



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### PVCA WINS BACK APPRENTICES FOR INDUSTRY

#### *FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

The Print and Visual Communication Association (“PVCA”) has announced success today, following twelve (12) months of rigorous lobbying to re-instate the apprenticeships for the print and signage industries onto the Australian Apprenticeships Priority List (“AAPL”).

In 2021 the government struck off seven (7), then nine (9), industry apprentice courses from the AAPL which led to the printers and industry being unable to claim government wage subsidy support for apprentices, as well as limiting apprentices access across various claims to payments and other supports to assist their studies.

The peak industry body, engaged directly with Minister Brendan O’Connor and the Department to have the industry reassessed, seeking an immediate intervention from the Minister under his discretionary powers in May 2022. The Minister declined to intervene, and signatory stakeholders did not feel it was a priority project, which left the PVCA no option but to lobby further into the Department and engage Opposition channels where applicable.

“It has been a difficult journey at times with various stakeholders not willing to focus on the criticality of the AAPL listing for the industry, that said, we were determined to rectify this issue and continued through every option available to us, ultimately leading to success for the members and industry. I was thrilled to see the AAPL list released over the weekend, despite the National Skills Commission still not updating their Skills Priority List documents from October 2022,” commented Kellie Northwood, Chief Executive Officer, PVCA.

The rationale from the Department that justified the apprenticeships being struck off was that the print and signage industry was not deemed a priority due to low job advertisement rates compared to other sectors and a declining industry. They held that there was ‘no shortage’ and a ‘soft’ future demand for occupations in our industry. The PVCA vehemently rejected the Department’s assessment formulas and called on the opportunity to collect, and submit, industry specific data. This was granted and the PVCA submission outlined the growth across packaging, labels, digital and other sectors, challenging the Department’s assessment criteria.

Further, the PVCA issued an Industry Skills Survey with data being submitted directly into the Department for consideration.

“The PVCA Industry Skills Survey revealed that 76% of printers in Australia had at least two (2) job vacancies and 67.5% of these jobs had been vacant for over eleven (11) weeks. 58.14% of these roles are Print Machinist and Finishers, two (2) of the first occupations to be removed, all data which clearly meets the mandate under the Department’s criteria for the nine (9) apprenticeship courses to sit on the AAPL,” commented Charles Watson, GM – IR, Policy & Governance, PVCA.

The AAPL now has 111 occupations including nine (9) specific to the print industry. Ensuring printers and new apprenticeships are now able to apply for apprenticeship related wage subsidies and other related incentives that may be available to priority apprenticeship related occupations.



The next commitment from the PVCA is to work with Jobs and Skills Australia, the National Skills Commission, various Industry Skills Councils, and various federal government committees and departments so as to overcome a range of industry skill and training related issues.

“Given the interconnected web of ecologies that apply to vocational training in this country, and across state and federal government departments and educational bodies, there are numerous issues that we are seeking to address,” furthered Watson.

The PVCA holds a seat on the Board of the Manufacturing Jobs and Skills Council, overseen by the Innovation and Business Skills Australia (“IBSA”). IBSA is the recently appointed government administrator for manufacturing jobs and skills with specificity to the print and related sector industries. The purpose of the Council is to provide strategic leadership in addressing skills and workforce challenges for the print industry. Watson will lead this representation and the PVCA is developing an Employer’s Committee to brief the Council on industry need.

“I want to thank Charles and the team for prioritising this for our members, for not giving up even when there were some frustrating times of ‘doors closed’. The PVCA is more than offering members IR and Workplace Relations support, we are also fighting for the industry on many levels, this is the first example of many for 2023,” concluded Northwood.

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#### ***About the Print & Visual Communication Association***

The Print and Visual Communication Association (PVCA) is the recognised peak industry body for the print, paper, publishing, packaging, graphic design, distribution, and media technology industries in Australia, operating for over 130 years.

A registered organisation with direct signatory to the nine (9) Awards across our industry and membership. Offering an end-to-end industry association solution that is relevant in all that it undertakes. Whether advocating the relevance of the established media – print – that we all belong to, developing global partnerships and translating to regional requirements, awarding excellence, investing in products, and arming our industry with sales tools, sustainability collateral, industrial relations representation and more.

The largest print industry body committed to building a stronger united leadership to deliver the goals of our members. United we will lead strong advocacy, government advisory, skills and training programs, protection, and promotion of our industry channels and more to ensure our member’s businesses operate within a future-proofed strategy for success.

Please visit the [Print & Visual Communications Association](https://www.pvca.org.au) for more information or contact:

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