

TRAINING AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT — APPRENTICES EMPLOYED ON PROJECT

4143. Mr M. McGowan to the Minister for Training and Workforce Development:

I refer to the Minister's answer to Question on Notice 3901, and I ask:

- (a) noting that the answer stated "five apprentices were required to be employed by the contractor", can the Minister clarify whether this statement refers to the requirements imposed on the contractor or a confirmation that the contractor has in fact employed that number of apprentices; and
- (b) what is the actual number of apprentices employed by the contractor for this project?

Mrs L.M. Harvey replied:

- (a)–(b) Due to deficiencies in the collection and reporting mechanisms of the 2007 endorsed Priority Start Building Policy the Department of Training and Workforce Development (DTWD) is unable to provide specific data on the number of apprentices and trainees employed on State Government construction projects.

In 2011 the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) reported concerns with the policy and its compliance mechanisms. The policy was also subject to broad criticism from industry for being unworkable. In 2013 DTWD proposed an amended version of the policy in an attempt to address the issues from the OAG report. During the review process the State Solicitor's Office (SSO) identified further flaws associated with the 2007 endorsed policy.

Significant changes were required to address the fundamental flaws in the policy and DTWD commenced development on a new policy in close consultation with the Government and industry.

On 11 August 2015 the Liberal–National Government launched the Government Building Training Policy, which comes into effect on 1 October 2015. The new policy addresses all of the key deficiencies outlined by the OAG and SSO.

The new policy requires all companies awarded State Government building, construction and maintenance contracts with a labour value of \$2 million and over to meet benchmarks in the engagement of apprentices and trainees across their labour workforce and those of the subcontractors they are using.

The new policy also requires contracting agencies to monitor compliance and report on this in their annual reports. DTWD will monitor agencies' reporting obligations.