



The Hon Andrew Robb AO MP
Minister for Vocational and Further Education

MEDIA RELEASE

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MAJOR BOOST FOR REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Employers in the mining and agricultural industries will benefit from a new project which aims to get more women, school leavers and Indigenous people into the workforce under a \$450,000 Howard Government initiative.

Mining companies and farmers will work with local training organisations to identify how their training needs can be better met. This might include processes to better recognise workers' prior learning and skills and to identify re-skilling and cross-skilling needs.

"With a small amount of targeted training, people maintaining tractors on a farm can quickly make the transition to working on earth moving equipment in mines," said the Hon Andrew Robb AO MP, Minister for Vocational and Further Education.

"Both industries require seasonal workers – fruit pickers are not needed all year round and labourers are not needed to the same extent during the exploration phase of a mine."

Through these partnerships in Dubbo, Port Augusta and Townsville, employers will be better able to manage the seasonal nature of their businesses and offer their employees work all year around.

The projects will commence in November 2007, and will be undertaken under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Minerals Council of Australia (MCA) and the National Farmers' Federation.

The Howard Government will fund these projects through the National Skills Shortages Strategy, and will work closely with the Minerals Council of Australia and the National Farmers' Federation to ensure their effectiveness.

Today's announcement reaffirms the Howard Government's continuing commitment to delivering a range of initiatives between 2006 and 2009 as part of its \$12 billion investment in Australia's future.

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