

# You Do Not Have To Serve Your Time

We constantly read of the shortage of skills and the need to increase the number of skilled tradespeople in Australia. One response has been the introduction of the 457 Visa, which enables employers to sponsor overseas workers to fill skilled positions in Australia on a temporary basis for up to four years. This is a short term solution.

In the long term a far more desirable solution is to increase our skills base by training more apprentices. We need to make an apprenticeship one of the favoured options, not only for youth leaving school, but also for unskilled mature workers already in the workforce. The latter are a ready supply of potential skilled labour.

The Queensland apprenticeship system awards qualifications on the basis of achieving an appropriate level of competency. It is no longer based on serving a fixed period of years. The competency

based system means that those who are able to do so can complete the apprenticeship in the minimum time. Time based apprenticeships are now a thing of the past. If an apprentice has the ability to achieve the required level of competency quicker than the nominal duration of the apprenticeship, then they may do so. Competency not time is the criterion.



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