MEDIA RELEASE

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Australian Government continues support for Group Training

New South Wales has stripped its funding for a group training program which helps boost commencements and completions in Australian Apprenticeships and supports disadvantaged Australians access training and job opportunities.

Federal Minister for Skills, Senator Chris Evans, today said the Gillard Government will invest $14 million this year to continue the Joint Group Training Program (JGTP), despite the NSW Liberal Government pulling its share of the funding from 1 January 2013.

“The Gillard Government is committed to boosting training opportunities to give more Australians a chance to share in the benefits having a qualification can bring – higher skills, better pay, a more rewarding career,” Senator Evans said.

“The O’Farrell Government’s short-sighted cuts to training and skills funding comes at a time when employers are crying out for more skilled workers.

“Premier O’Farrell’s latest funding cuts to group training follows his decision to cut TAFE funding, slash jobs and increase student fees.

"At the time we need to grow Australia’s skills base, the NSW Liberal State Government is implementing policies that could see a reduction in training opportunities.”

Jointly-funded by the Commonwealth and state and territory governments, the JGTP specifically targets nationally agreed priorities, such as skill shortage areas, Indigenous Australians, people with disability, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and rural and remote areas.

The Program helps Group Training Organisations recruit Australian Apprentices, provide employer responsibilities such as wages, employment benefits and superannuation, ensure the quality of training and provide additional support to ensure the apprenticeship is completed successfully.

“It is disappointing the NSW Liberal Government is cutting its contribution to this important program which helps support apprentices to complete their training.
“Programs like JGTP provide group training organisations with the ability to create employment opportunities for Australian Apprenticeships that otherwise may not have existed,” Senator Evans said.

“The Gillard Government’s funding will ensure apprentices in NSW have the same opportunities as apprentices across other States and Territories to learn a trade and access higher skilled, higher paying jobs.”

The Gillard Government is investing more than $15 billion in vocational education and training over the next four years to make sure Australians can access higher-skill, higher-paying jobs.

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