Dear Professor Harper

Re: 2009 Minimum Wage Review

I am writing on behalf of Group Training Australia Ltd (GTA) in relation to the above review which also includes minimum wages for employees to whom training arrangements apply.

GTA is the national industry association for the group training network which employs some 40,000 apprentices and trainees, or 13% of all new entrant apprentices and trainees in the national system.

In 2006 GTA commissioned the report Living standards of apprentices from the Centre of Applied Research in Social Science at the University of New England. A copy of the report was sent to you at the time and subsequently to the president of the AIARC as part of the award modernisation process.

As the title suggests the report compares apprentices' income, based on the minimum payable under a cross section of awards, against several cost of living benchmarks. Amongst its many findings the report indicates that most 1st year apprentices, apart from those receiving substantial allowances, are dependent on their parents' magnanimity to achieve even an austere, low-cost standard of living. For many young people this is either an unattractive or untenable proposition and acts as a disincentive to apprenticeship training.

I doubt very much that the essential findings of this report have altered since it was released in October 2007 and for this reason I again submit the report to help inform your deliberations in the 2009 minimum wage review.

I would be pleased to discuss any of the material in the report in more detail if that would be of any assistance.

Yours sincerely

Jim Barron
CEO

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