

Media Release



**MASTER BUILDERS
AUSTRALIA**

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Master Builders Backs Kickstart Apprenticeships Program

Statement by Wilhelm Harnisch, Chief Executive Officer

Master Builders Australia, the peak body for the building and construction industry, today strongly supported the refocussing of the Government's Jobs Fund stimulus measure to assisting employers through increased incentives to take on more traditional trade apprentices.

Mr Wilhelm Harnisch, the CEO of Master Builders Australia said, "The building industry has a substantial structural skills shortage which will become very evident once the economic recovery gathers a head of steam and which will add to substantial labour cost increases unless the skills shortage can be met.

"There is currently a short fall of nearly 5,000 building apprentice commencements since last year and the Apprenticeship Kickstart Program should therefore help fill this apprenticeship deficit in the building and construction industry.

"The Government's Apprenticeship Kickstart Program is strongly supported because of its focus on encouraging employers to take on younger building apprentices during the current soft conditions in the building and construction industry and its forward looking focus on green skills. The Government's response follows Master Builders call for greater apprenticeship incentives."

Mr Harnisch said, "Master Builders will strongly encourage builders to take advantage of the increased financial incentives to take on more building apprentices such as carpenters, bricklayers and painters over the December 2009 – February 2010 period."

Master Builders also strongly supports the Government's decision to provide a further \$20 million for pre-apprenticeship training. This will provide many young people with the opportunity to embark on a very rewarding career through a building industry apprenticeship.

He said, "The Government's stimulus measures, including the Jobs Fund, are providing much needed opportunities for employers and future apprentices in the building and construction industry, while at the same time, contributing to the Governments economic recovery strategy in ensuring that future skill shortages are addressed.

"The medium to long term outlook for the building and construction industry is very positive. Master Builders has estimated that nearly \$1.2 trillion worth of investment in building and construction will occur over the next 8-10 years which will require at least another 200,000 people with building industry skills."

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