



FACT SHEET



Trade union response to skills shortage

The ACTU has developed a plan around six principles to address the skills crisis.

1. Industry Plans

Collaborative development of a specific plan to consider changes to the structure of traditional apprenticeships developed between employers and unions in those industries where skills shortages have been identified. These plans may consider:

- options of higher qualifications outcomes
- credits for pre-apprenticeship and school-based program
- range of on-the-job experience and training required for trade competence

2. Funding

Additional funding from government:

- for 20,000 additional TAFE places in the traditional trades
- for pre-vocational/pre-apprenticeship training and school-based apprentices
- to implement program of matching apprentices with employers
- for improved pathways and for Recognition of Current Competence and Recognition for Prior Learning programs

3. Additional incentives for industry

Additional incentives to employers for

- longer duration training
- training in critical industry areas of skill shortages

4. Skilled Migrant Workers

The union movement will oppose the use of skilled migrant labour to fill shortages caused by government incompetence or employer neglect. However, skilled migration can be used in areas of genuine skills shortages under the following conditions:

- An agreement that this is not a solution to skills shortage but is a means to overcome immediate crisis
- All avenues for up-skilling or existing workers and recruiting local workers exhausted
- Such workers afforded all Award terms and conditions of permanent workers
- An agreed training place in place with union and business making an investment in training
- Apprentices not to be exploited by travel and action arrangements and only to be recruited through accredited recruitment agencies agreement with union over number of workers and length of time
- Offered permanent residency after one year

5. Integrity of Traineeship and Apprenticeship System

Defend the integrity of traineeship/apprenticeship system through:

- establishment of office/ombudsman to each state/territory to deal confidentially with apprenticeship/traineeship issues
- employers required to produce agreed training plans prior to receive any government incentive/subsidy payment and employer penalties for refusal/inability to produce training plan
- end to fully on the job training and employers to employ trainees/apprentices under appropriate industrial agreement

6. Role of Government/s

Governments at all levels to take a lead role in investment in skilling workforce:

- supply of goods and services to Commonwealth and States contingent on companies' meeting training responsibility
- audit of use of trainees and apprentices and programs to re-establish trainee and apprenticeship stream with the government sector as a model employer.