



## **SENATOR THE HON MARK ARBIB**

Minister for Employment Participation

### **ANNA BURKE MP**

Member for Chisholm

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2010

### **Local employers urged to Kickstart apprenticeships**

Minister for Employment Participation Mark Arbib and Chisholm MP Anna Burke today urged local businesses to take advantage of the Federal Government's extra incentives to hire an apprentice.

Senator Arbib said more than 3,300 young trades apprentices had been employed in Victoria since December 1 under the Apprentice Kickstart program.

Around Australia more than 14,000 apprentices have been employed through the Kickstart Program and, with just two weeks to go, Senator Arbib urged local businesses to take advantage of the bonus.

Under Kickstart, the Rudd Government has more than tripled the commencement bonus for employers in the first year, from \$1500 to \$4850.

Employers receive \$2350 when they employ a 15 to 19-year-old apprentice in an eligible trade and then receive a further \$2500 after the apprentice completes nine months.

Senator Arbib and Ms Burke today visited St Mary Magdalen's Primary School in Chadstone, which received \$2 million in the *Primary Schools for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* stream of the Building the Education Revolution, to view progress on the school's new library and multi-purpose hall, and to speak to local tradespeople who have employed apprentices.

"Local contractors such as Braeside Electrical and Tru Plumbing are all setting a great example training the tradespeople of the future and giving young people a head-start in their career.

"Youth unemployment is a critical issue and apprenticeships are a great way to build skills for the future while giving young people a go," said Senator Arbib.

“With the global recession seeing apprenticeship commencements drop by about 10,000 across Australia in the past year, it is critical that we train tradespeople now to avoid a skills shortage as the economy recovers.”

Ms Burke said local businesses and apprentice training organisations were pleased the Rudd Government had responded to their calls for extra incentives for employers of apprentices.

“The Kickstart bonus is available to employers of apprentices in the fields that have been hardest hit by skills shortages – identified on the National Skills Needs List,” Ms Burke said.

“These include everything from butchers, bakers, bricklayers, carpenters and plumbers to electrical trades and hairdressing, all important trades.

“The bonus is available until the end of the month and aims to sign up 21,000 young apprentices across Australia.”

“The Government introduced the bonus to fast-forward hiring decisions – to bring apprentice numbers back up to the levels before the global recession,” Ms Burke said.

“We want to be sure the region gets its fair share of the funding and encourage any business which is thinking of hiring a new apprentice to act now.

“There has never been a better time to put on an apprentice with these added bonuses.”

Funding for Apprentice Kickstart comes from the Government’s \$650 million Jobs Fund and was negotiated with the support of the Australian Greens and Senator Stephen Fielding.

It brings to about \$250 million the level of additional support the Rudd Government is providing to apprentices.

More information on Apprentice Kickstart is available at [www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au](http://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au)

**Media inquiries: Leo Damis (Minister Arbib) 0427 204 636/ 02 9364 2600**  
**Joe Fennessy (Anna Burke) 0417 140 935/ 03 9802 0566**