

Friday, January 24, 2025

ACTU welcomes \$10,000 cost-of-living boost for apprentices

Australian Unions welcome the Albanese Government's announcement of a \$10,000 wage bonus for apprentices to work in housing construction and clean energy.

The policy follows today's release of the Strategic Review of the Australian Apprenticeship Incentive System, which revealed that low wages were a key barrier to entry and completion of apprenticeships.

Starting July 1, 2025, eligible apprentices will receive five \$2,000 payments, supplementing their wages, over the course of their apprenticeship. The incentive payments aim to ease cost-of-living pressures, increase apprenticeship completion rates and build a long-term pipeline of skilled workers in housing construction and the clean energy industry.

The program will support the federal government's plan to build 1.2 million homes in five years under the Homes for Australia initiative. Eligible occupations will be determined in consultation with Jobs and Skills Australia and Jobs and Skills Councils.

Other measures announced today include the extension of training support and hiring incentive payments, an increase in the Living Away From Home Allowance, and a boost to wage subsidies for hiring more apprentices with a disability.

The plan builds on the federal government's expansion of Free TAFE and the slashing of HECS debt for students. The investments in skills and training will help rebuild the VET sector following a decade of cuts and neglect by the previous Coalition government.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Assistant Secretary, Liam O'Brien:

"Unions hear from apprentices across Australia that the biggest barrier holding them back are low wages. You can't address cost-of-living without a plan for wages, and that's why today's announcement of a \$10,000 wage bonus is so important.

"Thousands of young Australians, especially in our outer suburbs and regions, make huge sacrifices to pursue an apprenticeship so they can get ahead. The \$10,000 wage bonus will go a long way in easing their cost-of-living so they can build Australia's future.

"The Albanese Government's expansion of Free TAFE and their boosting of apprentice wages will help repair Australia's skills and training sector after a decade of cuts and closures from Peter Dutton's Coalition.

"Tradies finally have a government that is on their side and actually cares about investing in their future."

ENDS

Media Contact: Cameron Warasta (0447) 159 467