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## National Apprenticeship Reform Needs Industry Input

The Federal Government's plans to reform Australian apprenticeships is a welcome move, but industry must be involved in creating a system that better delivers training and keeps apprentices in jobs.

The Housing Industry Association, the voice of Australia's residential building industry, acknowledges the recommendations of the Government-appointed expert panel looking into Australian apprenticeships.

"The panel's report, *A Shared Responsibility, Apprenticeships for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, correctly highlights the complexity of the current system and low completion rates for training – an issue HIA has consistently raised," HIA Executive Director, Industry Workforce Development, Nick Proud said.

"The report provides a number of worthy recommendations aimed at reducing the high attrition rate, but a key area the HIA is concerned about is a proposal to require employers to have accreditation before recruiting apprentices. It's important that such a move doesn't have the unintended result of turning off employers from taking on an apprentice," Mr Proud said.

"Many of the recommendations involve a potential cost to employers, including those around apprentice wages and benefits. Questions have to be asked about the Employer Contribution Scheme, where employers may have to find additional dollars to support apprentice employment," Mr Proud said.

One of the key recommendations that HIA believes should be quickly implemented is the mentoring of apprentices. "With mentoring, HIA's group training scheme has successfully seen HIA Apprentice completion rates leap to 80 per cent. That's much higher than the industry average rate of less than 50 per cent completions."

"The HIA welcomes calls to better promote apprenticeships and traineeships as a valued career of choice for both males and females. Producing a nationally consistent training system is very important," Mr Proud said.

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