

MEDIA RELEASE

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Turnbull Government Sneaks Through Changes to Undermine Apprenticeship System

In its final moments before going into caretaker mode, the Turnbull Government has rushed through changes that seek to undermine the quality and cost of vocational education and training.

In a document released by the Government, it has been revealed that employer organisations and training providers will be paid by the government to undertake "Alternative Delivery Methods" of apprenticeship training that will reduce the face-to-face training undertaken by students in the apprenticeship system.

AMWU National President, Andrew Dettmer, slammed the Turnbull Government's actions.

"The Minister has rushed through these changes in the dead of night in the hope that no one would notice. These changes are aimed at reducing the quality of training and shifting the cost of training back on students," he said.

Under the proposed changes, to be delivered as a pilot in various regions around the country, training would be delivered en bloc at the front end of an apprenticeship. It will mean that apprentices are encouraged to undertake training up front at their own expense, rather than undertaking training during the course of their employment with the employer contributing to the cost.

"For over a century, our VET system has relied on quality training that is delivered while you work. These changes seek to dismantle that system so big business and private training providers can earn a quick buck off the misery of young apprentices," said Mr Dettmer.

Research undertaken by the AMWU in 2015 showed that apprentices are already struggling with the cost of living and, despite being frugal with their money, are increasingly in debt. In a major national survey of apprentices conducted by the union it was revealed that:

- About 60% of apprentices have less than 1 month's pay in savings
- About 50% report having other forms of debt
- Almost 60% report struggling to pay their bills

The survey results come after a succession of decisions by the Abbott and Turnbull Government's that slashed assistance to apprentices totaling more than \$1 billion.

"This is a system in crisis and the people hurting the most are young people seeking to get decent skills and a decent job," said Mr Dettmer.

"There is nothing agile or innovative about shifting costs to apprentices," he said.

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