



INDUSTRY INFO

APRIL 2007 / MAY 2007

Happy Easter

The Apprenticeship Factory management and staff hope all their apprentices, trainees and hosts had a happy Easter. We hope, (if you were lucky enough to have some time off), you managed to make the most of the Easter break and spend some quality time with family and friends.

School To Work Program Launch – Engineering & Automotive



*Photograph Courtesy of Shepparton News
Jason Kelly (Engineering), Michael Bull (Automotive)*

The Apprenticeship Factory, with assistance from Office of Training and Tertiary Education, have launched two programs to help address some of the current skills shortages in our region.

These programs are in the Automotive and Engineering areas.

These programs will help:

- Applicants and employers to map out a suitable career paths into these industries
- Schools that have interested students find a School Based Apprenticeship or work experience
- Educate Careers Teachers about benefits to students who wish to enter these industries
- Provide a common point of contact for industry, schools, parents and students

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Apprenticeship Completions Likely To Grow

A new report predicts that the number of traditional apprenticeship completions will start to increase in line with growth in commencements in recent years. The report "What is happening to traditional apprenticeships completions?" looked at the relationship between commencements and completions. While commencements have been growing since 2001, the number of completions has remained constant.

The researchers offered two separate explanations: firstly, the discrepancy could be largely due to the time lag between commencing and completing an apprenticeship – because in many cases it takes four years to complete. They said the difference between commencements and completions could also be due to factors such as changing labour markets, which may play a role in the decline in completion rates. For example, the resource boom may be responsible for luring young people away from apprenticeships.

But the gap is likely to shrink as apprentices reach the end of their training. The report also showed that completion rates declined significantly in NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and the ACT, while remaining constant or slightly increasing in the other states. The paper said possible explanations included differences in legislation, industrial arrangements and labour market conditions. The report also said official completion rates are often understated because they focussed on training contracts, rather than individuals, who may change employers or qualifications.

For the complete report, go to www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1724.html

Work Skills Vouchers

Australians aged 25 years and over who do not have Year 12 or equivalent or Certificate level II or higher qualifications are now eligible for Work Skills vouchers to help them improve their qualifications. The vouchers will be worth up to \$3,000. Once fully implemented up to 30,000 vouchers will be available each year.

The vouchers can be used in public, private or community colleges. They may be used for all accredited literacy/numeracy and basic education courses and all vocational certificate level II courses. Some examples of courses where the vouchers could be used are:

- Certificate II in Adult General Education
- Certificate II in Automotive (Mechanical - Vehicle Servicing)
- Certificate II in Community Services (Children's Services)
- Certificate II in Hospitality (Commercial Cookery)

This measure will improve the basic skills of the Australian workforce and assist those without Year 12 or equivalent or Certificate level II or higher qualifications. Improvements in basic skills will help people who are already in employment to move into higher level positions and assist those who are looking for work to find jobs.

Priority will be given to applicants in the following order:

- unskilled workers wishing to acquire qualifications
- income support recipients, such as parents and carers returning to the workforce, who will face active job search requirements in the next two years
- unemployed job seekers in receipt of income support and participating in the Job Network who are undertaking active job search
- people not in the labour force, either voluntarily or because of carer responsibilities, who intend to seek work after achieving their qualification

Individuals are able to check their eligibility for a voucher through the website www.skillsvouchers.dest.gov.au or telephone hotline 13 38 73 operated by DEST.

SkillsInfo Website Released

The SkillsInfo website, a joint project between DEWR and DEST, is now online. SkillsInfo provides skills-related information on education, training, industries and regions and data on industry employment trends and prospects. The website is built around five themes: education and training, industries, regions, skills issues and skills links.

SkillsInfo includes Industry Employment Profiles that present, in graphical form, a comprehensive suite of data on employment characteristics, trends and prospects for all industries. There are also links to skills-related websites covering economic trends and statistics on skills, employment services, recent and topical media articles, research and discussion papers and other key developments relevant to meeting Australia's skills needs. The SkillsInfo website can be accessed at <http://www.skillsinfo.gov.au>

Mutual Recognition Of Occupational Licences

From February 2007, new arrangements have been put in place making it easier for licensed tradespeople, and authorities that issue licences, to know what licence a worker is entitled to when applying for a licence in another jurisdiction. The new arrangements cover licences issued to:

- electricians
- electrical fitters, lineworkers, and cable jointers
- tradespeople with restricted electrical licences
- plumbers and gas-fitters
- carpenters and joiners, bricklayers, and builders
- refrigeration and air-conditioning mechanics
- auto-gas installers

The website <http://www.licencerecognition.gov.au/default.aspx> allows the user to look up a licence entitlement in another state or territory, based on the currently-held licence.

Employed People More Likely To Participate In Sports

Nearly two-thirds (66% or 10.5 million people) of the Australian population aged 15 years and over reported that they had participated in sports and physical recreation at least once during the 12 months prior to interview in 2005-06. Similar proportions of males and females (both 66%) participated at least once during this period. Participation in activities organised by a club, association or other organisation also showed similar proportions for males (2.3 million or 29%) and females (2.1 million or 26%).

Almost one in three (29% or 4.7 million people) of the population aged 15 years and over participated in sports and physical recreation activities twice per week. More females (32% or 2.6 million) than males (27% or 2.1 million) were involved in more than twice-weekly participation.

The number participating in non-organised activities (8.6 million or 54%) was almost double that for participation in organised activities (4.4 million or 28%).

Walking was the most commonly reported physical recreation activity for both males and females, with 4.0 million people (25%) participating. This was followed by aerobics/fitness (2.0 million or 13%), swimming (1.4 million or 9%) and cycling (1.0 million or 6%).

Employed people had a higher participation rate (72%) than those who were unemployed (66%) or those who were not in the labour force (55%). Respondents who were not in the labour force had the lowest rate of participation in sports and physical recreation during the 12-month period prior to interview (55%).

Like A Good Read?

Latest apprentice and trainee statistics released -NCVER

The September 2006 quarter apprentice and trainee statistics are now available. Further information is available from the 'Australian vocational education and training statistics: Apprentices and trainees, September quarter 2006 - Summary'.

For a copy, visit <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1743.html>

What is a skill shortage? - Sue Richardson

This report is part of a suite of research projects entitled 'A well-skilled future: Tailoring VET to the emerging labour market' conducted by a consortium of researchers from the National Institute of Labour Studies and the Centre for Post-compulsory Education and Lifelong Learning. This report aims to clarify the term 'skill shortage' and to explain how skill shortages can be resolved naturally by market forces. It also provides some guidance on determining when a skill shortage requires public-policy intervention.

For a copy, visit <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1732.html>

Victorian Training Awards – Nominations Open

The Victorian Government encourages excellence in post-compulsory education through the Victorian Training Awards. The awards recognise the vital contribution made by learners, teachers, employers, training providers and program designers to building a world class post-compulsory education and training system. Group Training Association of Victoria is a proud principal sponsor of the awards.

For information about award categories and to download a nomination form, please go to: www.education.vic.gov.au/about/events/vta/default.htm.

Scam Awareness

March 2007 was Scams Awareness Month, Consumer Affairs Victoria, as a member of the national Australasian Consumer Fraud Taskforce, took part in a four-week initiative to help you learn how to protect yourself from scams. All sorts of people fall for scams. Scams bombard us through spam email, drop into our letterboxes and target us over the phone. Follow these tips which could help you prevent yourself falling into the scammer's trap.

Protect your money:

- 1) Never respond to an email asking you for your PINs or passwords
- 2) Never send money to someone you don't know or trust
- 3) Only invest with licensed financial services providers

Protect your phone:

- 1) Be suspicious of unexpected calls and text messages
- 2) Hang up. Or text 'STOP' to unwanted messages
- 3) Don't give out your number to just anyone

Protect your computer:

- 1) Keep your protection software up to date
- 2) Don't respond in any way to unsolicited emails
- 3) If in doubt, delete

Protect your identity:

- 1) Never give out personal information to someone you don't know or trust
- 2) Don't just bin it - destroy it (old bills, records or expired cards)
- 3) Check your credit report at least once a year

Quality Time Counts For Kids

According to a study of 93 Australian young people from Year 6 to Year 11 about their perspective on their parents paid and un-paid work:

- The majority of young people want more time with their parents rather than more money through parental work.
- Children especially prize hanging time with an unstressed parent.
- Children recognise job spill over, when parents return from work in a bad mood, tired, emotionally drained or physically injured.
- Young people particularly want parents present for special school events, celebrations, sporting achievements and when problems arise.
- A parent at home, for example, a father, does not substitute easily for an absent parent, such as a mother working long hours.

Suggestions To Help Combat Workplace Stress

- 1) Plan ahead. Make a to-do list in order of priorities. Finish the most important task before you tackle the next one. Don't try to pack more into your day than you can cope with comfortably.
- 2) Take regular breaks. Short rests between periods of concentrated mental effort, particularly when you are frustrated with a project or are unable to move forward, can be refreshing and help you to refocus. Take your scheduled breaks.
- 3) Recognise that some things cannot be changed and put your energy toward those that can. Don't punish your self for mistakes but view them as an opportunity to learn from them.
- 4) Sit up straight. A good upright posture improves breathing and increases blood flow to the brain. We often slouch when stressed, which restricts breathing and blood flow and can magnify feelings of helplessness.
- 5) Exercise every day, even if you only have time for only a brisk 20-minute walk. Keep a hand exerciser or a squeeze ball at your desk and give it a few squeezes during tense times. Squeezing something provides a release that satisfies our bodies' fight-or-flee response when stress shoots adrenals into the bloodstream.
- 6) Don't neglect your diet. Start off with a breakfast containing protein and carbohydrates for sustained energy and don't let the demands of your day get in the way of a healthy lunch. Make sure you stop for a lunch break.
- 7) Water is necessary for our body to operate efficiently. Water is vital to the body in temperature regulation, nerve impulse conduction, circulation, metabolism, immune system, eliminative processes, sensory awareness and perceptive thinking.
- 8) Talk about stressful events to your supervisor; a friend or spouse before things get too bad. If you need extra help, seek counselling via the Employee Assistance Program.
- 9) Identify the sources of your stress. This gives you more choice in how you react. Pay attention to such signs as a tension headache and stop what you are doing for a rest break. If possible, practice deep abdominal breathing whenever you feel muscular tension setting in.
- 10) Cultivate an optimistic attitude. Don't talk yourself into believing that you can't cope. Reduce your exposure to events that tick you off. Avoid negative attitudes and events.
- 11) Learn to express anger in a constructive way. Keeping anger within you adds to feelings of stress; blowing up in a rage is almost as bad. Maintain a sense of humour about it all.
- 12) Switch off when away from work and enjoy your favourite pastimes. Leave your problems at the workplace and only take home necessary work.

Labour Force Stats – Feb 2007

FEBRUARY KEY POINTS

Trend Estimates (monthly change)

- EMPLOYMENT increased to 10,350,400
- UNEMPLOYMENT decreased to 495,900
- UNEMPLOYMENT RATE remained at 4.6%
- PARTICIPATION RATE remained at 64.8%

Seasonally Adjusted Estimates (monthly change)

Employment

- increased by 22,000 to 10,357,900. Full-time employment increased by 20,700 to 7,407,700 and part-time employment increased by 1,300 to 2,950,200.

Unemployment

- increased by 9,500 to 502,000. The number of persons looking for full-time work decreased by 9,500 to 345,100 and the number of persons looking for part-time work increased by 19,000 to 156,900.

Unemployment Rate

- increased by 0.1 percentage point to 4.6%. The male unemployment rate decreased marginally to 4.2%, and the female unemployment rate increased by 0.2 percentage points to 5.1%.

Participation Rate

- increased by 0.1 percentage.

What is it with Hot Cross Buns?...

Hot Cross Buns are made especially for Easter and are documented to have existed before the advent of Christian Easter celebrations. These were made as cakes from wheat which was used in Pagan Spring festivals. The buns were traditionally made on Good Friday in the Christian church with the dough kneaded for the Host and therefore marked with a cross to indicate this. These buns/cakes were also believed to have many special properties including the curing of certain illnesses. They were also believed to last twelve months without turning mouldy which was of great use during Pagan times when the storage of food was imperative for survival. It was believed that they would protect against evil forces and fire if hung in the kitchen. Sailors believed that hot cross buns would protect against shipwreck if taken to sea. Farmers in certain parts of England also believed that they would protect the granary against rats.

Some Inspiration...

If we do not plant knowledge when young, it will give us no shade when we are old.

Lord Chesterfield

There are two things to aim at in life; first to get what you want, and after that to enjoy it. Only the wisest of mankind has achieved the second.

Logan Pearsall Smith

Happiness is as a butterfly which, when pursued, is always beyond our grasp, but which if you will sit down quietly, may alight upon you.

Nathaniel Hawthorne