



Media Release

Too many of Australia's Apprentices quitting due to poor wages

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Despite providing the skills for our future, Australia's apprentices would be better off flipping burgers or waiting tables – not to mention taking unskilled work in the mining sector.

Paul Bastian, National Secretary of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union, will today launch a national survey that shows that many apprentices are living on wages below the minimum wage and barely above the poverty line.

The results of the survey include the rates of pay the various years of apprentices are on, and the reasons apprentices had considered chucking it in.

The survey found:

- 66 per cent had considered giving the apprenticeship away due to poor wages
- 40 per cent had considered giving the apprenticeship due to a lack of proper mentoring
- 34 per cent want to give it away due friends earning more after completing less training

Mr. Bastian said Australia needed to better value the critical skills imparted during apprenticeships and the sacrifice these workers make to provide a trade.

"We don't have a skills crisis in Australia, we have a training crisis.

"According to the data conducted from the National Centre for Vocational Educational Research show 48 per cent of Apprentices drop out.

"The cancellation rate has increased in recent years by 8.8 per cent.

"Apprentices report being paid as little as \$7.60 per hour. Compare that to the \$11.20 an hour you'd receive making cheeseburgers.

"While apprentices have a significant value to the Australian economy, and our future as a nation, they're not being valued.

"We need to cherish the role of the apprentices to our economy, industries and societies – they're the future.

"This conference is a tremendous opportunity to find out first hand what apprentices are facing.

"Many have young families, and competing opportunities from the mining sector to be unskilled labour earning substantially more.

"Unless we respect their work and ensure it is more secure and rewarding, where will be our people who can make things of the future?" asked Mr Bastian.

For more information, please call Adrian Dodd on 0401 726 476