

Media Release

MTAA response to the Australian Government's White Paper on Jobs and Opportunities

Canberra 25 September 2023 – The Motor Trades Association of Australia (MTAA) recognises the Australian Government's sharp focus on full employment as a key aim in its new White Paper on Jobs and Opportunities.

"Full employment is a key and admirable goal for the Australian economy. However, meeting this target means employers and employees need to exercise all available workplace flexibilities to achieve these aims," said MTAA CEO Geoff Gwilym.

A greater focus on foundations skills in schools and training programs will add to Australia's skills capability and improve workplace productivity, enabling greater participation by those who struggle to access the form of employment that suits their individual needs.

MTAA supports the need to raise resources and funding for training providers and urges government to ensure the private training providers, along with TAFE institutes, can access the same funding to deliver the same training, and can access resource funding equitably, either in or outside of the TAFE institute.

Industry registered training organisations, who form a key conduit between industry, training and employment, also need particular focus. The provision of quality training will be critical to a number of industries, including those, like automotive, who face critical skills shortages.

MTAA and its state and territory members support linking VET qualifications with higher education pathways and encourage government to acknowledge many existing industries, like automotive, are in a steep transition curve, with whole sectors reskilling to meet the needs of the digital world and to meet environmental targets.

"Mechanics today have to be mechanical and digital technicians at the same time," said Mr Gwilym.

"Working on new vehicles requires electronic diagnosis and computer analytics, the same as someone working on a wind turbine or a complex computerised system. Care needs to be taken to ensure a scarce number of trade aspirants leaving school will not jump to higher-level apprenticeships at the expense of the traditional trades."

Automotive alone still needs 15,000 new apprentices to enter the industry every year and any reduction means vehicle service and repairs take longer, which is bad for the economy and productivity.

"MTAA supports a greater focus on matching incoming temporary and permanent migrants and, in particular, it has been identified as the sixth most in demand occupation by Jobs and Skills Australia. In an industry with over 30,000 vacant jobs nationally, we need to ensure we tightly match migration with genuine jobs and employment in the economy," said Mr Gwilym.

David Dowsey
Head of Marketing, Media, Communications & Publications

03 9829 1247 | 0419 361 122 | ddowsey@vacc.com.au | vacc.com.au