



the voice of the industry

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Policy Doesn't Solve Skills Problem

In the lead up to the NSW election the calls by politicians to stop funding Registered Training Organisations (RTO's) are not only wrong, but will substantially harm the residential building industry in NSW, said Executive Director HIA NSW, David Bare.

"HIA is fully supportive of policies that encourage people to take up a skilled trade, as it is vital that Australia has a steady supply of trades people to build the homes of tomorrow and increase the supply of housing in NSW," Mr Bare said.

"However, recent calls to stop *all* RTO's from receiving government support will make the problem of skills shortages worse.

"Private RTO's, in particular industry association RTO's like HIA, have a long and successful track record delivering training products that are designed specifically for industry. This allows students the option of choosing training that is tailored to their experience and delivered with flexibility to align with their working hours, and provides the crucial element of on the ground training.

"There is no doubt that some private RTO's have abused funding in the past, however The Australian Skills and Qualifications Authority (ASQA) has made a concerted effort to crack down on the 'dodgy' RTO's in recent years.

"If ASQA audits a private RTO and is satisfied they meet the necessary requirements, why would a state government believe differently?

"HIA has helped hundreds of both young and adult apprentices complete their apprenticeship and get trade qualified. Over 15,800 students received their qualifications at an RTO in 2017.

"HIA has also helped hundreds get their certificate in building, or in other career pathways, and taken mature age apprentices through their journey to realising a new career. Last year over 40% of all certificates achieved in Australia were achieved through RTOs.

"Instead of pitting TAFE against RTO's politicians in NSW would do better to put funds into promoting trades, to show that a trade is just not a plan B career choice but a legitimate and rewarding career that provides a vital service to the residential building industry and economy as a whole.

"In fact, it seems lost on many politicians that industry groups like HIA work hand in hand with TAFE all the time with their apprentices.

"HIA would also like to see more money directed towards mature age apprentices entering the work force, as their expertise and life experience makes them a valuable asset to the residential building industry.

"Any incoming NSW government needs to create meaningful policies to address skills shortages and provide flexibility in choice for students via a contestable market. Simply using a populist argument and pitting RTO's against TAFE doesn't help anyone," concluded Mr Bare

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