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NATIONAL SKILLS SHORTAGE HURTING SMALL BUSINESS
MINISTER CONGRATULATES DARWIN CONSORTIUM

Speaking at the signing of the funding agreement for the Australian Technical College (ATC) Minister for Employment, Education and Training, Paul Henderson said that the national skills shortage is the biggest hurdle facing Territory small business today.

“Lack of skilled staff is putting constraints on small business benefiting from the Territory’s outstanding business conditions,” Minister Henderson said.

“Getting and keeping skilled staff is hitting small business the hardest.

“The demand for more Australians with the relevant skills training is huge, but we have faced an uphill battle to convince Canberra how bad the shortage is and what it means for small business.

“Both the Territory Government and local industry have cranked up training initiatives.

“The Territory Government committed $15 million in 2006 for programs that support and train apprentices and trainees, the numbers of which have grown by over 1800 in the last 5 years.

“We now have 3289 apprentices and trainees in the Territory.

“When it opens next year ATC will cater for 50 new apprentices.

“Congratulations must go to the Darwin Industry Consortium who has battled, including the Federal Minister’s threats to pull funding, to get the Darwin ATC to this stage.

“I always welcome any effort to do with training but I hope that Canberra and its messengers don’t for one second think that the problem is licked,” said Minister Henderson.

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