Media Release

David Tollner, Member for Fong Lim
Minister for Employment and Training

Delivering work-ready apprentices for Katherine employers

17 July 2014

The Giles Government is collaborating with Katherine businesses to boost the number of work-ready apprentices available to local employers.

A new program, aimed at people in the region who are interested in an apprenticeship in automotive or engineering trades, assists new entrants through the vital first year.

Minister for Employment and Training, Dave Tollner, said many small businesses want to take on apprentices, but often the cost of the first year’s training can outweigh the benefits for the employer.

“This program provides work-ready second year apprentices by providing a new approach to the first year training and work requirements,” he said.

“We have devised an approach that achieves the theory and practical elements of the first year outside the traditional single employer model.”

The program will involve 15 apprentices being employed by GTNT. Apprentices will attend Charles Darwin University - Katherine Rural Campus in a live-in arrangement while undertaking the first stage of their apprenticeship in conjunction with a range of trade-related projects at Charles Darwin University and work placements with local employers to support their on-the-job training requirements.

The program will run for approximately 21 weeks and the apprentices will also be supported by a trade qualified mentor throughout the program.

On completion of the program the apprentices can be hosted to interested employers in a Group Training arrangement or directly employed by employers interested in taking on a work-ready apprentice.

“This way we can offer local Katherine employers work-ready second year apprentices without those employers having a first-year apprentice on their books when they are largely doing a theory component offsite,” Mr Tollner said.
The program is modelled on a successful pilot program run in Darwin in 2013 where 12 apprentice boilermakers completed the first stage of their apprenticeships.

Geoff Crowhurst of Crowhurst Engineering in Katherine was a driving force for the program to be delivered locally.

Geoff employed Josh Craggs from the pilot program, and as a result, has led discussions with the Katherine Mining Services Association and Department of Business to set up a similar program in Katherine.

Charles Darwin University was also keen to see the program expanded to Katherine, with it providing an expanded role for its local campus.

“Charles Darwin University is pleased the program will be conducted in Katherine and looks forward to working with local students and employers to ensure its success,” CDU’s Head of School of Trades Justin Busse said.

Mr Tollner said the new program is an example of how the government is collaborating with the business community to design and facilitate tailor-made VET training solutions for sectors, industries or groups of businesses.

“This is vital if we are to have the skilled workforce we need to develop Northern Australia and meet the needs of our growing economy,” Mr Tollner said.

Interested people should contact GTNT Recruitment on 8980 0600 or visit www.gtnt.com.au

Applications close 27 July.

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