



The Hon. Carmel Tebbutt, MLC

Minister for Education and Training

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MEDIA RELEASE

**NEW APPRENTICE AWARD TO BOOST RECOGNITION OF SKILLS
SHORTAGE TRADES**

NSW Education Minister Carmel Tebbutt today announced the introduction of a new annual apprenticeship award scheme that will recognise the talents of young apprentices in the mechanical and electrical trades.

The first Mechanical Apprentice of the Year and Electrical Apprentice of the Year will be announced towards the end of 2005 after a Memorandum of Understanding was signed today by TAFE NSW and industry sponsor, the SKILLED Group.

Each of the winning apprentices will receive the award of \$2,500 upon completing their training.

Ms Tebbutt said at a time of national skills shortages, it was crucial to encourage young people to take up apprenticeships in areas like the mechanical and electrical trades.

“The Carr government last month announced a detailed incentives and training plan to encourage more people to take up apprenticeships,” Ms Tebbutt said today.

“This new award is a further recognition that we value our young apprentices and want to support them in their path from training to full-time work.”

Today’s announcement comes after the Carr government revealed detailed new plans for apprenticeship incentives and training in measures to be announced in the 2005-2006 state budget, including:

- A \$100 car registration rebate for 25,500 first and second year apprentices;
- Doubling the rate of travel assistance for 5,000 apprentices and trainees who have to travel large distances from regional and rural NSW, and are away for two nights or more, from \$14 to \$28 per day;

- **A new TAFE TradeStart scheme which will allow 450 apprentices to complete their first year of TAFE training in just 16 weeks;**
- A job matching service to link TAFE TradeStart graduates to employers;
- Extra funds for group training to place around 800 apprentices with employers; and
- A new reporting system to ensure that 20 per cent of trade work on government construction projects worth more than \$2.5 million is performed by apprentices.

New figures released by Ms Tebbutt last week showed a significant rise in the number of new apprentices in NSW over the past few years.

Apprenticeship approvals between 2002 and 2004 increased by 28 per cent overall in NSW, according to the report by University of Western Sydney expert, Dr Phil Toner.

NSW spent almost \$1.6 billion on vocational education and training in 2004. Currently, almost 50,000 people in NSW are in apprenticeship training.

“The Carr government’s flexible approach to apprenticeship training has produced some positive results,” Ms Tebbutt said.

“But the effort to address critical national skills shortages must continue at a federal and state level.”

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