

DOING WHAT'S RIGHT FOR AUSTRALIA

The Howard
Government



INVESTING IN TRAINING AND SKILLS

The Howard Government believes that Australia made a serious mistake in recent decades, turning its back on technical education and allowing the trades to be talked down and considered a second rate career. The Howard Government has worked hard to restore the status of the trades so that young Australians see them as an avenue to a rewarding and satisfying career.

The Howard Government has increased the number of apprentices in training to around 400,000 (up from 154,800 in March 96). With around 160,000 people aged 25 and older undertaking apprenticeships, there are now more *mature aged* apprentices than the *total number* of apprentices under Labor.

The Howard Government has established 28 Australian Technical Colleges around Australia with 21 already open for business. Australian Technical Colleges allow students to complete their final years of high school and at the same time start an apprenticeship in their chosen trade, so that they finish school well on their way to a successful career.

Because local industries are involved in the running of the Technical Colleges, students get the most up to date training on state of the art equipment, learn the skills that local industries need and build important networks with local business communities.

The Howard Government is further driving vocational education through a number of new measures, like \$1,000 tax-free wage top ups for first and second year apprentices, \$500 Apprenticeship Training Vouchers toward reimbursement of course fees and \$800 toolkits to first year apprentices to assist with the initial cost of training.

A measure of the success of the Howard Government's Australian Apprenticeship program is that more than 90% of those who complete an apprenticeship find ongoing employment within three months.

While young Australians are benefiting from the opportunities brought about by a strong economy and strong job market (with the lowest rate of unemployment in 33 years), the Howard Government is determined to encourage those not in work to participate. We are especially proud of the Work for the Dole program that since 1997 has seen more than 599,613 participants take part in 34,924 Work for the Dole activities, providing Australians with valuable work experience and improving their work ethic, while helping them gain pride and self-esteem from contributing to the community.

The Howard Government will work hard to maintain a strong economy, generate jobs and provide training opportunities for Australians to be able to have a fulfilling working life.



For more information about our achievements and plans for the future

