



National Retail Association

MEDIA STATEMENT

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Service Sector Traineeships Crucial To Youth Employment

The Australian retail sector has warned that any failure on behalf of the federal government to fund traineeships in the service sector would directly contribute to higher youth unemployment.

The warning from the National Retail Association Executive Director Gary Black follows the release to the media of a government taskforce report, *A Shared Responsibility - Apprenticeships for the 21st Century*, which misguidedly recommended cutting trainee subsidies to retailers in the services sector.

Mr Black said the services sector was the predominant employer of young Australians and strongly deserved government traineeship support.

“The services sector carries a disproportionate burden of delivering employability skills to young Australians and support for traineeships is crucial for this to continue,” he said.

“The short-sighted recommendation from the taskforce, if adopted by the government, would undoubtedly result in a massive loss of job opportunities for young workers.

“With youth unemployment already running at over 12 percent across the country this would be a very foolish and deeply misguided recommendation to adopt.”

Mr Black said the retail and services sector was the lifeblood of many regional economies where youth unemployment is highest, and retail and service sector traineeships provided much needed job opportunities.

“Without the traineeship opportunities in the services sector, the choice faced by many young people would be between leaving for larger urban coastal centres or remaining jobless,” he said.

Mr Black said the retail sector was concerned that the training bureaucracy was captive to the union dominated mining, resources and construction sector, toward which the taskforce had recommended traineeship funding should be redirected.

“The taskforce’s advocacy of a shift of resources from the service sector to the highly profitable mining and resources sector is shameful.

“Services sector employers large and small would be left with no option but to employ less young people as a result of the loss of training subsidies and to rely more on experienced and productive adult labour. I urge the federal government to formally reject the taskforce recommendation”.

Gary Black is available for interviews – contact Brad Burke 0458 291 234.