

Media Release

Call To Redirect Incentive Funding To High Unemployment Regions

25 September 2009 — For Immediate Release

In order to create new jobs for apprentices in regions of high unemployment, the government funding model that supports employer incentives needs to be changed according to Cairns-based Skill360 Australia. This is the message that will be delivered by Skill360 Australia to the *Keep Australia Working Forum* which is being held at the Cairns convention centre today. The forum is being hosted by the member for Leichhardt and attended by the Minister for Employment Participation, Senator Mark Arbib.

“At the moment there are no additional incentives to take on an apprentice in areas of high unemployment. An employer in the Queensland’s south east where unemployment is in the region of five to six percent receives almost identical funding to an employer in Cairns where unemployment is more than twice as high,” said Troy Williams, Chief Executive Officer of Skill360 Australia.

Cairns-based Skill360 Australia, Queensland’s largest not-for-profit government-endorsed Group Training Organisation, receives funding of around \$1million per year which is used to assist local employers take on an apprentice or trainee. This funding is provided on a fifty-fifty basis from the Australian Government and the State Government.

“We are not asking for the total amount of funding under this program to be increased at this point in time, but simply redirected towards where there is the greatest need,” Mr Williams said.

The current funding model provides additional incentives for mature age, women, indigenous, disabled and school-based apprentices, with a minor additional allowance for apprentices in designated regional areas. Cairns falls within the category of the latter, however the additional assistance amounts to less than two percent of the average apprentice’s wage.

“We are seeking a change to the funding model which provides additional support for employers taking on an apprentice or trainee in regions, such as Cairns, where unemployment is significantly above the national average. The current model does seem to be unfair,” Mr Williams said.

Despite the inherent problems in the funding model that disadvantages Cairns’ business, Skill360 Australia continues to do what it can to support local employers take-on an apprentice or trainee.

“Businesses, both large and small, really like the group training services offered by Skill360 Australia as it makes taking-on an apprentice or trainee easy. Skill360 Australia assists the business find a suitable candidate, completes the complex paperwork and can even help the business access the limited government subsidies. From there, we look after the apprentice or trainee’s pay, taxation and superannuation. All the business receives is a simple weekly invoice,” Mr Williams said.

Ends.

Media Contact:

Troy Williams – CEO, Skill360 Australia 1300 933 358



Skill360 Australia

1 Wilkinson Street Manunda Qld 4870
PO Box 68W Westcourt Qld 4870
P 1300 933 358 F 1300 933 365
E media@skill360.com.au
www.skill360.com.au