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**MEDIA RELEASE**

***Advanced manufacturing capabilities needed more than ever: National Skills Week Chair, Brian Wexham***

**[Date Month] 2023** – National Skills Week’s Chairman Brian Wexham notes that Australia needs advanced manufacturing capabilities more than ever to capitalise on growth opportunities in the sector as disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic tails off and business conditions start to normalise.

The latest data from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) shows there were 415,240 apprentices and trainees in-training as at 30 June 2022, up 16.8 percent from 30 June 2021.*The Apprentices and trainees 2022 – June quarter* report shows that non-trade occupations contributed most to the increase in in-training numbers, up by 38.3 percent to 173, 235 when compared with the same time in 2021. By industry, the largest absolute increases in in-training numbers were in the construction, accommodation, and health care and social assistance sectors.

Mr Wexham said, “We still need people trained in traditional trades for our economy to flourish, but conditions are now also ripe for a renaissance in advanced manufacturing. Prime Minister Albanese announced in March the AUKUS submarine program will create around 20,000 direct jobs over the next 30 years across industry, the Australian Defence Force and the Australian Public Service including trades workers, operators, technicians, engineers, scientists, submariners and project managers.

“Our scientific, education and training institutions will play a central role in helping deliver this capability. The same can be said for the meteoric rise of renewable energy projects nationally.

Australia’s Clean Energy Council reported in April that renewable energy accounted for 35.9 per cent of Australia’s total electricity generation in 2022, more than double what it was in 2017 when this accounted for just 16.9 per cent of generation. “Continuing investment in large scale power generation and storage projects will be a further boon for advanced manufacturing,” the Council reported.

**The Chief Executive of Apprenticeship Support Australia (ASA), Lee Xavier, said,** “*National Skills Week* is a celebration of the range and diversity of our VET sector and also a time to put the spotlight on how an apprenticeship and traineeship will open doors for you. It is a fantastic opportunity to highlight the value and benefits of technical training to a wider audience and allows people to reach out to find out more about what is on offer and how to access these future prospects.

**“Apprenticeship Support Australia** is very proud of our long-term partnership with the organisers of the week, and for the opportunity to come together to showcase how apprenticeships and traineeships have changed so many lives for the better. We want to further build on this momentum by continuing to promote the development of the skills and knowledge required for a rewarding career, with the emphasises on the importance of finding meaningful work based on people’s passions and talents.”

Now in its thirteenth year, **National Skills Week 2023** to be held August 21 to 27 invites all Australians to explore the diversity of career options on offer through Vocational Education and Training. If the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us one thing it is that more home-grown capability in the manufacturing, construction and health care sectors especially is needed to place our economy on a stronger footing.

A key objective of National Skills Week is to identify and highlight industries with the most in-demand jobs of the future as well as sectors forecast to see the biggest growth in coming years, so Australians can gain the training and education they need to secure those jobs and maintain stable long-term employment.

For further information, visit nationalskillsweek.com.au

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