

Media Release

Prime Minister Welcomes Skill360's Kickstart Apprentices

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Two apprentices engaged through Skill360 Australia with the support of the Apprentice Kickstart Bonus today met the Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, at the Cairns Job Expo held at the showgrounds.

The Prime Minister met Luke Verrall, an apprentice plasterer and Nathan Perez, an apprentice electrician, who both started their apprenticeships this week. The Jobs Expo is part of the Keep Australia Working Initiative and connects locals looking for work to a range of employers and provides guidance on pathways to employment through training and apprenticeships.

"Both Luke and Nathan have been employed with the support of the Australian Government through the Apprentice Kickstart Bonus and it was great that the Prime Minister was able to meet the beneficiaries of this initiative," said Troy Williams, Chief Executive Officer of Skill360 Australia.

With the support of the Australian Government, Skill360 Australia is able to offer local employers cash incentives of \$3,350 when taking on an apprentice. The Apprentice Kickstart Bonus is a total of \$3,350 paid in installments of: \$850 paid at the three month point of the apprenticeship; and \$2,500 paid at the nine month point of the apprenticeship. The bonus is available to apprentices commencing between 1 December 2009 and 28 February 2010.

"The extra \$3,350 provided makes the decision to take on an apprentice a lot easier, and Skill360 Australia is pleased to be able to assist local employers access this funding," Mr. Williams said.

There is also welcome news for companies that currently have sufficient workload for an apprentice, but are unsure about their business prospects in twelve month's time. Mr Williams says the solution rests in the group training model, where Skill360 Australia employs the apprentice and places them with host employers.

"Group training is ideally suited for employers who are confident that they can hire an apprentice now, but not sure whether they will be able to do so in a year or so," Mr Williams said.

Under the group training model, such as that managed by Skill360 Australia, if a host employer finds themselves unable to sustain an apprentice, the apprentice is then placed with another employer so that their training can continue.

"Group training allows employers to get on with the job of providing apprentices with real-life work experience, while Skill360 Australia takes care of the administrative workload." Mr Williams concluded.

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Media Contact:

Troy Williams, CEO – Skill360 Australia 0419 996 158

