

Senate Select Committee on Work and Care

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 16 September 2022

Outcome: Skills and Training

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations Question No. IQ22-000052

Senator Barbara Pocock on 16 September 2022, Proof Hansard page 17

Decarbonisation agenda and Skills

Question

CHAIR:

The other thing I am interested in, given the expansion we're expecting in transition employment as we decarbonise, is whether there is any effort to set targets or to encourage the participation of women in those kinds of growth, skills and employment opportunities. There was some discussion about that in this room by the National Electrical Contractors Association in relation to the Jobs and Skills Australia Bill. He made the point that women who do apprenticeships often come into it older, in their mid-20s, to take on that kind of training. We need gateways and support if we're really going to lift from the current one or two per cent of electricians, for example, that are women in Australia. What efforts have you afoot on programs that help make those things happen?

Ms Wearne: This is something for the skills area, but there is a new energy apprenticeships program. I don't have any detail at hand, but we could get some information on that. There are some additional fee-free TAFE places which have been announced recently. They give priority to young people, people out of work and unpaid carers, and provide a pathway to enter the workforce or to upskill. There are programs like that which our skills colleagues are responsible for, but we could get more information, if you need that.

Answer

The Australian Government has commenced implementation of the Australian Skills Guarantee, which will see one in 10 workers on major projects funded by the Australian Government be an apprentice, trainee, or cadet. On 1 September 2022, at the Jobs and Skills Summit, the Government announced that the Guarantee will include specific sub-targets for women and a focus on the need for digital skills.

The Australian Government has committed \$38.6 million to support women to take up an Australian Apprenticeship in trade occupations that have had historically low female participation, such as electrical, plumbing and carpentry. Support includes:

- Guaranteed Gateway Services places - providing advice and pre-commencement assessments for women interested in taking up an eligible trade, including outreach activities to promote interest and awareness.
- Guaranteed In-Training Support services over the life of the apprenticeship - ensuring women who start an apprenticeship in non-traditional trade occupations have access to mentoring and wrap-around support to help them stay in and successfully complete their apprenticeship.

- A networking and mentoring service delivered by the Australian Apprenticeship Support Network - connecting women undertaking these apprenticeships, provide them with peer support and entrepreneurship training, setting these women up for success in their industry of choice.

Complementary to these initiatives, the Australian Government has committed \$100 million towards the New Energy Apprenticeships Program to support 10,000 apprenticeships and build the skills and workforce needed to transition Australia's economy to net zero.

Apprentices who train in new energy industries will receive up to \$10,000, including \$2,000 on commencement and \$2,000 a year for up to four years, including upon successful completion.

Women who take on a New Energy Apprenticeship will be eligible for financial support through this measure and for the non-financial supports outlined above for women taking on an apprenticeship in a trade that has had historically low female participation.