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Expanded Kickstart to boost engineering trades

More Australians will get the opportunity to learn an engineering trade as part of an expansion to the Gillard Government’s $57.5 million Kickstart Initiative.

Minister for Skills, Senator Chris Evans, today announced that nine additional key engineering trades are now eligible for Kickstart payments, which triple the incentives made to employers in the first year of taking on an apprentice.

An extra $3,350 will be paid to employers who take on a new engineering apprentice between now and 28 February 2013. This is in addition to the $1,500 commencement payment for eligible employers.

“Engineering skills are critical to our economy and that’s why Labor is working with employers and unions to boost the numbers of Australians in apprenticeships,” Senator Evans said.

“Almost every part of the economy relies on these skills in some way but the numbers of apprentices in training isn’t keeping up with the growing number of jobs being created for engineering trades.

“That makes it important to boost the number of apprentices in engineering trades now and help more Australians learn these skills.

“Kickstart is contributing to training the next generation of skilled fitters and turners, toolmakers and metal fabricators by helping businesses to take on a new apprentice now.

“By creating new opportunities for an apprenticeship, we are also making sure Australians are well-placed to take on the higher-skill, higher-paying jobs that are in the economy.”

Kickstart is being extended to help boost the number of engineering apprentices following Government consultation with industry.

Ai Group Chief Executive Innes Willox welcomed the change saying almost every sector of the Australian economy utilised engineering skills.

“Engineering apprentice commencements have not fully recovered to pre-GFC levels. The extension of the Kickstart initiative to small and medium size enterprise employers of apprentices in the engineering trades is warranted immediately,” Mr Willox said.

Apprentice Kickstart is designed to bring an extra 21,000 apprentices into the workforce and runs until the end of February.

The new eligible trades for Kickstart payments are Aircraft Maintenance Engineer (both Avionics and Mechanical), Fitter, Fitter and Turner, Fitter-Welder, Metal Fabricator, Metal Machinist, Pressure Welder and Toolmaker.

For more information or to apply, visit www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au

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