

**From:** Peter Torning  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 6 April 2005 6:21 PM  
**To:** Windsor, Tony (MP)  
**Subject:** Rural Skills Shortage

**SUBMISSION NO. 2**

I supply the following in respect of the Parliamentary Inquiry in Rural Skills Shortage.

Yesterday, I met a fellow by the name of Ross and we had a bit of a chat. Ross is a bricklayer and also a stonemason. He told me the following things about his trade and a stonemason. All of this is hearsay, but from credible sources so may be nonetheless useful:

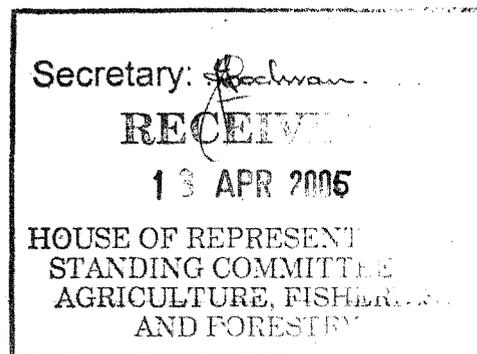
1. There are only 4 stonemasons in the entire north-west region. He is one of them and he is semi-retired, now only doing small jobs.
2. If he took on an apprentice, the apprentice would have to travel to Sydney for training for one week per month for all of the apprenticeship - presumably 3 years. This is because the course is not offered in any nearby location. So, the student would need to travel to Sydney on a Sunday, spend the entire week in Sydney and return the following Saturday. In Sydney, the apprentice would be responsible for paying for his/her accommodation, meals, travel within Sydney etc - all on an apprentice's wages. This would be a near impossibility for an apprentice who does not have family in Sydney.
3. The employer would receive about \$2,500 at the time of signing the apprentice, then another \$2,500 about 3 years later, but only if the apprentice successfully completed the course. This is best described as a pittance.
4. I have also heard that this is similar for people studying for some other courses, such as dentistry-related trades.

It is unlikely that the Region could support all necessary courses, and so it is necessary to find other options. Should the foregoing be correct, there is a clear need for:

1. Better financial support for apprentices for travel expenses to Sydney as well as for accommodation, meals and travel within Sydney.
2. Better financial support for employers who indicate that many apprentices really only begin to become useful after two years.

Regards

Peter C. Torning



7/04/2005