



RAPS

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2015

INDUSTRY NEWS

[WE URGENTLY NEED YOUR INPUT](#)

STATE PRIORITY OCCUPATION LIST (SPOL) 2015

The Department of Training and Workforce Development (DTWD) are in the process of updating SPOL. Courses listed on the SPOL receive the highest Government subsidy and unless occupations are included on SPOL, limited or no funding will be available from the Government.

DTWD have informed RAPS that “*unless further information is provided indicating unmet demand (skill shortages) or non-market factors*” the occupations of Retail Manager, Retail Supervisor, Sales Assistant, Pharmacy Assistant and Funeral Workers (on SPOL 2014) will not appear on SPOL 2015.

If you have an identified skill shortage in your industry and can justify why it should be on the SPOL please let us know by contacting Jane Piercey at RAPS (tel. (08) 9446 8177; email jane@rapstc.com.au) **before cob Wednesday 18 March 2015.**

RAPS EXTENDED TRADING HOURS SURVEY

RAPS would like to hear your views on how you found the extended Christmas trading hours and general extended trading hours and appreciate your time in completing a survey.

The results of the survey will be formulated into a report and forwarded to the appropriate Government Departments.

To complete the survey please click [here](#).

EMPLOYERS URGED TO HAVE THEIR SAY ON TRAINING

Assistant Minister for Education and Training Senator Simon Birmingham has urged Australian employers to take part in the Survey of Australian Employers being conducted by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) over coming weeks.

The survey aims to ask 9,000 employers from across the country and from all industry sectors about their experiences on how they meet their skill needs and how staff training needs could be better met.

Businesses are randomly selected from the Australian Business Register to participate in the survey, which will be conducted until June 2015.

The Survey of Australian Employers is a biennial survey conducted on behalf of the Australian, state and territory governments. The results will be published on NCVER's website in late 2015.

For more information please click [here](#).

NEW RETAIL SERIES LAUNCH

An innovative retail training initiative to support employer-led training that focuses on job outcomes was launched in Melbourne on 19 February 2015 by the Assistant Minister for Education and Training, Senator Birmingham.

Two dedicated components comprise the new training service, addressing identified skills gap in merchandise management and online retailing.

The New Retail Series has been developed by the industry for the industry. This series of pilot training programs is dedicated to addressing the skills and training gaps identified by Australian retail employers in a quick, responsive and flexible way.

For more information please click [here](#).

GOOD WEBSITE DESIGN THE KEY TO SME'S SNAPPING UP ONLINE CUSTOMERS

There is a huge opportunity for small online retailers to snap up customers as long as they have a responsive and easy-to-use website, according to research published this week by FedEx Express.

The study, which surveyed around 9000 individuals, found 11% of Australian consumers would choose to purchase from a small independent online retailer before a larger or international brand.

However, of the respondents who expressed a low desire to purchase from a niche e-retailer, around half said their reluctance was due to poor website design.

Competitive shipping speeds and product tracking were the most influential factors in influencing a customer's decision – with more than 40% of respondents saying a long

delivery period would discourage them from buying from a small to medium enterprise's (SME) website.

Also worrying for SMEs is the 41% of consumers who said their purchasing behaviour is influenced by a lack of recognition or reputation of an SME retailer.

Click [here](#) to see what website errors can cost your business thousands.

ONLINE SHOPPING AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

The rise of online shopping, and its impact on the retail sector, continues to attract significant interest from within the Australian Retail industry. In particular, recent retail trade figures produced by the National Australia Bank have highlighted continued growth in online shopping across the twelve month period from December 2013.

A number of key retail categories continue to experience gains from online sales, with some achieving double-digit, year-on-year growth during the month of December, including food retailing (19%), electronic games and toys (14%), and homewares (10%).

Although this suggests an increasing appetite for online shopping in this country, it is surprising that few retail businesses are adjusting the structure of their business to accommodate the changing needs and expectations of customers.

Research also indicates that only 36.1 per cent of Australian retail businesses have facilities for receiving orders via the internet, with only a limited number of retailers having shopping cart facilities, online payment capabilities, and personalised pages for repeat customers.

The National Retail Association has free resources and support services available for businesses wanting to use digital platforms to improve their businesses

If you would like to understand how best to make use of new technologies in your business, please contact the NRA's Research Division on 1800 738 245.

WORKPLACE ESSENTIALS WEBSITE

The Workplace Essentials website provides small to medium businesses with a 'one-stop' gateway to find useful information, templates, links and resources that can help them to better plan, attract, develop and retain a skilled workforce.

The Department of Training and Workforce Development (DTWD) and their project partners have published a series of workforce planning and development brochures tailored towards small to medium businesses.

All brochures are available on the Workplace Essentials [website](#).

RAPS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & BUSINESS NEEDS EMPLOYER SURVEY

RAPS understands how valuable your time is, but would very much appreciate you completing the **employer** survey at the following link: [RAPS Employer Survey 2015](#)

STATE NEWS

WA TRAINING AWARDS 2015 APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN

The Department of Training and Workforce Development is now calling for applications for the WA Training Awards 2015.

2015 will see the WA Training Awards celebrating 21 years of recognising the outstanding achievements of apprentices, trainees and vocational students and the contribution to training made by trainers, training organisations and employers.

This year, the WA Training Awards has introduced an online application system. All applications will be submitted and judged online.

Entries close at 5:00 pm on Friday 8 May 2015.

For more information on how to enter please visit the WA Training Awards [website](#).

TRAINING PROVIDERS FORUM 2015

The 2015 Training Providers Forum will be held on Monday 25th and Tuesday 26th May at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre.

This two day conference and exhibition will provide the latest updates on training and workforce development and showcase examples of innovation and good practice.

For more information please click [here](#).

EXPANDING CAREER OPTIONS FOR WOMEN

In a joint initiative of the Department of Training and Workforce Development (DTWD), the Department of Local Government and Communities and the Construction Training Fund, a new State Government scholarship program has been launched to encourage women into trade and industry areas with low female participation.

These scholarships can be used to help with costs associated with undertaking training, including student fees, learning resources, mentoring, coaching, tools, equipment, accommodation, transport and childcare fees.

One hundred scholarships will be available in the first year of the program in around 180 qualifications linked to non-traditional occupations across many industries.

Applications open on 16 March 2015.

For more information please click [here](#).

ACCOMMODATION ASSISTANCE FOR REGIONAL STUDENTS

In a media statement released on 25 February 2015, the Minister for Training and Workforce Development, the Hon. Liza Harvey MLA announced that regional apprentices and trainees will have access to double the accommodation allowance than currently available.

This will help with the cost involved for students that have to live away from home for part of their training.

There is also a new arrangement which will see lecturers travelling to regional centres to visit the students, cutting down the demand for students to travel.

To view the full media release please click [here](#).

NEW CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE

The Department of Training and Workforce Development has relocated its Career Centre, Migration Services, Perth Aboriginal Workforce Development Centre and Education and Training International services to a new Customer Service Centre.

From Tuesday 13 January 2015, services are located on the 7th floor of the GPO Building, 3 Forrest Place, Perth.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN BUSINESSES URGED TO APPLY FOR NEW INDUSTRY SKILLS FUND

Businesses in Western Australia can now apply for support to boost the skills of their workforce under the Australian Government's new \$476 million Industry Skills Fund.

With more than 10% of Australian businesses located in Western Australia, it is expected the Industry Skills Fund will provide up to \$47 million to Western Australian employers to access around 20,000 training and support places.

Businesses wanting support to train workers will be required to make a contribution between 25 and 75 per cent to the cost of training. The co-contribution rate depends on the number of employees, with smaller businesses receiving higher levels of support.

Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis, throughout the year.

Guidelines and more information are available at www.business.gov.au

NATIONAL NEWS

NATIONAL TRAINING COMPLAINTS HOTLINE

The Assistant Minister for Education and Training, Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham, has launched a new National Training Complaints Hotline.

The National Training Complaints Hotline protects students and makes it easier for consumers, such as apprentices, students, employers and others, to lodge complaints if they are concerned about any aspect of the training system.

The Hotline directs complaints to relevant authorities, connecting consumers to the appropriate organisation.

To find out how to access the hotline and how it operates please click [here](#).

YOUTH PILOT PROGRAMMES - APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN

The Assistant Minister for Education and Training, Senator Simon Birmingham, has announced details of the new \$44 million youth stream pilot programs, aimed at addressing youth unemployment.

The Training for Employment Scholarships and Youth Employment Pathways will be trialled across all states, with 21 regions selected for the Youth Employment Pathways and 11 for the Training for Employment for Scholarships.

The Training for Employment Scholarships will provide up to 7,500 scholarships of up to \$7500 for youths aged 18-24, available to micro, small and medium businesses who hire an unemployed person for 12 months to support the costs of training.

The Youth Employment Pathways program will provide assistance to 3,000 youth who are not in work, training or school. Eligible community service organisations can receive funding of up to \$2,000 to support 15 to 18 year olds, to get back into school, start VET or move into the workforce.

For more information please click [here](#).

VET FEE-HELP PROVIDERS UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

Targeted audits of Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) will address allegations of unscrupulous marketing and other practices intended to exploit the Australian Government's VET FEE-HELP program.

Assistant Minister for Education and Training Senator Simon Birmingham said the national regulator, the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), would undertake a total of 23 audits of RTOs including of providers who had been identified through complaints made to the authority.

Any training providers found to be engaged in practices that are contrary to the required national Standards could face regulatory sanctions, including the cancellation or suspension of their registration.

For more information please click [here](#).

NEW LAWS TO STRENGTHEN VET STANDARDS

Legislation was introduced into Parliament on 25 February 2015 to further crack down on unscrupulous Vocational Education and Training (VET) providers and improve training quality.

Assistant Minister for Education and Training, Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham said the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Amendment Bill 2015 would:

- Enable the Australian Government to create new quality standards in order to quickly address any problems with VET providers or VET courses;
- Require anyone, including brokers and other third parties, who is marketing a VET course to clearly identify which registered training organisation (RTO) is providing the qualification; and
- Extend the registration period for RTOs from five to seven years to enable the national training regulator – the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) – to focus its attention on investigating and acting upon high risk and poor quality providers.

For more information please click [here](#).

REVIEW OF THE AUSTRALIAN APPRENTICESHIP AND TRAINEESHIPS INFORMATION SERVICE

The Australian Apprenticeships and Traineeships Information Service provides online information and resources about potential Australian Apprenticeships pathways, and an advisory service and information sessions for Australian Apprenticeships stakeholder organisations.

An independent review is currently being undertaken into the Australian Apprenticeships and Traineeships Information service.

To have your say, please click [here](#) to complete a short survey.

APPRENTICE NUMBERS RECOVER IN DECEMBER QUARTER

There has been a turnaround in the number of apprentices commencing, suggesting an end to the recent decline, according to the latest figures from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER).

The figures show that non-trade commencements increased by 5,300 to 31,700 in the December quarter, suggesting an end to the series of declines since June 2013.

Trade commencements increased 1,600 to 21,500, ending the downturn since September 2013.

The NCVER report, *Apprentices and trainees 2014 – early trend estimates, December quarter*, provides seasonally adjusted and smoothed data at the national level.

THE NATIONAL RETAIL ASSOCIATION TO INVESTIGATE LITERACY, LANGUAGE AND NUMERACY SKILLS IN THE AUSTRALIAN RETAIL INDUSTRY

The National Retail Association will undertake a study to uncover the key issues impacting on literacy, language and numeracy skills (LLN) in the Australian Retail industry.

The study, funded under the Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) Programme by the Australian Government Department of Industry, will highlight the importance of LLN skills training in achieving workplace goals.

The study will assist in the development of workforce strategies, tools and resources, which will be tailored to meet the specific training needs of employers, and trainers, operating in the Retail industry.

Significantly, a recent study conducted by the National Retail Association has revealed that interpersonal and language skills are the most important attribute for working in the Retail industry, while numeracy and literacy skills are also considered to be very important.

This suggests that there is a clear identified need in the Retail industry for employers and trainers to have readily available strategies and resources that can enhance the LLN skills of entry level team members.

If you would like to participate in the study, please complete a brief online survey by clicking [here](#).

Alternatively, If you would like to discuss the study in more detail, please contact NRA's Research Division on 1800 738 245.

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