

Media Release

Automotive industry calls for a balanced approach to apprenticeship support

24 January

The Motor Trades Association of Australia (MTAA) is urging the Federal Government to expand its targeted \$10,000 construction apprenticeship bonus, advocating instead for a comprehensive approach that supports skills development across all essential trades that have been identified to be in shortage.

"While we welcome government initiatives to boost apprenticeship numbers, we need a strategy that strengthens Australia's entire skilled workforce," said Matt Hobbs, MTAA CEO. "Recent data shows concerning trends in automotive apprenticeship enrolments, with some states reporting – Light Vehicle mechanics down 22%, Heavy Commercial Vehicle 34%, and Automotive Electrical Technology down 35% compared to this time last year. All these trades are in short supply."

The automotive industry, which contributes over \$37 billion annually to the Australian economy, is experiencing unprecedented technological transformation with the rise of electric vehicles and advanced automotive technology.

"The next generation of automotive technicians will be working with some of the most sophisticated technology in any trade," Mr Hobbs said. "We need to ensure career pathways into automotive trades remain attractive and accessible to support Australia's transition to new mobility technologies. The Government has acknowledged this with support for EVs"

The MTAA believes a more strategic approach would involve industry-wide consultation to develop apprenticeship incentives that reflect the evolving needs of Australia's economy.

"This isn't about choosing between building houses and maintaining vehicles – both are essential to Australia's future," Mr Hobbs added. "We're calling for a balanced policy approach that recognises the strategic importance of developing skills across the economy that are in short supply – which includes the automotive industry."

The MTAA looks forward to working with the government to develop comprehensive solutions that support sustainable skills development across Australia's essential trade industries.

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