

Media Release

Challenges ahead for apprentice opportunities

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Master Builders support the State Government's aim to secure the long-term supply of locally skilled workers to the building industry but warn that builders have trouble taking on apprentices during hard times.

Training Minister Sue Ellery this week announced the Priority Start Policy, which took effect from April 1, requiring industry to invest in apprentices and trainees by meeting a target training rate on all State Government building, construction and maintenance contracts valued over \$5million.

Master Builders Executive Director John Gelavis said a healthy pipeline of apprenticeships and traineeships was important for the future of the industry but noted there were difficulties for builders.

"Many builders have reported challenges in retaining quality trainees and also ensuring meaningful and appropriate work is available during the current economic downturn," he said.

"This comes at a challenging time for the industry but we are pleased the government is aware of the need to maintain a strong and enduring workforce and we are cautiously optimistic that there will be long term benefits.

"In being compelled to take on apprentices, the key challenge is to ensure builders are not unfairly burdened with the cost of training and providing ongoing work as the industry continues to struggle through tough economic conditions."

For more information please contact:

John Gelavis, Executive Director – w: 9476 9800 m: 0428 884 392