

GTA is the national peak body representing the network of over 150 Group Training Organisations (GTOs) employing over 40,000 apprentices and trainees throughout Australia.

12 May 2009

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## Training maintains its critical role in the economic recovery

With unemployment forecast to rise to 8.5%, the vocational education and training (VET) sector is set to play a critical role in the Federal Government's economic recovery program according to Group Training Australia (GTA), the single largest network employing over 40,000 apprentices and trainees.

Over the four year Budget estimates, additional funding of \$0.5 billion will be targeted to VET initiatives.

GTA Chief Executive Officer, Jim Barron said the VET sector is encouraged by the news that it will continue to play a key role in the economic recovery.

"This budget maintains the steady course of investment in training and apprenticeships that will help support young Australians as we deal with the economic downturn.

"The decision to merge a number of apprentice incentive payments into a single streamlined payment is to be applauded. Steps to eradicate duplication and paperwork are to be welcomed, particularly for employers looking to take on apprentices and trainees.

"The decision to make the Support for Mid-career Apprentice payment available to people aged 25 years and over, down from 30 years of age, is particularly significant.

"From a group training perspective, I very much welcome the decision to continue the Joint Group Training Program, the pre-employment Australian Apprenticeships Access Program (Access), and the pre-vocational stream of the Group Training in the Trades Program (GTTP) for another four years.

"The significant expansion of the Access Program is to be particularly applauded as, over a number of years, it has provided training and employment opportunities to many individuals looking for a second or third chance.

"GTA and the group training network look forward to working with the government in delivering programs to young people under the Compact with Young Australians, and through the measures in this Budget" Mr Barron said.

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