



Vocational Education & Training (including Competency Based Training)

Policy Issues

- Whilst there is a lot of discussion about attracting people to the industry, many who are attracted do not complete their qualifications. This is a priority issue that HIA will continue to explore.
- The training system is viewed as inflexible by employers, while some trainers and employee groups hold firm views that only what already exists is appropriate.
- While governments have signed up to User Choice arrangements, there are many obstacles to greater flexibility in the system, some of which are being addressed.
- Issues considered in developing this policy include the costs for employers when taking on apprentices; impediments in the system stemming from the industrial relations system; industrial relations legislation at state level which set minimum durations for training contracts and existing capabilities to deliver competency based training. This training structure therefore dictates that no matter how quickly an apprentice gains competencies, he or she is still subject to a four year contract.
- HIA will continue to lobby the federal government for more flexible training alternatives.

HIA's Policy Position on Vocational Education & Training

PART 1 – General policy

In respect to Vocational Education and Training in the residential construction industry, HIA considers that:

- The range of training options and delivery methods must be driven by the needs of the industry;
- Training must be delivered in a competitive market offering genuine User Choice to all participants;
- The cost to employers of taking on an apprentice must be reduced in step with any financial or other incentives to persuade apprentices to continue in their apprenticeships;
- Industrial impediments (such as restrictive award conditions) to greater choice and flexibility in training must be removed immediately;
- Training must be genuinely competency-based, being defined as a training system that:
 1. Provides for the inclusion of the following features:
 - a) performance criteria that include measures of proficiency;
 - b) the need for the employer, as well as the registered Training Organisation (RTO) to sign-off in the competency assessment process;
 - c) recognition of individual statements of attainment that correspond to discrete skills sets which together form part of a full trade qualification;
 - d) training plans that:
 - i. are developed between the RTO, the employer and the apprentice;
 - ii. accommodate both the training needs of the apprentice as well as the operational needs of the employer's business;
 - iii. identify steps or stages that correspond to points of wage progression; and
 - iv. include a review mechanism that is acceptable to all parties;
 - e) the recognition of industry guidelines and benchmarks as published by the Housing Industry Association Ltd from time to time; and
 - f) an efficient and independent dispute resolution mechanism; and

2. Allows for:

- a) an entry-level skills assessment to be conducted by an assessor of the employer's choice or an independent third party, as agreed by all parties, prior to the training plan being entered into; and
- b) the keeping of an up-to-date log book of the tasks performed by the apprentice, to be:
 - i. kept by the apprentice;
 - ii. signed by all parties; and
 - iii. taken into account by the assessor when that apprentice's competency is being assessed.

- All training providers should have flexible workplaces able to attract high quality staff and respond quickly to changing customer demands.

PART 2 – Wage progression

HIA acknowledges that, under a genuine competency based-training system, apprenticeship wages will progress correspondingly with training progression.

PART 3 – Transitional period

That there should be a transitional period during which both systems (being a 'genuine competency-based' apprenticeship system and a 'time-served' apprenticeship system) are available.

PART 4 – Skills sets

HIA supports:

- The implementation of flexible pathways centred on specific skill sets which are required by the residential building industry.
- The preparation of a report examining a certification process for skills that industry requires independent of national recognition, to be funded by the Federal Government.