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## **Apprentice numbers fails to bring Christmas joy**

The Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) has today reiterated its calls for major reforms to the nation's apprenticeship system following the release of national data that shows near two-decade lows in apprenticeships and traineeships.

ACPET CEO Rod Camm said the release of the *Apprentices and trainees 2016 June quarter* report by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research highlighted the collapse of traineeships over the last four years and the continuing downward trend of traditional trade apprenticeships.

"It's clear from today's data that the flagship of Australia's vocational education and training system is in need of an urgent and major overhaul. We haven't seen apprentice and trainee numbers this low in nearly two decades," he said.

Mr Camm said the trend data that showed apprenticeships continue to decline was also of concern.

"Apprenticeships and traineeships have been a key plank in Australia's strategy to skill young people, and others, to meet the needs of business and industry. Importantly they have also played an important role in giving many young people their first career opportunity," he said.

"With youth unemployment around 19 per cent there is an urgent need to reinvigorate the apprenticeships and traineeships that provide real skills and job opportunities."

Mr Camm called on federal, state and territory governments to give this a priority in a new skills agreement.

"The current national agreement expires in six months and apprenticeship reform must be a cornerstone of a new agreement," he said.

"ACPET has welcomed Federal Minister Andrew's recognition of the need for reform. It's now time for strong measures by the Commonwealth and State and Territory governments."

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**Rod Camm is available for interview. Please phone the SAS Group on 07 3221 9222, or directly on 0409 484 051.**