

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

Review of the Defence Annual Report 2015-16 –17 February 2017

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Defence

Topic: Potential for new Apprenticeship Scheme

Question reference number: 18

Senator: Snowdon

Type of question: asked on Friday, 17 February 2017, Hansard page 61

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 14 March 2017

Question:

Mr SNOWDON: Lastly, has there been any thought given to establishing a new apprenticeship scheme or schemes within Defence to try and get younger, skilled people trained in the Defence workforce – Balcombe or its equivalent?

Rear Adm. Wolski: It is a perennial discussion.

Mr SNOWDON: Is it a hardy perennial?

CHAIR: Could we have that discussion within 30 seconds?

Mr SNOWDON: We can have it some other time.

Vice Adm. Griggs: I think we can give you an answer to that on notice.

CHAIR: That would be good, thank you.

Answer:

Defence trains its workforce to meet capability requirements, which includes trade training. Defence currently has 2,734 registered apprentices across 24 trades. They are registered under the Australian Apprenticeship Scheme and awarded the relevant national trade qualifications and trade certification where eligible. Defence has established a multi-jurisdictional Apprenticeship Management Framework with the Department of Education and Training and NSW State Training Authority to ensure appropriate management of apprentices from initial trade training (off-the-job) through to on-the-job training, often involving cross-border postings.

Defence cannot recruit apprentices younger than 17 years of age, under the 1999 UN Charter of Child Rights, which prohibits the recruitment of children for use in armed conflict. As such, Defence apprentices must be at least 18 years when they are posted from their initial trade training to a unit.