

AUSTRALIAN
MANUFACTURING
WORKERS'
UNION

BETTER WAGE APPRENTICE SURVEY

Better Wage Apprentice Survey

In 2012 the AMWU conducted an extensive survey of 545 apprentices in the manufacturing trades, providing detailed insight into their demographic make-up, income and expenses, training patterns, and opinions about their apprenticeship. Titled the *Better Wage Apprentice Survey*, the survey was conducted online, by email, over the phone, and in person. A further summary of the methodology of the survey is included in Attachment “N”.

Demographic Profile

The average age of all our survey taken together was 23.16, with a younger age of 19.90 years old for junior apprentices and an older 28.02 years old for adult apprentices. Ages stretched across a large range, particularly among adult apprentices.

Respondents were overwhelmingly male (96%), reflective of gender ratios in the trades and occupations surveyed.

Average age by stage of apprenticeship	
Stage	Average Age
Junior	
1st Year Junior	18.21
2nd Year Junior	19.98
3rd Year Junior	20.16
4th Year Junior	21.29
Junior Total	19.89
Adult	
1st Year Adult	26.83
2nd Year Adult	29.72
3rd Year Adult	27.56
4th Year Adult	27.67
Adult Total	28.02
Grand Total	23.16

Breakdown by gender

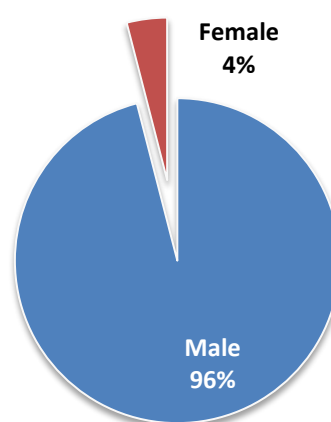


Figure 1

Table 1

Stage of apprenticeship

Apprentices were split between junior apprentices with 59% of respondents and adult apprentices making up 41%, and fairly evenly split between the stages of their apprenticeship.

Breakdown by stage

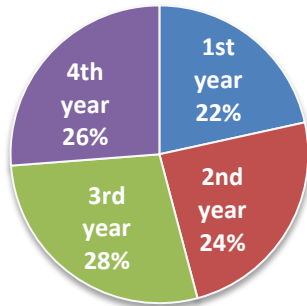


Figure 2

Breakdown of adult and junior

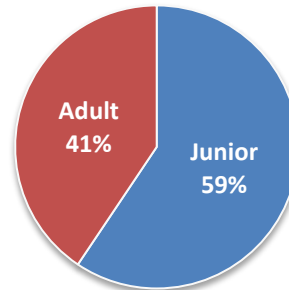


Figure 3

Age distribution

A further breakdown shows that, while the bulk of apprentices are in their late teens and early twenties, a considerable number of apprentices are distributed throughout the working age range, with 14.43% of all apprentices surveyed over the age of 30.

Percentage of apprentices by age

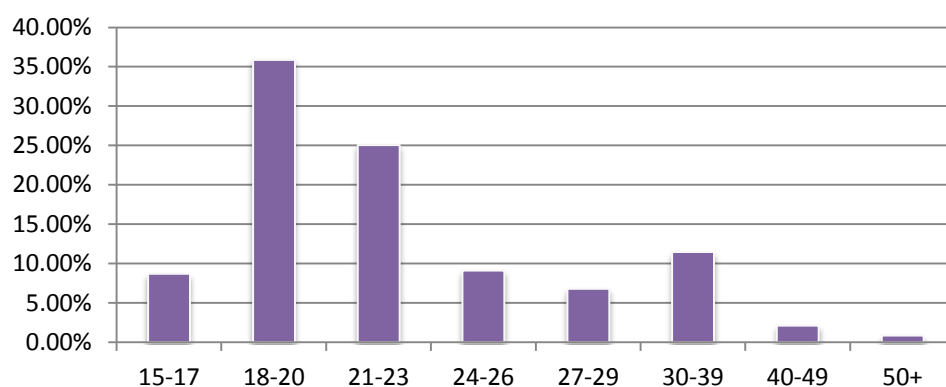


Figure 4

Commencement Age

Commencement age of AMWU apprentices peaks at 17 and 18 years of age. Adult apprenticeships (those currently commenced at 21 and older) showed a peak at 21, but a more even distribution of commencements of apprentices into their mid-30s, and continuing throughout the working age population.

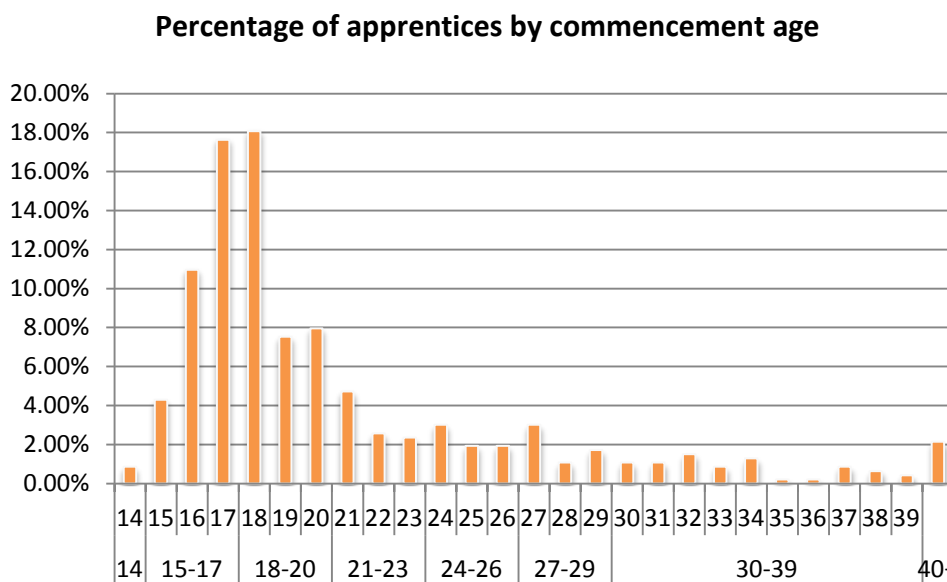


Figure 5

Education

The school level qualifications of commencing apprentices varied significantly by age. Apprentices commencing from ages 18-23 had the highest level of year 12 completion, with 70.5% in this cohort having completed year 12, compared with only 40.9% in the 15-17 cohort, and only 10% in the 40+ cohort.

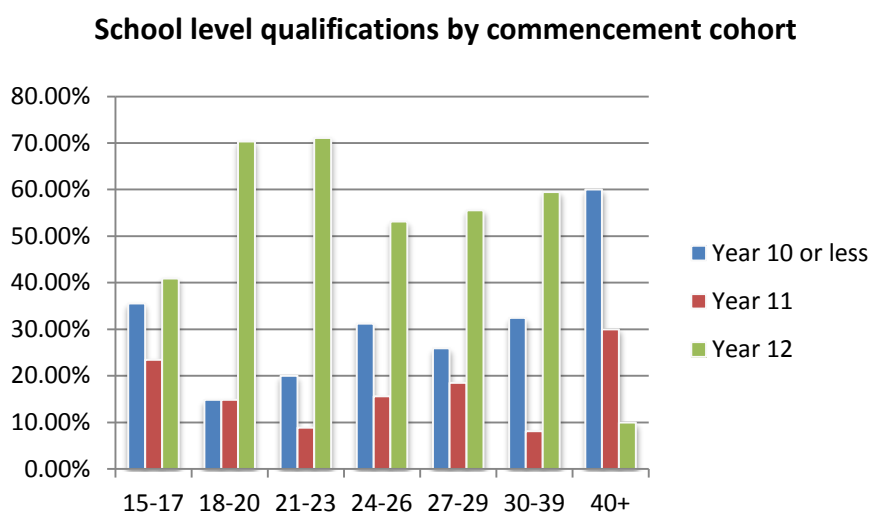


Figure 6

Award

The AMWU survey is reflective of the primary awards that cover AMWU trades, while not all survey respondents were members of the AMWU, respondents still predominantly fell into the AMWU trades.

Breakdown by award coverage of relevant trade

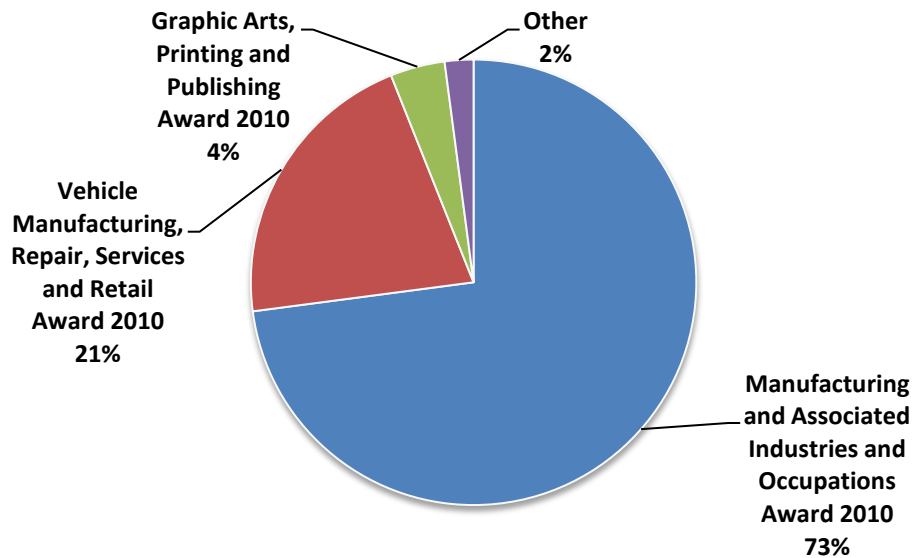


Figure 7

Industrial instrument

The survey also asked respondents to identify their industrial instrument. A plurality (42%) were unsure, 38% were covered by an enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA), 14% were covered just by the award minimum, and 6% identified that they were receiving an informal over award rate of pay. This result calls for further information and education.

Breakdown by industrial instrument

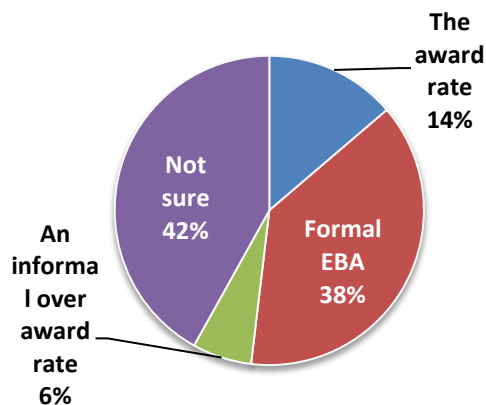


Figure 8

Family Life

Family structures of apprentices varied significantly between adult and junior apprentices. While all apprentices were most likely to be single, adult apprentices were significantly more likely to be married and have children. Junior apprentices were much more likely to live at home, with more than 80% still living with their parents compared to 37% of adult apprentices. If the surveys collected at TAFE, which skew highly to apprentices living at home, are removed, the overall rate of those living at home is 41.68%. Further the breakdown of those living at home varies by state, with those in South Australia (72%) and Tasmania (71%) much more likely to live at home, while those in Queensland (34%) and Victoria (46.15%) are much less likely.

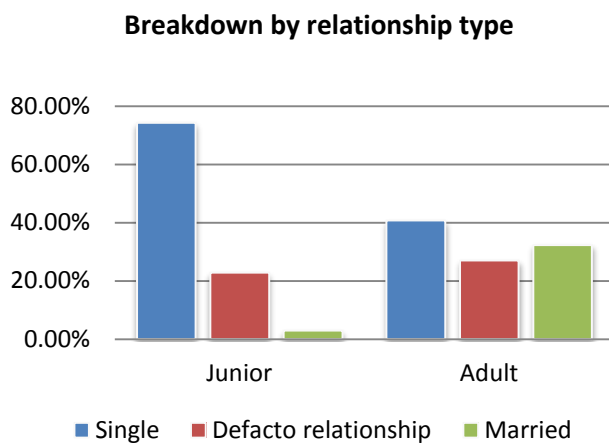


Figure 9

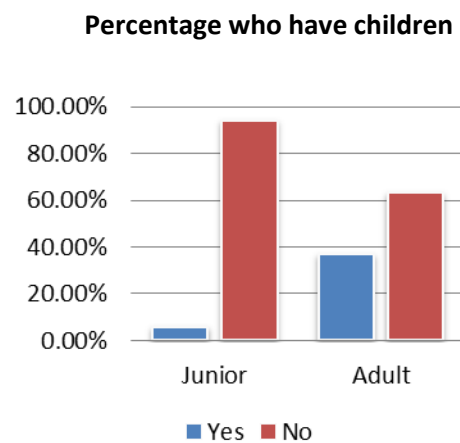


Figure 10

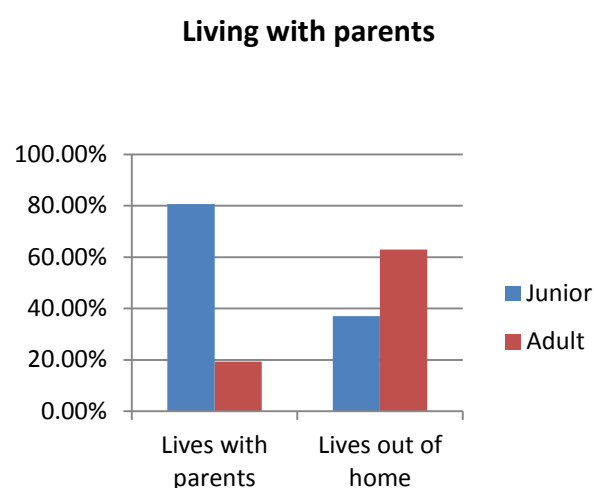


Figure 11

Average Income

The average income of apprentices varied by stage and industrial instrument, junior apprentices on average earned less than their adult counterparts in the first three years of their apprenticeship, but earned on average a similar amount in their fourth year.

Apprentices covered by an enterprise agreement generally earned more than those on the award. Workers who were unsure of their industrial instrument on average earned less than other apprentices except those on the award minimum.

Average income per hour by stage

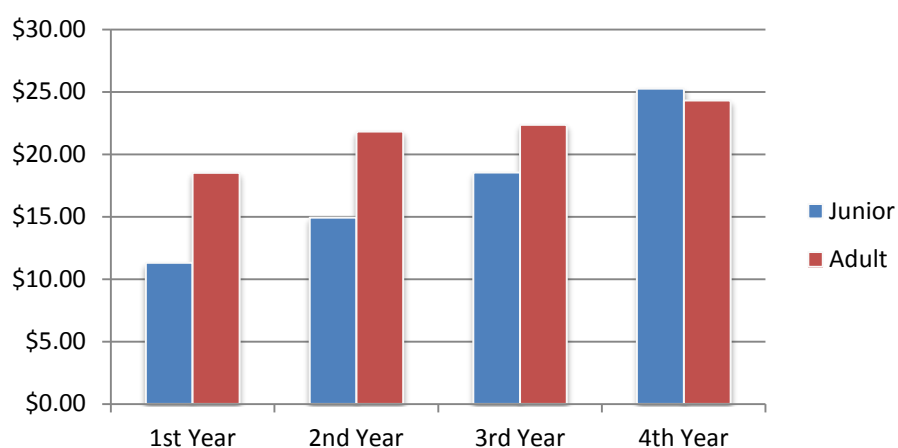


Figure 12

Average income by industrial instrument and stage

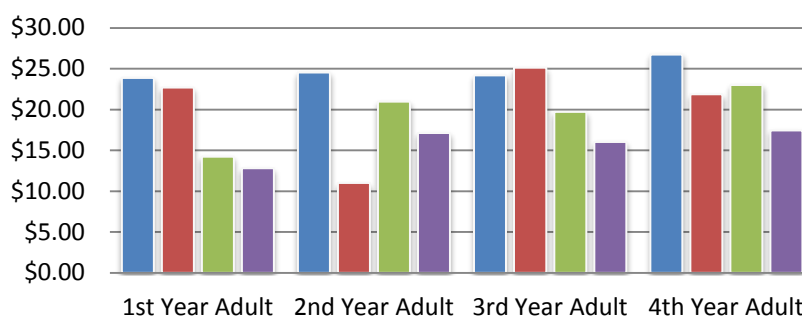


Figure 13

Income distribution

Incomes varied significantly from the average, with a wide distribution across each stage, from those on the award minimum to higher informal and EBA rates. Through each stage progression, and comparing adult to junior apprentices we can see a general progression to higher wages.

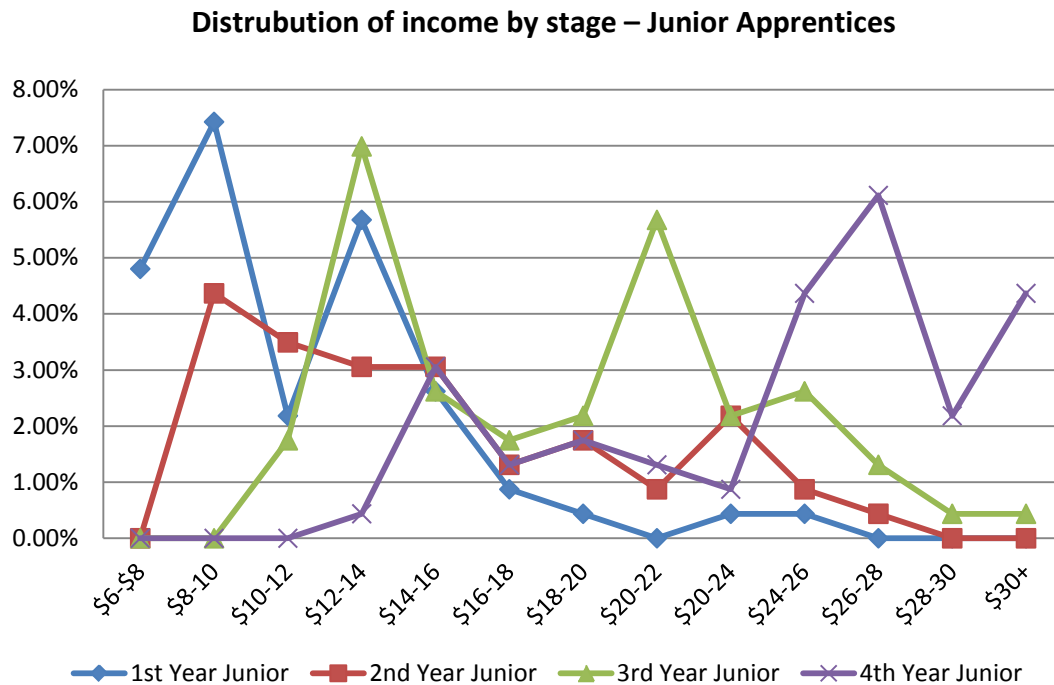


Figure 14

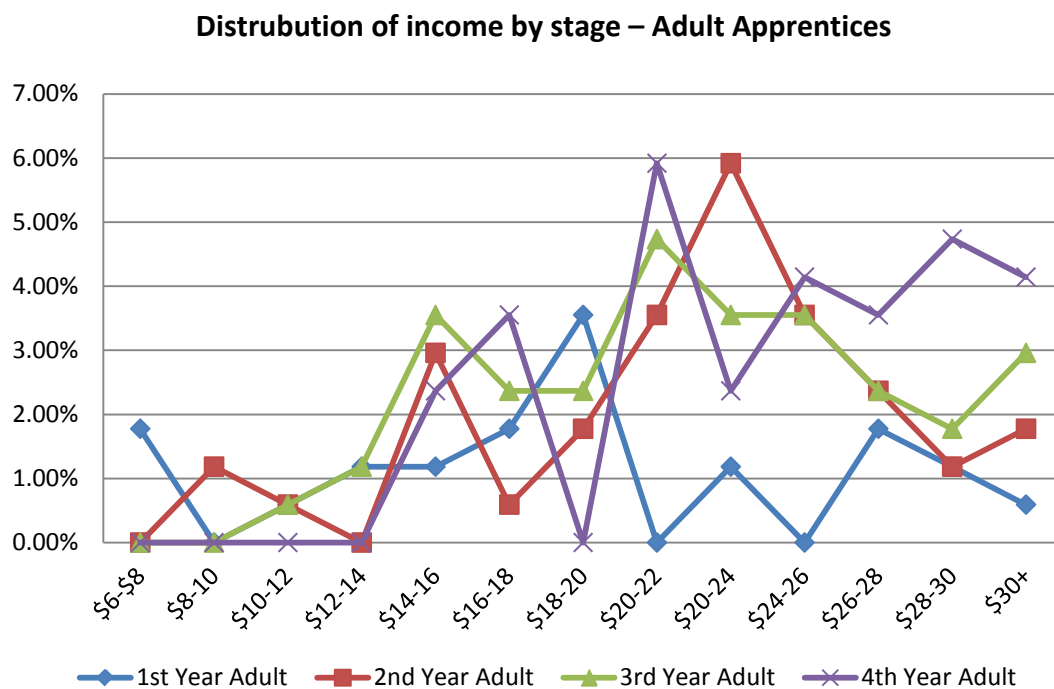


Figure 15

Work for same employer prior to commencing apprenticeship

Some apprentices take up the role while working for the same employer 24.53%. The survey indicated this was more often the case with adult apprentices, while junior apprentices were more likely to start with their current employer as an apprentice

Over 28.07% of Stage 1 junior apprentices were working for their employer prior to commencing an apprenticeship. This is significant regarding the Union's claims that existing junior employees do not lose income as a result of commencing an apprenticeship.

Previously working for same employer by stage

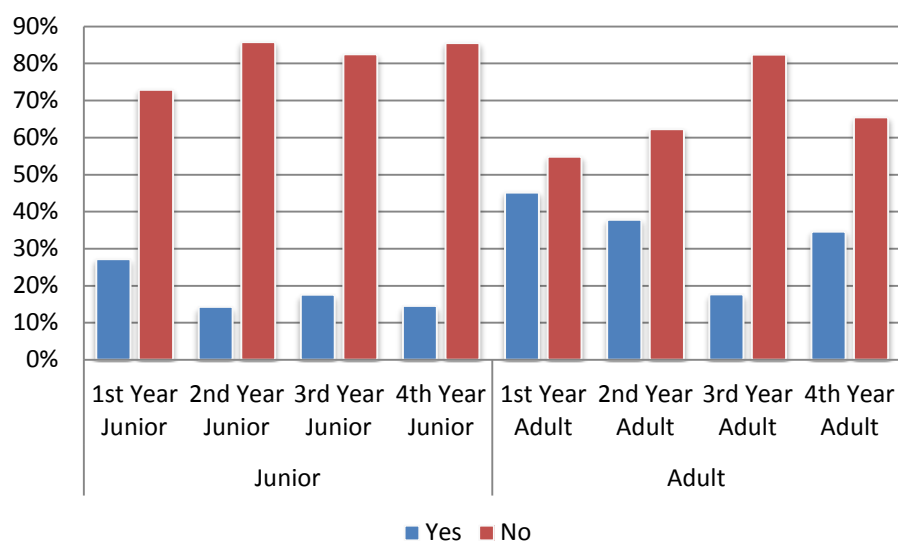


Figure 16

Reliance on own vehicle

A majority of apprentices reported that they were required to use their own vehicle for transport, or as part of their apprenticeship, this varied depending on their location, from 84% reliance in WA to 66% and 65% in NSW/ACT and Victoria and only 58% in Tasmania.

Are you required to use your own vehicle for your apprenticeship by state

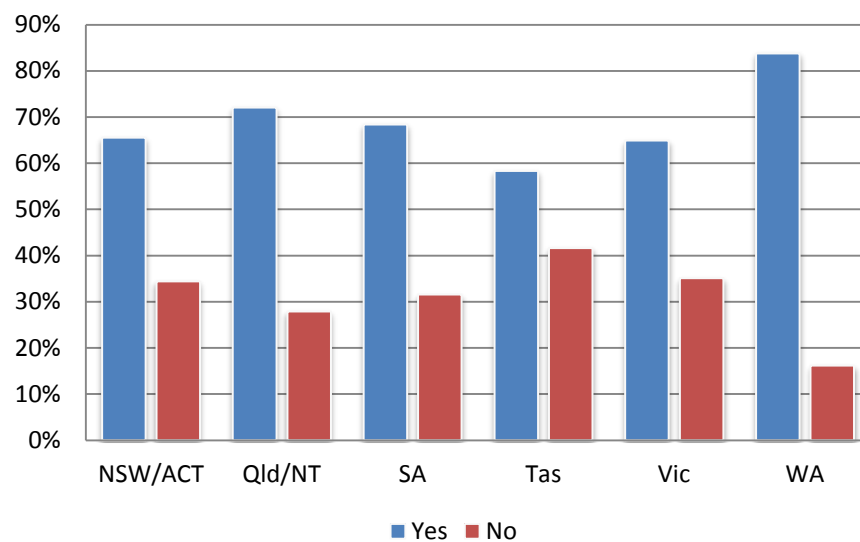


Figure 17

Overtime

A significant majority of apprentices reported working overtime (71%). Of those that did work overtime a plurality reported working more than 6 hours a week.

At each stage a majority of all apprentices worked overtime from 54.41% for 1st Year Juniors to 83.87% for 1st Year Adults. Apprentices in their later stages and adult apprentices also tended to work more overtime hours. The amount of overtime worked by Stage 1 and 2 juniors is evidence of productive work being performed in the early stages of an apprenticeship.

Breakdown of apprentice who perform overtime

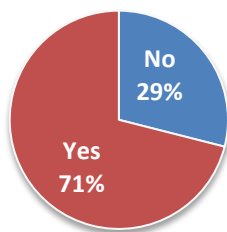


Figure 18

Average weekly overtime hours for those that perform overtime

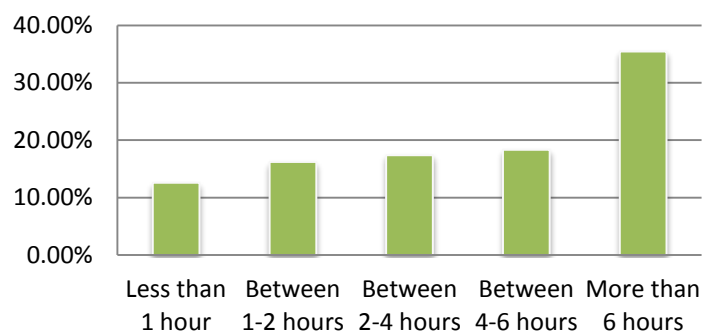


Figure 19

Performs overtime by stage

	Yes	No
Junior		
1st Year	54.41%	45.59%
2nd Year	78.46%	21.54%
3rd Year	75.00%	25.00%
4th Year	72.73%	27.27%
Junior		
Total	70.18%	29.82%
Adult		
1st Year	83.87%	16.13%
2nd Year	69.39%	30.61%
3rd Year	69.81%	30.19%
4th Year	70.69%	29.31%
Adult		
Total	72.25%	27.75%
Grand		
Total	71.03%	28.97%

Table 2

Breakdown of amount of overtime by stage

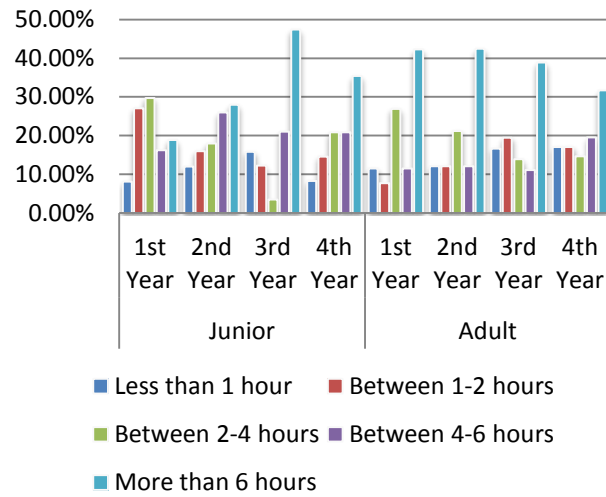


Figure 20

Expenses

While income increased by stage of apprenticeship, so did the reported expenses and living costs of apprentices. In particular, adult apprentices who were much less likely to live with their parents, and more likely to have families of their own reported significantly higher housing costs and total overall expenditure.

Nationally, those living at home had relatively stable living costs, while those paying rent or mortgages paid differing amounts depending on their location, with the highest costs in Queensland, Victoria, and New South Wales.

Average living costs by stage of apprenticeship

Stage	House	
	Costs \$ per week	Total Expenses \$ per week
1st Year Junior	\$111.86	\$398.20
2nd Year Junior	\$132.58	\$547.31
3rd Year Junior	\$130.76	\$636.82
4th Year Junior	\$160.30	\$745.23
Grand Total	\$134.31	\$585.40

Table 3

Stage	House	
	Costs \$ per week	Total Expenses \$ per week
1st Year Adult	\$299.64	\$726.37
2nd Year Adult	\$290.04	\$807.57
3rd Year Adult	\$343.18	\$853.32
4th Year Adult	\$287.16	\$776.97
Grand Total	\$306.13	\$797.96

Table 4

Average housing costs by state – Breakdown for living with parents

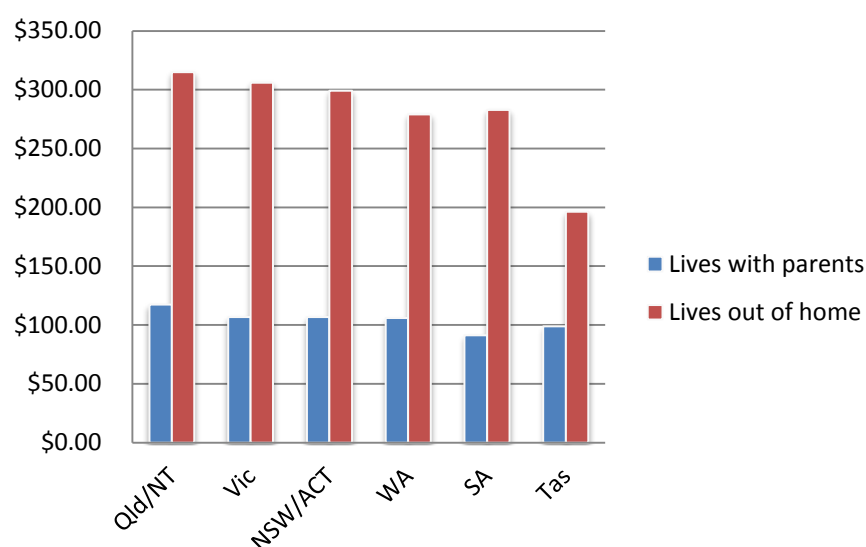


Figure 21

Training

A majority of survey respondents attended training in block release (52%), with the plurality of those attending block release over 2 or more periods each year. For day release apprentices 1 day per week was the most common pattern of attendance. The numbers attending block release is a relevant consideration in the context of the Union's claims regarding payment of training costs.

Method of attending training

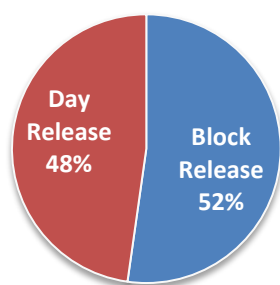


Figure 22

Pattern of training attendance

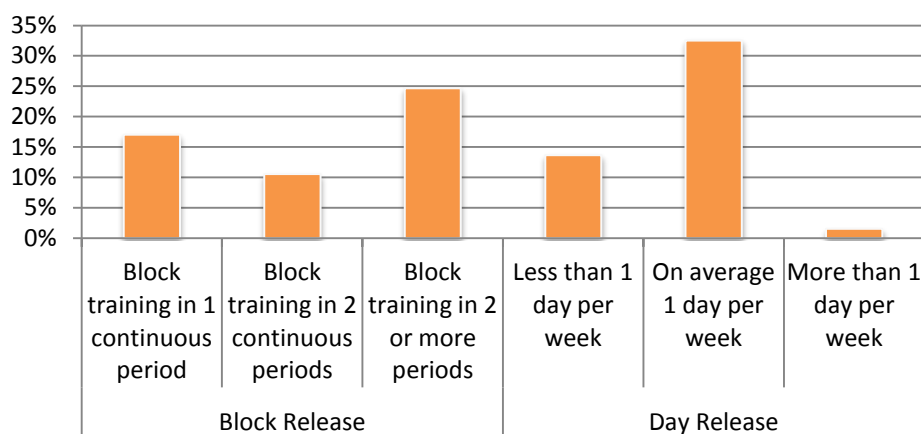


Figure 23

Reimbursement of training expenses

The figures pleasingly indicate a majority of apprentices are being reimbursed. That said, more than 40% of apprentices attending block release and more than 50% of apprentices attending day release are not fully reimbursed.

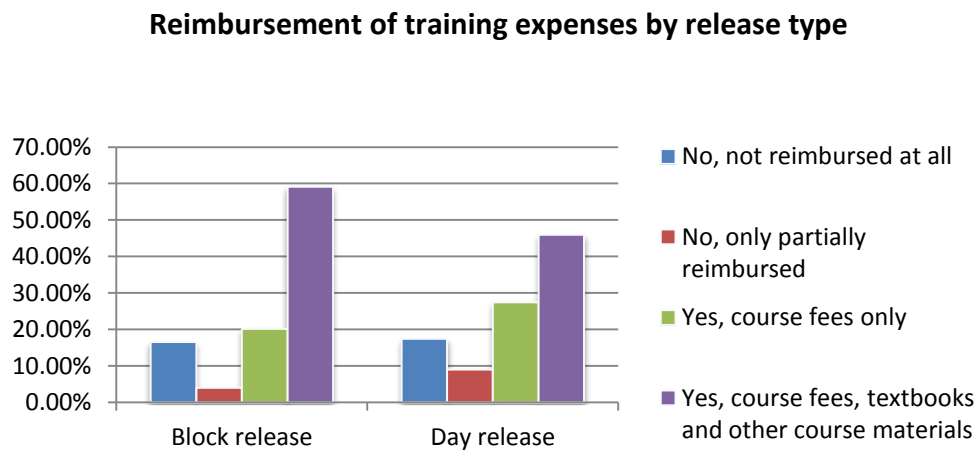


Figure 24

Apprentice concerns and opinions

We surveyed apprentices about the key issues they felt affected their apprenticeship. On a scale from 1 (Not important at all) to 5 (Very important), the most significant issue was “Low apprentice pay rate” which on average received a rating of 4.14. Amongst 1st year junior apprentices it was rated 4.39. Additionally 35% of apprentices said they had thought of chucking in their apprenticeship because of the low rates of pay.

Lack of mentoring, cost of tools and poor quality training also rated highly as key issues affecting apprentices. These issues provide context for the Union’s claims.

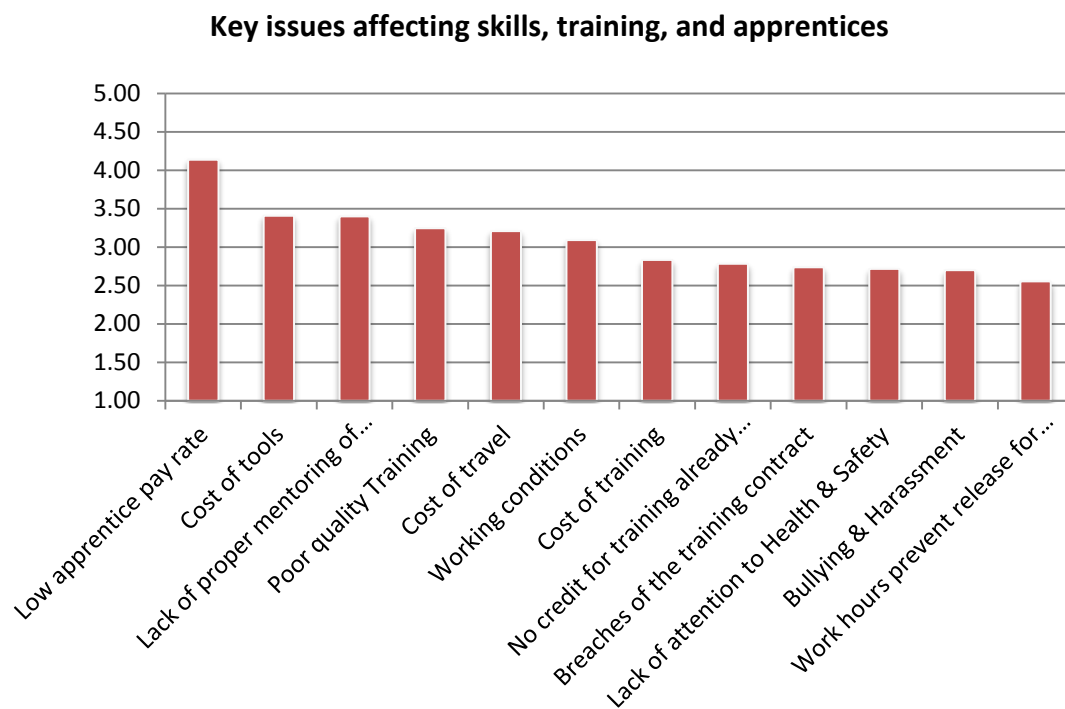


Figure 25

Have you thought of chucking in your apprenticeship for any of the following reasons?

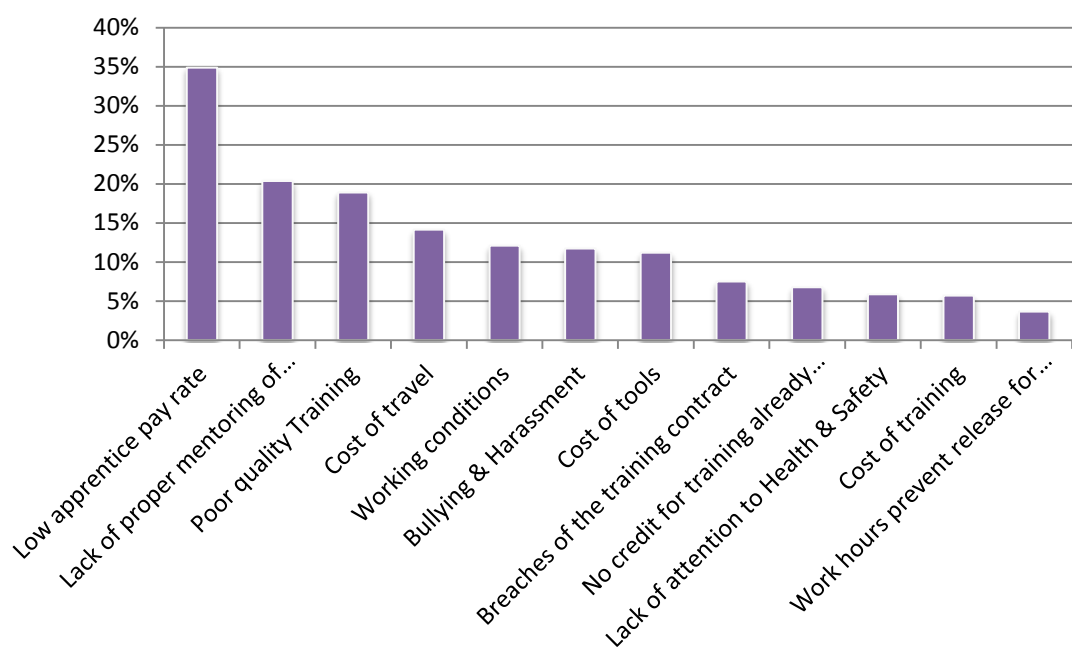


Figure 26

TAFE (non-union) sample

The AMWU Survey sampled both union members and non-union members. In our sample of 32 non-union apprentices at Granville and Miller TAFEs the results show that union and non-union apprentices face similar problems and have for the most part the same concerns.

The TAFE sample consisted mainly 1st year junior apprentices. These apprentices on average earned less than other respondents with a 1st year junior average of \$9.51 compared to \$11.96 for the rest of the sample.

The respondents from TAFE also were more likely to work overtime 86.21% compared to 69.75% for other respondents.

Comparison of 1st year average hourly rates

Type	Average Hourly Rate
TAFE 1st Year	\$9.51
Non TAFE 1st Year	\$11.96

Table 5

Comparison of percent working overtime

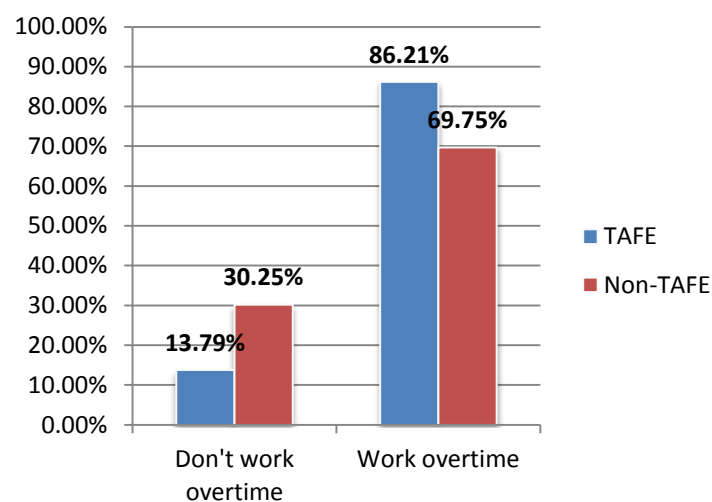


Figure 27

Comparison of TAFE (non-union) key issues

The issues of concern were largely the same between the two groups, with TAFE respondents more concerned about low pay, and the costs of tools and travel likely due to their lower average pay rate, and comparatively less concerned about release for training, mentoring, working conditions, and quality training, this also may relate to the location of the sample at TAFE being more positive about training.

Comparison of key issues affecting skills, training, and apprentices

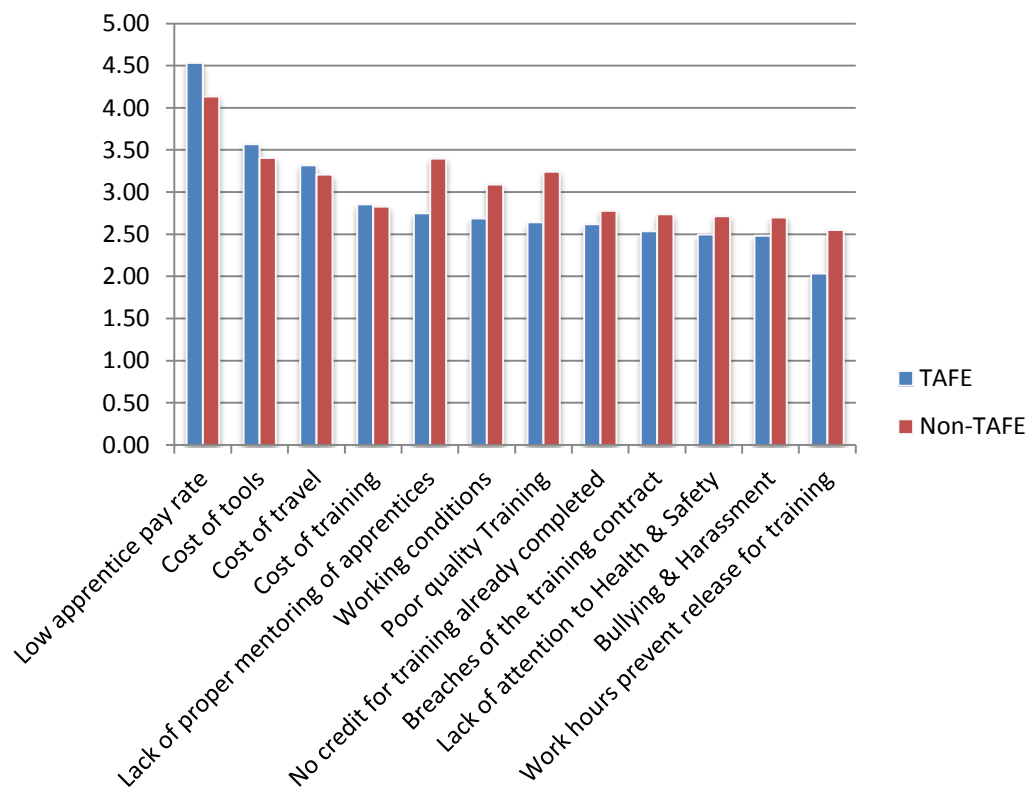


Figure 28