
Tuesday 13 October 2026

Master Plumbers backs plan to cut apprenticeship training costs

Employers need support to take on apprentices, backed by enough funded training school places to help them qualify

Master Plumbers and Mechanical Services Association of Australia has welcomed the Victorian Liberals and Nationals' proposed \$115 million Accelerating Apprenticeships Fund, saying it recognises the investment plumbing businesses make when they employ an apprentice.

The fund would cover half of approved off-the-job training costs for apprentices in priority occupations, including plumbing. The Coalition says Victorian apprenticeship commencements are at their lowest level in decades and vocational training commencements have fallen 46 per cent since 2021.

Master Plumbers CEO Ashleigh Dalmau said:

"Every qualified plumber started with an employer willing to give them a chance. For a small business, taking on an apprentice is a significant investment of time, supervision and money. Helping with that cost makes it easier for more employers to say yes."

"We need more young people entering the trade, but a commencement is only the beginning. They need an employer to back them and a training school that will help them finish."

"Master Plumbers has the trainers, facilities and industry demand to train more apprentices. Our completion rates exceed 90 per cent, yet our funded intake is capped at 150 places. We have had to close our waiting list."

"Cutting costs for employers is a welcome step. The next step is ensuring there are enough funded places at training schools, including industry training providers, for the apprentices they take on."

"We also welcome the Coalition's Technical Colleges proposal, which includes pathways into plumbing. More young people should have the chance to discover what a career in our trade can offer."

"Give young people a chance to discover the trade, make it easier for businesses to employ them, and make sure the training system can carry them through to qualification. That is how we build the skilled workforce Victoria needs."

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