

TRAINING OF PAINTERS AND DECORATORS

3rd December, 2015

Industry Statement

The Master Painters Association of Victoria/Tasmania and the Master Painters, Decorators & Signwriters of South Australia Inc. as the peak body representing the painters in their respective States, have an invested interest in the standard of training given to apprentices in the painting and decorating industry.

We note with concern that there is an increasing number of Registered Training Organisations who have entered into partnerships with Training Brokers and offer online and onsite training for Painting Apprentices.

As associations of many years experience we have monitored various training delivery models to Painters and Decorators, we consider online training and accelerated learning programmes, are best suited for experienced workers who have on the ground prior experience in the Painting and Decorating industry. These workers easily relate to what they read in an online course as they have previous life and work experience. Student's straight from school or new to the painting industry have little life/work experience and tend to have poor understanding of what they may be reading online. It can be difficult for them to apply the theory to their practical. We believe that most individuals training to be painters and decorators would benefit greatly from a more structured face to face traditional learning programme with purpose built classrooms and workshops to conduct high quality training and assessment.

We have serious reservations concerning the stress placed upon apprentices and non-apprentices studying online. We know from experience, that they will need to study in their own time, at home in the evening and at weekends and believe that the amount of apprentices dropping out of an apprenticeship increase dramatically due to the stress of studying alone. The costs of downloading and uploading documents can also be significant.

Online training is probably one of the only options for many remote apprentices and arguments can be made for this. We advise our members and the painting industry as a whole, that online and onsite training enforces and places a greater responsibility onto the employer, who must inevitably spend more valuable time training the apprentice. This will therefore increase the time lost in production, and ultimately cost the employer financially.

In addition, many employers do not work in specialised areas of our trade such as Wallpapering or Decorative Finishes and will therefore have difficulty in providing an apprentice experience over all the competencies required to be a reputable trade standard Painter and Decorator. Ideally students should be exposed to a vast array of different work environments while learning. Any gaps in these various work experiences have always been met by government training organisations, such as TAFE.

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With new models of training delivery, we have seen that the apprentice is often accelerated through their apprenticeship, and can therefore come out of their apprenticeship, with very little trade experience. They are being set up to fail as a tradesperson. This accelerated online delivery model that is currently emerging, maybe financially rewarding for the employer and the RTO, but in our opinion is very detrimental to the advancement in skills and knowledge to the painting and decorating trade. The general public will start to see a new generation of so called qualified and trained 'licensed' painters who have a trade certificate, but do not have the necessary skills or experience to perform in a safe a competent manner. Where and how a prospective employee is trained could reflect their job prospects when considered against a competitor for a position.

We note the Commonwealth and State training bodies are developing a better framework to provide assurances through a stronger audit procedure, that all RTOs comply with the Volume of Learning clause. This should ensure that all RTOs can demonstrate clearly that they have allowed an apprentice and learner an acceptable amount of time to develop all required skills and knowledge to be deemed competent in all facets of the Certificate III in Painting and Decorating. We are concerned that some RTOs or their brokers may turn up on site and "tick" an apprentice through the qualification very quickly. We believe that the Volume of Learning clause is being seriously breached by some RTOs.

The need for Apprenticeship Field Officers is another area that is sadly lacking in the current apprenticeship system and in some states there is no one employed in this area. If we are going to address the short comings in the apprenticeship system then it is imperative that these field officers are reappointed as soon as possible to address the concerns of the training providers and to assist the apprentices in the field to achieve the best possible outcomes for themselves and our industry.

We support all quality RTO's that comply with the Volume of learning clause and we work closely with Tafes that have a Painting & Decorating department and have shown as an RTO to have a proven record, established facilities and equipment and a long history of successfully training generations of Painters and Decorators. We express our concern at the austerity measures and reduction in funding from both Federal and various State and Territory Governments to TAFE in Tasmania, South Australia and Victoria. We now believe that TAFE is being placed at serious threat and we may lose TAFE altogether.

The Master Painters Association of Victoria/Tasmania and the Master Painters, Decorators & Signwriters of South Australia Inc. believe that the current state of vocational training in Australia is of great concern and should be addressed forthwith as a matter of urgency.

It is vital for the future of the Painting and Decorating Industry that Industry Standards are maintained and we have National Licencing for all painting contractors in Australia.

MASTER PAINTERS ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA/TASMANIA and THE MASTER PAINTERS, DECORATORS & SIGNWRITERS OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC.

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