Discussion Paper

Reforming Support Services for the Australian Apprenticeships System

June 2013
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**Introduction**

The Australian Apprenticeships system makes a significant contribution to the skills needs of the Australian economy. The completion of an Australian Apprenticeship has also made a positive difference to the careers of many individuals. Australian Apprenticeships are a cornerstone of the Australian Vocational Education and Training (VET) system, with approximately 25% of the 1.9 million students enrolled in the system being either Australian Apprentices or trainees.

The Australian Apprenticeships system is integral to the achievement of Australia’s skills and workforce development goals. Effective delivery of support services to employers and Australian Apprentices can make a measurable difference to the ability of the system to deliver these outcomes. For these reasons, the Australian Government is seeking to improve the delivery of the Australian Apprenticeships Support Services (AASS).

This discussion paper seeks the views of stakeholders on the proposed improvements to the system and opens a discussion on the best way to implement these changes. Views expressed through this consultation process will be considered as the development of the new service delivery network progresses.

**Current Arrangements**

**Responsibility for the System**

The Australian Government and the state and territory governments (the states) share responsibility for the regulation, funding and oversight of Australian Apprenticeships and traineeships.

The states regulate and deliver training, which involves, but is not limited to, declaring VET qualifications as valid Australian Apprenticeship or traineeship pathways, determining acceptable durations for the period of training, formalising the arrangements through Contracts of Training and offering some support, and dispute resolution and arbitration between employer, employee and training organisations. States also carry responsibility for managing the joint funding of formal off-the-job training for Australian Apprentices and trainees. Training places are usually funded under User Choice arrangements, which can be used to engage both public and private providers.

The Australian Government provides approximately $1 billion per annum in incentive payments to employers and personal benefits to Australian Apprentices through the Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Program (AAIP). In addition, the Australian Government operates and fully funds a national network of Australian Apprenticeship Centres (AACs) which deliver the Australian Apprenticeship Support Services, and manages the Training and Youth Internet Management System (TYIMS) which is the key IT support system that tracks Australian Apprentice/trainee and employer relationships, determines eligibility for, and makes, payments, and tracks performance of AACs.
Administration of Support Services and Incentive Payments

Since 1998, the Australian Apprenticeships Support Services (AASS) has been delivered on behalf of the Australian Government through a network of Australian Apprenticeships Centres (AACs). The services delivered by AACs include:

- marketing and promoting Australian Apprenticeships;
- providing comprehensive information to Australian Apprentices, employers and other interested parties;
- working with the state and territory authorities to provide streamlined support services for employers and Australian Apprentices;
- aiming to achieve better participation in Australian Apprenticeships for Indigenous Australians, people with a disability, mature aged workers, Australian School-based Apprentices and areas of skills shortage;
- establishing effective relationships to encourage the commencement and successful completion of Australian Apprenticeships; and
- determining eligibility for, and administering, payments under the Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Program (AAIP).

Delivery of AASS through the national network of AACs currently involves 23 organisations holding 72 contracts in 22 regions and about 350 sites. Support services through AACs have served the system well since their establishment and in addition, due to the maturity of the model, AAC staff act as effective intermediaries in ensuring participants are informed of all options and information under the Australian Apprenticeships program.

The Need for Reform

Despite the strengths of the current model of AASS delivery, which include the uniformity of service, the maturity of the AAC model, and full national coverage, there have been issues raised over time about the appropriateness of the support services delivered in the context of a diversified labour market and modern approaches to service and the interface with government.

The Australian Apprenticeships system has become increasingly complex for Australian Apprentices, employers, the Australian Government, the states, and other stakeholders. The efficiency and effectiveness of the system has also been questioned, as has its relevance to the modern economy. A number of reviews and proposals have been developed by different stakeholders, including the Expert Panel report; *A Shared Responsibility – Apprenticeships for the 21st Century*, which advised the Australian Government on reform options for Australian Apprenticeships. The report found that the system suffers from administrative confusion as governance structures, responsibilities and custodianship of the system remain unclear to many users.

Given the number of stakeholders involved in the VET and Australian Apprenticeships sphere, there is also inevitably duplication on the ground. This includes employers receiving monitoring visits from state training authorities and the AACs. In some cases employers and Australian Apprentices will also receive visits from organisations providing mentoring services including those funded by
the Australian Government. While the purpose of the visits may have different intent, they often appear duplicative and/or unnecessary. Confusion is also created through the presence of multiple AACs within individual regions which all operate under different names. While AACs have responsibility for marketing of Australian Apprenticeships and traineeships in their regions, the competitive nature of the marketplace results in AACs having to market their own organisations.

The current system is also administratively complex. It has been estimated that AACs currently spend up to 80 per cent of their time and resources on administration. While mentoring and pre-sign up advice are not currently a contractual responsibility of the AACs, the heavy focus on administration and paperwork limits the opportunity for the system to focus more on personal support services which have been shown to have a positive impact on completion rates. The Expert Panel, as well as stakeholder consultation undertaken by the Department, has emphasised the importance of personalised support to increase the likelihood of an Australian Apprentice finishing their training. The Expert Panel stated:

The need for apprentices and trainees to be supported both inside and outside the workplace is a consistent theme presented in research on non-completion (of training). Apprentices and trainees engaged under arrangements that include pastoral care and more personalised selection have been found to have greater completion rates. The need for accessible support is especially critical in the first six months of the employment arrangement when the apprentice or trainee is most at risk of dropping out.1

In addition to this, the current structure of defined regions for AAC services means that while there are multiple providers in all regions, employers in those regions are limited to contracted providers. While this approach assures national coverage, and competitive tension to improve delivery, there is evidence that it does not meet the need of many national employers as they may be required to deal with multiple AACs across Australia.

Harnessing Modern Technology

In 2012, the Australian Government engaged Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu (Deloitte) to provide advice on improving the delivery of support services. Deloitte outlined significant benefits that could be reaped through the use of an improved IT system which could remove the administrative burden which is a significant element of the current system. Following this advice, the Australian Government determined that the use of information technology deployed at a national level to modernise the administration of the Australian Apprenticeships system and consequently the ability to create a new service delivery model would deliver the most effective support to Australian Apprentices and their employers.

The new Australian Apprenticeships Management System (AAMS) is being developed by the Australian Government to replace the out-dated Training and Youth Internet Management System (TYIMS) which has a heavy workload and struggles to meet the demands placed on it.

AAMS will enable the Australian Government to implement a system which is more effective for Australian Apprentices and employers and more responsive to critical skills needs.

For many involved with the Australian Apprenticeships system, AAMS will provide a self-service portal which, through using modern on-line authentication technology, will enable employers and Australian Apprentices to manage their own information, create their own payments, as well as submitting training contracts electronically. AAMS will provide a system whereby employers, Australian Apprentices and service providers can provide their details electronically, at a time convenient to them and submit for processing as required.

AAMS will support regular employers of Australian Apprentices to complete the data collection in their own time with very minimal engagement from a service provider, therefore streamlining the process even further.

**Modernising Frontline Service Delivery**

By removing the current reliance on administrative functions, AAMS provides the opportunity for support services to be reformed with more focus on face to face engagement, including advice, support and mentoring, which have a decisive impact on rates of retention and completion.

To address the gaps in the system for advice and mentoring services for Australian Apprentices and employers, the Australian Government established the Australian Apprenticeships Advisers Program and the Australian Apprenticeships Mentoring Program in 2011 which work alongside the support services provided by state and territory governments. The Advisers Program is due for completion in December 2013 and the Mentoring Program in June 2015. In order to reduce complexity, confusion and overlap in the marketplace, and given the undisputed value of support and mentoring, it is intended that many of the functions delivered through these individual programs will form a central part of the reformed AASS.

The proposed structure of the reformed Australian Apprenticeships system is at Diagram 1.
Diagram 1 – Proposed structure of reformed Australian Apprenticeship Support Services

Information and marketing

Pre-signup advice and information

Employer

Advice to potential Apprentice on career pathways, pre-apprenticeships, personal benefits and support available

Apprentice

Matching Employer and potential Australian Apprentice

Sign up
Large employers and/or employers experienced in the system
- > fully self-service

SMEs with experience or large employers without experience
- > combination of self-service and human support

Employers with limited IT capacity to self-service or who are new to Apprenticeships
- > full human support

Quantitative need assessment

Baseline Support for all Apprentices. This will provide a basic ongoing level of contact with apprentices, with contact expected to be a few times a year including in the first month.

This service could be provided locally by a service provider or nationally via a helpdesk.

Intensive support for those at significant risk of non-completion, and their employers. This will be the same as for additional support, plus:
- Expectation of longer term support
- Apprentice will be allocated a dedicated case worker who they can contact on demand.

Additional support for those at risk of non-completion and their employers
- Provided by a local service provider.
- Face to face contact.
- Short term pastoral care and support.
- Includes referrals to specialist services where available.

Movement between levels based on an assessment of need.
Dissemination of Accurate Information

Ensuring Australian Apprentices and employers receive adequate information and advice about the system is integral to ensuring the right Australian Apprentice is in the right role. Currently, most advice to potential Australian Apprentices regarding pathways and qualifications occurs at the sign up of the training contract. This means that the Australian Apprentice and employer have effectively already made their decision to pursue a particular Australian Apprenticeship, and are effectively locked into a specific qualification.

Pre sign-up consultation with a focus on selection of the appropriate Australian Apprenticeship qualification is not currently a specific contracted requirement of AACS.

There is already a plethora of information available online regarding Australian Apprenticeships. Currently the majority of AACS have their own websites, as do group training organisations, and industry organisations, state governments as well as the Australian Government and several other organisations which are promoting elements of the Australian Apprenticeships system. The system as it currently stands includes a vast amount of duplication of information, which can make it difficult for an Australian Apprentice or employer to know which information is accurate, and it can be difficult to compare different information sources. There is also a duplication of effort from the organisations producing the websites and promotional information.

There is an opportunity for all marketing of Australian Apprentices be consolidated at a national and/or state level in order to deliver a coherent and consistent message in an effective manner. Likewise, the provision of information could be brought under a national umbrella website to provide potential Australian Apprentices and employers with the information and online help they require.

There is the potential to develop a cohesive approach to the dissemination of information, including through the website, through a helpline, and also, for those employers and Australian Apprentices already engaged with the Australian Apprenticeships system, the AAMS system will enable these
groups to be targeted with information specific to their requirements. This approach to the distribution of information ensures that accurate and relevant information can be provided directly from the Australian Government to the employer and Australian Apprentice.

Information and Marketing - questions for consideration:

- Should marketing for Australian Apprenticeships be focused at the national level? Who should provide this service? What information needs to be available?
- Is there a need for local regional and/or industry-specific Australian Apprenticeship information? Whose responsibility should it be to provide this?
- How should marketing reflect national/local areas of skills needs?
- Is there information which is currently not provided but would be useful for potential Australian Apprentices and employers?
- What specific social media tools are most effective for either providing information to current Australian Apprentices, or promoting Australian Apprenticeships to potential Australian Apprentices to enable them to engage with the Australian Apprenticeships system?

Pre Sign up Information and Advice

It is integral to the success of the system that Australian Apprentices and employers receive accurate information on qualifications and responsibilities associated with entering into a contract of training. As well as enhancing the current national website with additional information, an enhanced national helpline will also be established to respond to queries regarding the sign up process, qualification, incentives and training providers.

Additionally, a recent review of the Australian Apprenticeships Access Program (Access Program) has recommended streamlining delivery, creating better linkages with the broader Australian Apprenticeships system and refining the Program’s focus on targeting prevocational training to the
needs of industry. Integrating pre sign up services like those available through the Access Program would help prepare more vulnerable job seekers, match them to the right Australian Apprenticeship and support them and their employer through advice, support and mentoring services.

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<th>Pre sign up - questions for consideration:</th>
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<td>• Who is best placed to ensure that potential Australian Apprentices are enrolled in the correct qualification?</td>
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<td>• How much support and information do those organisations familiar with the Australian Apprenticeships system require?</td>
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<td>• How do we ensure engagement with Australian Apprenticeships by equity groups? To what extent could this be achieved on a local/regional/state or national level?</td>
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Matching Potential Australian Apprentices with Employers

A key gap in the current system is an ability to easily match Australian Apprentices with employers. The majority of matching is either done through non-specialised job search websites, word of mouth, or networks. To enhance this process the Department could establish an Australian Apprenticeship vacancy board where employers could list vacancies and potential Australian Apprentices could set up job alerts. Alternatively the Department could consider linking in with other existing job seeker sites which have the capacity to search by Australian Apprenticeship. A link to this site could then be provided from the Australian Apprenticeships website.
Matching - questions for consideration:

- Would a national vacancy website be effective for employer/Australian Apprentice matching?
- What other strategies could be used to improve matching services?

Sign-Up – Providing Employer Targeted Support

AAMS will support different approaches to conducting a sign up. Employers who are active in the Australian Apprenticeships system (often larger employers) and require minimal support will generally have the capacity to fully self-serve, i.e. sign up an Australian Apprentice with no contact required from a service provider. Those employers who are new to or infrequent users of the Australian Apprenticeships system may need additional support in signing up Australian Apprentices and navigating the system over the course of the training contract. AAMS will provide online support to help users navigate the system but service providers will provide support as required, i.e. service providers may conduct an initial consultation and then guide employers through the system to support the sign up.

A majority of employers of Australian Apprentices should be able to manage their own involvement with the system through an IT system with minimal additional support from the Australian Government. The Department estimates that large organisations (those with 200 or more employees) make up about 40% of the employers of Australian Apprentices. The majority of these employers would have not only the IT capability, but the capacity and in many cases, a preference, of controlling their own interaction with the Australian Apprenticeships system. Likewise many medium and small employers are also regular employers of Australian Apprentices and are IT savvy and may require minimal support.

It is anticipated that possible support for employers at sign up could include both a face to face component, as well as online and phone assistance. The helpline would be able to provide assistance with technical matters regarding AAMS as well as provide basic assistance on the sign up.
More in depth support would be provided through the option of a face to face meeting where employers can be taken step by step through AAMS and the sign up process. Consideration must be given to ensuring that all employers and Australian Apprentices are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities regardless of the sign up approach.

### Sign up - questions for consideration:

- What tools and information are required to ensure that the majority of employers are able to self-service through AAMS? What are the risks? How can these risks be mitigated?
- Do all employers need a face to face support component? Should employers new to the Australian Apprenticeships system automatically require additional engagement?
- What are the additional support needs of employers likely to be? How can these be addressed?
- Does current AASS sufficiently cater to the needs of SMEs? How could this be improved?
- Would the establishment of a self-service model potentially isolate SME’s who don’t have dedicated HR staff?
- Is it necessary for the same organisation which provides on the ground sign up support, to also be the organisation which provides ongoing support to Australian Apprentices and employers throughout their Australian Apprenticeship?

### Provision of Ongoing Support through to Completion

The current approach to identifying Australian Apprentices in need of additional support services is ad hoc and reliant on individual factors of disadvantage. This results in support being provided to many individuals who require no assistance, to the exclusion of many Australian Apprentices in great need of assistance who do not fall into these defined groups. In addition, in many cases, where support needs are identified, no systemic mechanism is in place to link an individual into appropriate support services. A systematic and multi-factor approach is needed to better identify
individual support needs and ensure that they can be linked with appropriate levels of ongoing support to improve the likelihood of an Australian Apprentice completing their training.

The early assessment of Australian Apprentice and/or employer need at, or as soon as possible after, sign up as well as individualised and wraparound services, strengthens the employment relationship and increases the chances of successful completion. To enable this, evidence-based assessment of each individual could be embedded within the Australian Apprenticeships system to enable more effective targeting of support. Embedding a tool to identify those at risk of non-completion as part of the sign up process through AAMS would enable all Australian Apprentices to be identified prior to the commencement of their Australian Apprenticeship.

A tool to identify those in need

One possible tool to achieve this is to use a modified version of the current Job Services Australia’s Job Seeker Classification Instrument (JSCI). The JSCI is a tool which is based on 18 factors identified through research, expert advice and consultations, as being important in measuring the likelihood of a registrant remaining a job seeker for at least a year. The JSCI then weighs these individual factors and then the collective sum of compounding factors. As a result of the assessment, job seekers are classified into streams gaining an entitlement to a range of support services. The development of an evidence based assessment of individual need through a proposed Australian Apprenticeship Classification Index (AACI) assessment tool would support the effective targeting of appropriate services, supporting the Australian Apprentice and/or employer, to strengthen the employment relationship and develop the capability and capacity of the parties to fulfil their commitment to the training contract.

The AACI would provide a robust framework for determining entitlement to streamlined intervention tailored to support individual need, in the context of supporting the employment relationship. Whilst based on the methodology of the JSCI, the AACI would be a stand alone tool tailored to the requirements of the Australian Apprenticeships system and managed within the system. As distinct from the JSCI which is administered face to face, the AACI would be designed to be an online tool as part of AAMS which would form part of the sign up requirements. If through completing the AACI, an individual is found to require additional assistance, a referral could be automatically sent to a suitable provider to initiate support services which would be provided as part of the AASS offering. The assessment model would require flexibility to allow for reassessment on an ‘as-need’ basis following changes in an individual’s personal circumstances.

The type of support to be provided

One of the key findings of the Department’s consultations with mentoring providers, funded through the Australian Apprenticeships Mentoring Program, was that the majority of issues being addressed by mentors are general pastoral care issues of a short term nature. This type of service delivery requires a clear skill set and in more intensive cases requires an ongoing relationship of trust between Australian Apprentice and mentor. It is therefore anticipated that a modernised service would be most effective if it is generalist in nature and delivered locally. The delivery
mechanism and/or providers should be determined by a focus on ensuring pastoral care competence and the ability to assist Australian Apprentices and employers to navigate the Australian Apprenticeships system.

Support services could be delivered on three levels: baseline support, additional support and intensive support. Determining the level of support required will depend on the needs of both the employer and the Australian Apprentice. All Australian Apprentices will receive a baseline level of support, with those at higher risk of non-completion receiving additional support and those at significant risk of non-completion receiving intensive support and mentoring.

_Diagram 2 - A three tiered approach to supporting Australian Apprentices_

It is estimated that the majority of Australian Apprentices would require only baseline support, with a minority of Australian Apprentices requiring additional support, including a smaller cohort which would require more ongoing one-on-one intensive support. It would be expected that many equity groups who experience barriers to participation and completion would fall into one of the higher support categories.

The aims of the support services are to:
• motivate and build the confidence of Australian Apprentices to reach their full potential in their Australian Apprenticeships
• to be a point of contact for Australian Apprentices when issues or potential issues arise in relation to their Australian Apprenticeships
• empower Australian Apprentices with the knowledge and capacity to identify and resolve issues autonomously when they arise, and
• encourage Australian Apprentices to develop their independence and self-reliance in the workplace

While not specifically assigned to a support level, employers would also be able to access the support services on a self-referred basis.

Baseline Support
Baseline support would be available for all Australian Apprentices. This would provide for a level of support slightly higher than is currently received under AASS. It is expected that this service would be provided on a one to one basis, but may not necessarily be conducted face to face. Many Australian Apprentices face minimal barriers to completing their Australian Apprenticeship, and only require minimal telephone contact to ensure their Australian Apprenticeship is on track. Also they require someone to contact if they do have enquires or concerns.

Baseline support would have a minimum of two contacts in the first six months (including one within the first four weeks of assessment), with contact a minimum of six monthly after that. Those Australian Apprentices receiving baseline support will be reassessed if it is suspected that they require additional support. Most issues dealt with through baseline support will be those around roles and responsibilities of employers and Australian Apprentices, issues around accuracy of payments, and terms and conditions of training contract. Should more complex issues be identified there would be scope for the Australian Apprentice to be transitioned into the additional support service level.

Baseline support would also be available for employers who require some guidance in dealing with their Australian Apprentice. However it is expected that access to baseline support would be employer initiated, rather than establishing a contact schedule for employers.

This service could be provided at a local level, or it could also be provided as a centralised phone service, possibly as an add-on to the national helpline.

Additional Support
Additional support would be available to those at risk of not completing their Australian Apprenticeship. The issues that are expected to be dealt with are those of a short term nature which require face to face assistance and a service which is familiar with other agencies in the local area to refer on to, as well as someone with experience with the Australian Apprenticeships system. Issues faced by Australian Apprentices requiring this level of support may include: changes to their domestic situation, bullying, financial management, literacy or further skill requirements.
Additional support would include contact at a minimum of six weekly (including one within the first two weeks of the assessment) or more frequently as required, until reassessed as requiring baseline support. Support would be primarily face to face or as agreed to by the Australian Apprentice or employer, however the first meeting should, in most cases, be face to face in order to build up a rapport and for the Australian Apprentice support worker to better assess their needs.

As well as providing support to the Australian Apprentice, support service staff would also be required to develop a relationship with the employer and provide mentoring services to the employer where required to assist with a productive workplace relationship.

The key responsibilities of support service staff would be to:

- build rapport and trust with the Australian Apprentice in order to engage with them and help them to develop the skills necessary to successfully complete their Australian Apprenticeship
- identify and address the specific needs of the Australian Apprentice being mentored and refer to appropriate specialised support services where required
- modify approaches specific to the needs of each Australian Apprentice being mentored recognising that the level, type, and frequency of engagement necessary will depend on the Australian Apprentice’s specific identified barriers and the impact these may have on their employment and the ability to adjust as required
- provide constructive and practical advice to the Australian Apprentice in relation to the workplace and encourage independence and self-reliance through modelling or providing guidance on best practice strategies
- build relationships with employers/supervisors, particularly those who may be new to supervising Australian Apprentices, to provide information and guidance where appropriate to help maintain a positive relationship between the Australian Apprentice and their employer
- refer the Australian Apprentice to other service organisations or provide them with additional resources where required to address personal barriers
- identify training which may be required to assist the Australian Apprentice through their Australian Apprenticeship such as improving numeracy and literacy skills.

**Intensive Support**

Intensive support would be required by a small number of Australian Apprentices, and would be for those assessed as being at a significant risk of not completing their Australian Apprenticeship. This type of support requires the allocation of a case worker to the Australian Apprentice so that a strong trust relationship can be built. The issues to be dealt with under this level of support would be similar to those in additional support but would be more critical. Contact for this group would be expected to be at least weekly and would include significant liaison with the employer to ensure maximum outcomes. Contact should be face to face unless agreed to by the Australian Apprentice or employer, however the first meeting should be face to face in order to build up a rapport and for the Australian Apprentice support worker to better assess their needs.
As well as providing support to the Australian Apprentice, support service staff must provide support to the employer to assist with a productive workplace relationship.

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<th>Provision of ongoing support to completion - questions for consideration:</th>
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<td>• What are the service standards that should be required for ongoing and intensive support?</td>
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<td>• What are the skills which would be required to undertake the support/case worker role? Should these be specified as contractual obligations by the Australian Government?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Is a modified version of the JSCI the correct tool for quantitative assessment? What other options are there for identifying those at risk?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Are there any risk factors that are specific to Australian Apprenticeships over job seekers?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Is there a need for funding to be made available to purchase additional services, such as tutoring, for those at risk?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Would baseline support need to be delivered on a regional basis? Could it be provided through a centralised helpline?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Is the frequency of contact, as outlined, sufficient for those groups?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Should there be set times for reassessment or should this only be undertaken when circumstances change which may make a person at risk?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Should employers be able to refer an Australian Apprentice to receive additional or intensive support, regardless of their assessment?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• AAMS has the potential to identify those employers who have a high turnover of Australian Apprentices. Should this information be used to encourage those employers to seek additional face to face support?</td>
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**Creating a Flexible System**

Within the proposed new system there is scope for other stakeholders (such as industry groups or state/territory governments) to supplement AASS services. The Australian Government may co-fund such activities if a broader public good is present. One possible example is funding or co-funding a capability within industry bodies to provide industry-based advice and assistance to Australian Apprentices in relation to career mapping and progression. This would be a much smaller component than the broader generalist service delivery and would be designed to be a resource for generalist mentors to tap into for highly industry-specific matters. Such a capability could also be used as a means of providing industry-specific advice to potential Australian Apprentices/school leavers under reformed AASS.

The flexibility of a tiered structure for service delivery enables a better opportunity to link in with existing structures already in place. Rather than delivery of a homogenous approach, there is an opportunity to develop shared responsibility between key groups. For example, there may be an opportunity for state government involvement in the wraparound support services, including provision of mentoring and career advice, and there is a potential role for them as field officers or as providers of sign up support and advice. There is also the ability to enter in bilateral arrangements with individual states to decrease duplication.
Conclusion

Removing the dependency of the Australian Apprenticeships system on manual processing and paperwork creates room to develop a system which is more focused on quality completions. An opportunity to implement a user needs system where users are able to self-select what level of support they require to interact with the system, but also a system which will identify those Australian Apprentices and employers most at risk of not successfully navigating themselves through the Australian Apprenticeships system and will assign these people with the additional level of support which they require.

However, moving forward with the reform of support services will only be achieved through the cooperation of all stakeholders in the system, including Australian Apprentices, employers, industry peak bodies, service providers, unions, state and territory governments and Australian Government departments. This will ensure that the new model of support services is streamlined, transparent and easily navigable by all Australian Apprentices and their employers. Australian Apprenticeships Support Services must reflect the needs of Australian Apprentices and employers, accommodate for their interactions with all stakeholders across the system (such as RTOs and state training authorities), and sit reasonably within the capabilities and accountabilities of future AASS providers.

How to Provide a Submission

The Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (‘the department’) is currently accepting submissions on the proposed reform of the Australian Apprenticeships Support Services, as outlined in this Discussion Paper.

Where possible submissions should be provided on the proforma found on the Australian Apprenticeships website (www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au). Submissions will be accepted up until 5pm on 31 July 2013.

Please note the following:

- The department may publish all submissions for public review on the department’s website and may include submissions in reports or materials published by the department.
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Queries in relation to responding to this discussion paper should be directed to aassreform@innovation.gov.au