

# MEDIA RELEASE

Issued 8:00am, Monday, March 9, 2009.

HVTC offers help to trade trainees worried about their jobs

Preference would be shown to tenderers who had or recruited apprentices and trainees when the Australian Government awarded infrastructure projects in the Hunter.

The assurance was given by Senator Doug Cameron, a member of the Government's Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration.

"In tendering for new government funded infrastructure projects, preference will be given to businesses that demonstrate a commitment to retain and employ new apprentices and trainees," Senator Cameron said.

"We should not abandon the aspirations and the life-chances of thousands of Australians to the short term vagaries of the labour market. To me that just seems wrong.

"One of the lessons we have learned from past economic downturns is that apprentices and trainees can be very badly hurt when job shedding starts.

"Obviously, apprentices losing their jobs or not getting the training they need would be a tragedy, both for the individuals affected and for regions like the Hunter which will suffer in the long run if skills are lost," he said.

Senator Cameron was based in the Hunter Valley in the 1980s and '90s. He has been an organiser, an Assistant State Secretary, Assistant National Secretary and National Secretary for Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union and the Vice-President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions from 1999 to 2007.

The Hunter Valley Training Company (HVTC) Chairman, Mr Milton Morris AO, who had spoken to Senator Cameron about subsidies for apprentice and trainee employment in past weeks, said he applauded the government's financial incentives and policies.

"I commend Senator Cameron for his unfailing support of HVTC over its 27 years of operations. Senator Cameron cares about training apprentices," Mr Morris said.

"It would be a tragic loss to the nation if, as a result of the present downturn, we lost or had insufficient people with the skills available when a recovery occurs," he said.

The HVTC was available to give guidance and help wherever it could to those affected by the downturn.

"I suggest employers or apprentices who are in this position should contact the HVTC to explore options," he said.

The company already employed about 1400 Australian apprentices and trainees who were placed with host businesses and companies throughout NSW and Queensland.

Apprentices and trainees employed by HVTC could be moved to host companies and businesses that had adequate work.

This ensured HVTC employees had a well-rounded training experience that was highly prized by potential employers, he said.

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