

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

A report on employer attitudes to employing apprentices undertaken by Strahan Research completed June 2005.

- The research involved a survey of 1243 tradesmen in Western Australia. 752 who currently employ apprentices and 491 which are not currently, or have not employed apprentices in the past 12 months.
- Motivation for employing apprentices are:
 - Wanting to raise the level of skills in the industry
 - Recognition of aging workforce and need for more young people
 - Desire to pass on skills to the next generation
- Disincentives to employing an apprentice are:
 - High wages compared to productivity
 - Workers compensation and public liability costs
 - Lack of work effort and avoidance of hard work by young people
 - Unwillingness to commit to learning the trade
 - Willingness to leave during or after completion of training
 - Time consuming administration and paperwork and limited financial support
- Benefits of employing an apprentice are:
 - Training to suit the needs of the business
 - Creating own source of skilled labour
 - Establishing stable and loyal employees for success of the business
- Employers want better administrative processes:
 - Reduced paperwork and red tape
 - Simplified processes
 - A one stop shop where everything is done and preferably done for the employer
- 48.7% of apprentices left their employer after they finished their apprenticeship or before completing it, while 51.3% of apprentice stayed with their employer after they completed, or failed to complete.
- 69% of employers said their most recent experience of employing an apprentice was positive.
- 63% said they would consider employing an apprentice from a group scheme.
- 45% said they had considered employing a female apprentice but 79.4% said they would consider employing a female if she demonstrated the aptitude for becoming a good tradesperson.
- Employers believe 3 main issues deter young people from taking up apprenticeships namely:

- Community perceptions about university as a first preference and the trades as second class, difficult and dirty.
- Young people want to step quickly into high paying careers without long training periods.
- Low apprentice wages.
- Lack of skilled workers is a driver in decisions to employ apprentices, but counterbalanced by the cost.
- Encourage employment of apprentices by:
 - Reducing costs.
 - Increasing Government subsidies / new incentives or tax breaks.
 - Simplify the administration of apprenticeships.
 - Make the apprentice contract less demanding.
 - Improve the standards / arrangements for off the job training.
- 62% of respondents say the apprentice subsidy influences their decision to employ an apprentice.
 - 11% say they would not employ an apprentice without it.
 - 29% say the subsidy is a major influence on their decision to employ.
- In comparing importance of the subsidy to other factors 70% of employers say it is a key factor in the decision to employ.
- Respondents overwhelmingly agreed about the importance of apprenticeship training and confirmed :
 - Training is essential to the future of the industry 99%.
 - On the job training is preferable to off the job training 90%.
 - Any training is preferable to no training 80%
 - 66% are satisfied with apprentice training
 - 63% see it as relevant to their business.
 - 58% prefer block release.
 - A minority 35% agree apprenticeships should be reduced to 3 years.
- 42% of employers pay their apprentices TAFE fees and 45% don't. 60% of those that pay fees approve of having to pay the fees.
- Increasing skilled workers in the industry.
 - 61% of respondents believe that the current system or an adaptation of it is the best basis for increasing the number of skilled workers in the industry.
 - 45% prefer a simplification of the current system.
 - 16% prefer the current system with no change.
 - RPL for current workers is preferred by 17% of respondents.