

AGS Metalwork

5 May 2020

Senator Katy Gallagher
Chair
Select Committee on COVID-19
Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Senator Gallagher

Re: New Supporting Apprenticeships & Trainees Wage subsidy

I am a qualified Boilermaker/Welder who owns a small business based in Welshpool, Western Australia.

I understand that as part of its Economic Response to the Coronavirus, the Australian Government has introduced a new 'Supporting Apprentices and Trainees Wage subsidy'. However, the apprentice or trainee must have been in training with a small business as at 1 March 2020.

On 19 March this year, I committed to an Apprenticeship Training contract in Engineering Tradesperson Fabrications (Heavy/Welding) with a young man I had previously been employing on a casual basis.

Even though the young man I have signed up as an apprentice was employed by me on 1 March, I appear to be ineligible to apply for the new subsidy. I would like to ensure ongoing employment and training for this young man, however, as a small business, my ability to manage cash flow challenges will make this very difficult in the current and uncertain economic environment.

Accordingly, I would like to know:

- Why is 1 March 2020 the date specified for an apprentice or trainee to have been in training with a small business? And what is the rationale for this date being chosen?
- How many apprentice/trainee arrangements have been registered between 2 March 2020 and the date of this letter?

- Will the Government please consider extending the new subsidy to small business owners like me who want to employ and train apprentices, but have only just missed out on being eligible by a relatively small timeframe?

I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely,
Andrew Streeter