industries/trades
 - c. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

3. Assess the Disabled Australian Apprentice Wage Support Program to ensure it reflects current wage rates.
4. Provide additional incentives for employers to attract and retain apprentices in priority sectors and skill shortage occupations.
5. Improve support frameworks to employers and apprentices to boost completions:
 - a. Increase support for employers to help them to better understand their responsibilities and improve their supervision skills.
 - This could include free supervisor training for employers.
 - b. Occupation-specific support and mentoring of apprentices.
 - These services should be industry-led as apprentices are more likely to respond to mentoring from people who understand their occupation and can support and advise them on their rights.
 - c. Improve apprentice-matching through a range of measures and programs, such as try-a-trade days, greater use of pre-apprenticeship programs and support to assist SMEs in the recruitment process.
6. Improve data collection for apprentices, including:
 - a. Data regarding non-completions.
 - b. Tracking apprentices' further education directions beyond their apprenticeship by using the USI.

We look forward to your consideration of these recommendations and your positive response. We would welcome any opportunity to further discuss these proposals with you at your convenience.

Yours sincerely



Innes Willox
Chief Executive
Australian Industry Group



Andrew McKellar
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Chamber of
Commerce and Industry



Bran Black
Chief Executive
Business Council of Australia

Cc: Senator the Hon Murray Watt
Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations