



Local apprentices defy national trend

There is a shortage of skilled labour in Australia and 'an apprentice drop-out rate of over 50 per cent, according to Work Place Connect's CEO Nicholas Wyman.

Electrical tradesperson Tony Vernon thought this might be because there are "more options in the city".

"Just on a local level here, they all seem to go well. In the bush, apprenticeships are highly sought after. I often have people ask me where they can get an apprenticeship," he said.

When asked if the current system was too inaccessible for apprentices, Mr Vernon said "they've got a lot of support. There

are good incentives for (apprentices and employers). The apprentice gets money towards a tool kit and the employer gets a reasonable amount of money to support the training".

Strangely enough this follows the release of a government report that suggests, among other reform options, that a training tax be applied to businesses that employ apprentices.

A Shared Responsibility - Apprenticeships for the 21st Century, was released by the Minister for Skills and Jobs Chris Evans.

NECA (the National Electrical and Communications

Association of Australia) welcomed the government's decision to reject this training tax.

Mr Tinslay stressed the importance of "a genuine consultation" between the government and the electrical industry when changes are to be made. A perfect "example of that", Mr Vernon added "was with the "insulation fiasco."

"As soon as they started I was fearful of that. They should have gone to NECA ... the electrical association were saying this is going to be trouble".

Nicholas Wyman of WPC suggested that youth unemployment is "three times the national

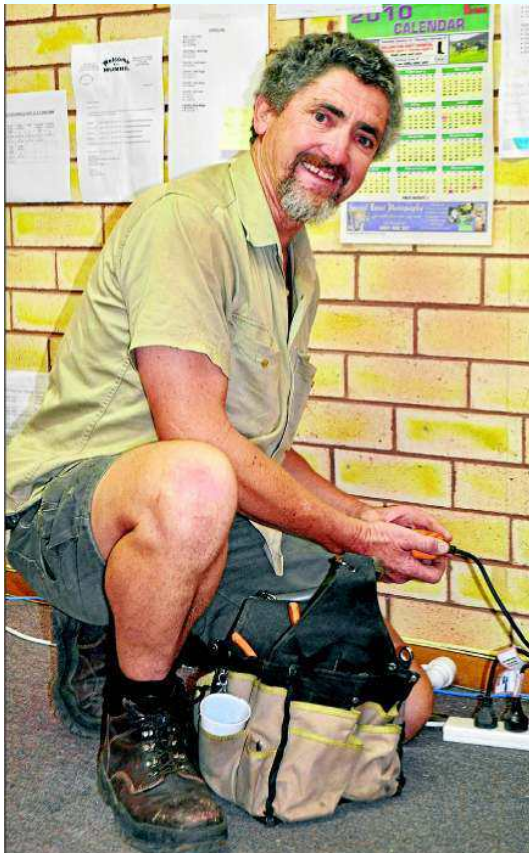
average and trending upwards. We have 150,000 15-19-year-old Australians who are disengaged and not in full time work or study".

Mr Wyman believed that "the current apprenticeship is too complex".

In light of this however, local electrician Tony Vernon was quite encouraging.

"The only thing is the log they've got to fill in, but if you keep at it it's worthwhile," he said.

A report commissioned by Upskilled (one of Australia's Registered Training Organisations) suggested that regional Aussies are still at a serious disadvantage when it comes to their career.



Local electrician Tony Vernon says apprenticeships are highly sought in country areas.