

CHRIS BOWEN MP
MINISTER FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION, SKILLS,
SCIENCE AND RESEARCH
MINISTER FOR SMALL BUSINESS

MEDIA RELEASE

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EXTENDING KICKSTART FOR KEY INDUSTRIES

The Government will extend the \$57.5 million Apprentice Kickstart Initiative to make it easier for employers to take on apprentices, the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Science and Research, Chris Bowen MP, announced today.

Mr Bowen said the two-month extension means that employers in the building, construction and engineering trades now have until the end of April to benefit from an extra incentive payment for them to take on a new apprentice.

"We know that times are tough for many Australian businesses so we are giving them a helping hand by extending the Apprentice Kickstart Initiative," Mr Bowen said.

"We want to encourage employers to take on an apprentice, train them up and position their businesses to take advantage of economic conditions as they improve."

Mr Bowen, joined by the Member for Chifley Ed Husic, made the announcement at Eastern Creek electrical engineering company Thompson Controls in Western Sydney, which has taken on two new apprentices through the program.

As at 28 February 2013, more than 12,000 apprentices have commenced employment under Kickstart, which triples incentives to employers in the first year of taking on an apprentice.

While uptake has been lower than expected due to a downturn in the construction industry, extending the scheme will provide support for many more employers and apprentices.

"This is exactly why the Kickstart program is so important – we want more people to take up and see through apprenticeships to meet the changing workforce needs of Australian industry," Mr Bowen said.

"The two-month extension is good for employers, good for young people seeking apprenticeships, and good for job seekers as it will help to stimulate employment in the building, construction and engineering industries."

"We need to start training more people in the construction trades now to meet the expected upturn in the housing sector, including plumbers, electricians, carpenters, toolmakers, metal fabricators, fitters and turners."

Mr Husic said the Government was closely engaging with industry to be able to best respond to the needs of key sectors that underpin the national economy.

"Local companies such as Thompson Controls play a vital role in boosting apprenticeship numbers across the country," Mr Husic said.

"We already have more than 4,500 apprentices in my electorate of Chifley and over 45,000 in the Western Sydney area, but the Kickstart program can lift those numbers further to help meet future workforce needs."

The Kickstart program aims to bring an extra 21,000 apprentices into the workforce.

An extra \$3,350 will be paid to eligible employers who take on a new construction or engineering apprentice in nominated trades, in addition to the existing \$1,500 commencement payment for eligible employers.

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