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Australian Apprentice Retention Pilot Project: Report to MEGT

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FINAL REPORT

Australian Apprentice Retention Pilot Project: Report to MEGT

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ACRONYMS

ACE	Adult and Community Education
ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
AVETMISS	Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard
CEET	Monash University-ACER Centre for the Economics of Education and Training
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
SRC	Social Research Centre
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
VET	Vocational Education and Training

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The authors wish to acknowledge the invaluable contribution of the Social Research Centre in conducting the project interviews.

ACER also wishes to thank the 495 apprentices who gave their time to be interviewed for the purposes of this study.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) was engaged in February 2010 by MEGT to conduct research on the retention of first-year apprentices participating in the MEGT mentoring and social networking program.

This component of the study aims to:

- Identify the critical ‘success factors’ involved in the program achieving its objectives;
- Identify the ‘inhibiting factors’ that need to be addressed; and
- Gauge the views of apprentices and other stakeholders about the program’s main components including their perceived effectiveness and ways they could be improved.

Following an analysis of the survey data the following key findings were made. The *Australian Apprentice Retention Pilot Project* has received uniformly high satisfaction ratings from the participating apprentices. On the whole, the apprentices feel that the mentoring was of a high quality and featured to at least some extent in their decision to continue their apprenticeship.

1. High response rate and good distribution of responses across sites, industry areas.

From an available sample of 550, 495 apprentices completed an interview – a response rate of 90%. Of those completing interviews 166 (33.5%) were located in New South Wales, 162 (32.7%) were located in Victoria and 167 (33.7%) were located in Queensland. Of those, 466 (94.1%) were still in an MEGT apprenticeship at the time of interview. There is further detail on sample size and composition included in Table 1.1.

2. Ratings of type of work, levels of training and levels of supervision are uniformly high; lower ratings for levels of pay.

The most common reason for undertaking an apprenticeship was that apprentices ‘wanted to work in this type of job’ (46.6%). Other factors rated as important motivators were ‘to get a recognised qualification or certificate (18.5%), ‘wanted a job of any type’ (9.4%) and opportunity to further knowledge and skills (4.3%).

There were uniformly positive agreement ratings in relation to happiness with the type of work, levels of training and levels of supervision. These apprentices were in agreement that their apprenticeship matches their prior understanding of what an apprenticeship would be like and that they also expected to complete their current apprenticeship. Relative to other items, there was a proportionately higher group of apprentices that disagree (5.6%) or strongly disagree (3.0%) they are happy with the pay they are receiving.

3. Around 80 per cent of MEGT apprentices surveyed had some form of contact with their mentor resulting in 602 different forms of contact and varying levels of contact between sites.

Of the 466 apprentices in an MEGT apprenticeship at the time of survey, 373 (80%) of those in the project group had been contacted by a mentor. Of the 602 different forms of contact between an apprentice and their mentor, 209 (34.7%) occurred on-site and 213 (35.4%) occurred off-site. A further 79 (13.1%) SMS messages and 69 (13.1%) *Facebook* messages were recorded as a means of contacting the apprentices. Within each of the sites, 92.9% of Victorian apprentices were contacted, compared to 82.5% in New South Wales and 65.0% in Queensland.

Within each of the sites, 92.9% of Victorian apprentices were contacted, compared to 82.5% in New South Wales and 65.0% in Queensland. In terms of relative rates of contact per apprentice in each site, there was little percentage point difference between each of the sites. Across all sites, there was about 1.6 contacts per apprentice. The level of coverage was highest in Victoria (1.7 points of contact per apprentice) followed by 1.6 in New South Wales and 1.5 in Queensland.

4. Mentor quality ratings were uniformly high; relatively lower ratings in relation to provision of post-apprenticeship information; limited engagement with social networking activities.

The majority of apprentices had a positive perception of the mentoring provided. The agreement ratings were uniformly high in relation to mentor efforts to understand their specific circumstances (98.4%), give useful information and advice (97.6%), help to better understand the apprenticeship (95.9%) and help with post-apprenticeship work options (96.5%). There were only minor differences in the rating of mentor quality between sites.

There were uniformly high satisfaction ratings of the program among both continuing and discontinued apprentices. Of the apprentices that had some form of engagement with mentoring (n=373), the majority strongly agreed (72.4%) and agreed (24.1%) they were satisfied with the quality of mentoring provided. The highest satisfaction ratings for the mentoring element was in Victoria (97.9%) followed by New South Wales (97.7%) and Queensland (93.1%).

5. Uniformly positive satisfaction ratings; program did feature in decision-making; limited variation between sites on ratings of overall program.

Of the 398 apprentices, both continuing and discontinued, that had some form of engagement with the mentoring and social networking activities, the majority strongly agreed (36.4%) or agreed (50.5%) that they would recommend the mentoring and/or social networking activities to 'friends or family if they had the opportunity to take part'. Slightly over 10% of apprentices were unlikely (10.8%) or very unlikely (1.3%) to recommend the program.

When evaluating the mentoring and social networking elements together as a single program, the satisfaction ratings were equally positive. The majority of apprentices were very satisfied (49.5%) or satisfied (47.2%) with the overall quality of the mentoring and/or social networking activities provided by MEGT. Satisfaction ratings were highest in Victoria (98.6%) followed by Queensland (96.3%) and New South Wales (95.0%).

Of the apprentices that had some form of engagement with the mentoring and social networking activities (n=398), 83.6% believed the program featured to a large extent (34.4%), certain extent (36.2%) or limited extent (13.0%) in their decision to continue their apprenticeship. A considerable proportion believed the program did not feature at all in their decision to continue their apprenticeship (14.8%). The proportion of apprentices that believed the program did not feature in their decision to continue was highest in Victoria (18.6%) followed by New South Wales (14.0%) and Queensland (10.6%).

While recognising the overall positive ratings, there are a set of key areas that future program managers could consider in implementing the same or similar programs. In summary, it is suggested that future programs of a similar nature ensure that in design and implementation the following factors are considered:

- Mentoring requires a sustained approach built on trust and respect;
- Mentoring requires an understanding of multiple contexts;
- Transitions from mentoring to social networking must be seamless.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) was engaged in February 2010 by MEGT to conduct research on the retention of first-year apprentices participating in the MEGT mentoring and social networking program.

Sponsored by DEEWR, the *Australian Apprentice Retention Pilot Project* aims to improve the retention of apprentices in skills shortage trades. The project involves the provision of mentors to support apprentices at three sites: in Queensland (Logan/Ipswich); New South Wales (Western Sydney); and Victoria (Southeast Melbourne). The role of the mentors is to visit the apprentice and maintain ongoing contact through social networking tools such as *Facebook* and *Twitter*.

MEGT engaged ACER to conduct an independent study and assist with the effective transfer of the lessons from these pilots into other possible settings.

This report presents the findings of the research project.

1.1 Focus of the Study

The ACER study focused on the following aspects of the pilot program:

- Identifying the critical ‘success factors’ involved in the program achieving its objectives;
- Identifying the ‘inhibiting factors’ that need to be addressed; and
- Gauging the views of apprentices and other stakeholders about the program’s main components including their perceived effectiveness and ways they could be improved.

1.2 Program Methodology

The pilot projects involve the provision of support by a mentor who visits the apprentice soon after commencement and keeps in contact via *Facebook* and *Twitter*. Apprentices in the relevant areas were asked if they wished to participate in the project when they signed their training contract. Apprentices were subsequently requested to sign a consent form to take part in the project and survey.

1.3 Methodology

The project team divided the project into three parts: a brief literature review; a survey of program participants; and analysis of their experiences and perceptions

The literature review involved a brief review of Australian and international research on apprenticeship retention, including recent research studies published by ACER and the Centre for the Economics of Education and Training (CEET), based at Monash University. A search of the literature was undertaken using the facilities of the ACER Cunningham Library. It included a search of the Australian Education Index.

The literature review provided background for development of the interview schedule. Other inputs to the schedule's design were provided by MEGT, the project steering committee and the Social Research Centre (SRC). To maximise response rates, the interview was designed to be brief and engaging. The interview was pilot tested with a small number of apprentices before the main study.

MEGT provided ACER's partner, the SRC with a contact file of apprentices who had consented to a telephone interview. The interviews were conducted over a period of four weeks in July and August 2010. Each interview lasted around six minutes.

As shown in Table 1.1 and Figure 1.1, the primary background variables for analysis of the interview data were:

- Site location, that is, Queensland (Logan/Ipswich), New South Wales (Western Sydney) and Victoria (Southeast Melbourne)
- Gender;
- Prior engagement with a pre-apprenticeship program;
- Prior engagement with school-based VET training; and
- Whether the apprentice had sought information before commencing their apprenticeship.

Unless otherwise noted, the denominator for the analysis is the total number of apprentices that had some form of engagement with the mentoring element of the program (n=373).

From an available sample of 550, 495 apprentices completed an interview – a response rate of 90.0%. Of those completing interviews 166 (33.5%) were located in New South Wales, 162 (32.7%) were located in Victoria and 167 (33.7%) were located in Queensland. Of those interviewed, 466 (94.1%) were still in an MEGT apprenticeship at the time of interview. Table 1.1 provides further information on the sample size and composition.

Although the response rate to the interviews was high, care should be taken in generalising the results because: (i) the sample was drawn from only three geographical regions in Australia, (ii) the number of industries in which the apprentices were working was limited and so was not representative of the occupational structure of Australia and (iii) there may have been economic, social or political factors, which shaped responses during the data collection, that have subsequently changed.

The interview schedule is included in the appendix to this report.

Table 1.1: Sample and main variables for analysis

Variable	Category	Count	%
Total program participants	Program group	550	
Total completed interviews by program group members		495	90.0
MEGT apprentice when interviewed	Yes	466	94.1
	No	29	5.9
Engagement with program	Contacted by mentor	373	80.0
	Not contacted by mentor	93	20.0
Gender	Female	68	13.7
	Male	427	86.3
Age	16 (and below)	127	25.7
	17	103	20.8
	18	90	18.2
	19	61	12.3
	20	40	8.1
	21 (and above)	74	14.9
Indigenous	Yes	3	0.6
	No	492	99.4
Location of program	NSW	166	33.5
	VIC	162	32.7
	QLD	167	33.7
Industry area ¹	Automotive	73	14.7
	Carpentry	70	14.1
	Plumbing	67	13.5
	Engineering/Electrical	60	12.1
	Manufacturing	60	12.1
	Hairdressing	54	10.9
	Food and Hospitality	39	7.9
	Other	72	14.5

¹ Groupings coded using AQF qualification title.

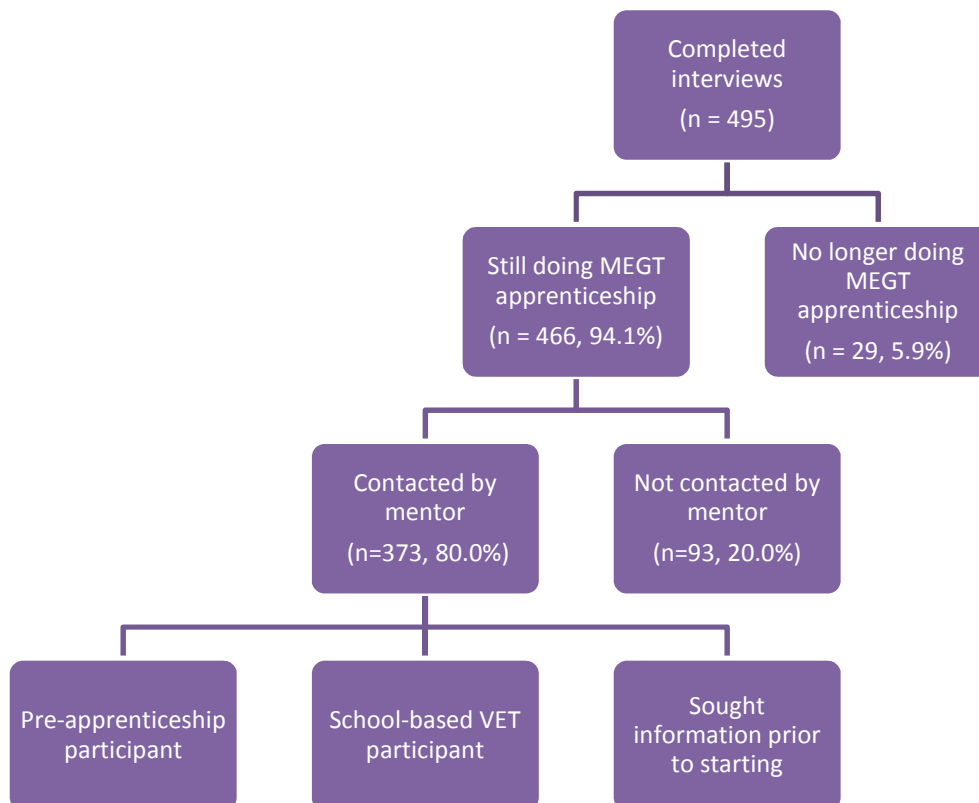


Figure 1.1: Sample and main variables for analysis²

1.4 Report structure

The report includes an analysis of the experience of program participants within the following domains:

- Motivation to undertake an apprenticeship;
- Perceptions of current apprenticeship;
- Participation and engagement with elements of the program; and
- Perceptions of the overall program.

² ‘Sought information’ refers to ‘any advice or information sought before starting the apprenticeship’.

2. EXPERIENCE OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

This chapter presents an analysis of rates of program participation and levels of program engagement among apprentices in the pilot program. An analysis of apprentice experiences and perceptions of the program is presented to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of the program.

This chapter is divided into the following sections:

- Motivation to undertake apprenticeship;
- Perceptions of the apprenticeship;
- Participation and engagement with elements of the program; and
- Perceptions of the overall program.

Unless otherwise noted, the denominator for the analysis is the total number of apprentices interviewed who reported that had some form of engagement with the mentoring element of the program (n=373).

2.1 Motivation to undertake an apprenticeship

This section discusses the motivating factors behind these apprentices first undertaking an apprenticeship so as to better understand their reasons and intentions when first commencing their apprenticeship. It was hypothesised that the reasons young people enter an apprenticeship could influence their attitudes towards the pilot program.

As shown in Tables 2.1 and 2.2, apprentices attribute high ratings towards work or job motivators, across all sites and industries. The most prominent reason for undertaking an apprenticeship was that apprentices ‘wanted to work in this type of job’ (46.6%). Other factors rated as important motivators were ‘to get a recognised qualification or certificate (18.5%), ‘wanted a job of any type’ (9.4%) and ‘opportunity to further knowledge and skills’ (4.3%).

There were only minor differences in reported motivation between commencing apprentices at the three sites. (The exception was NSW, where apprentices identified ‘wanted to work in this type of job’ (40.3%) as a relatively less important motivator and the ‘opportunity to further knowledge and skills’ (8.4%) as a relatively more important motivator.) For all sites, a higher proportion of those in hairdressing (67.3%) and carpentry (66.7%) apprenticeships first started their apprenticeship because they wanted to work in that particular type of job.

Table 2.1: MAIN reason for deciding to do an apprenticeship by pilot program site

(n=466)	NSW	VIC	QLD	Total
Wanted to work in this type of job	40.3	49.0	50.3	46.6
To get a recognised qualification or certificate	18.8	17.4	19.1	18.5
Wanted a job of any type	8.4	12.3	7.6	9.4
Opportunity to further knowledge and skills	8.4	2.6	1.9	4.3
Wanted to leave school	3.9	6.5	1.9	4.1
Other (10 reasons)	20.0	12.1	19.0	17.2
Total	100	100	100	100

Table 2.2: MAIN reason for deciding to do an apprenticeship by industry

(n=466)	Automotive	Carpentry	Engineering and Electrical	Food and Hospitality	Hairdressing	Manufacturing	Plumbing	Other	Total
Wanted to work in this type of job	42.9	66.7	47.4	34.2	67.3	34.0	41.5	36.8	46.6
To get a recognised qualification or certificate	21.4	10.6	14.0	21.1	10.2	26.4	20.0	23.5	18.5
Wanted a job of any type	7.1	7.6	10.5	5.3	2.0	7.5	12.3	19.1	9.4
Opportunity to further knowledge and skills	4.3	4.5	3.5	10.5	2.0	3.8	6.2	1.5	4.3
Wanted to leave school	2.9	1.5	1.8	13.2	2.0	0.0	4.6	8.8	4.1
Other (10 reasons)	21.4	9.1	22.8	15.8	16.3	28.3	10.3	15.4	17.2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

2.2 Perceptions of current apprenticeship

This section considers the satisfaction levels and future aspirations of pilot program apprentices in order to understand the factors impacting on rates of participation, levels of program engagement and perceptions of program quality.

Of the 466 continuing apprentices, the majority had a positive view of their apprenticeship. As shown in Table 2.3, the overall agreement ratings in relation to happiness with the type of work, levels of training and levels of supervision were uniformly high. The majority strongly agreed (70.6%) or agreed (26.6%) that they were happy with the type of work they had been given to do. The majority also strongly agreed

(72.1%) or agreed (23.8%) that they were happy with the level of training. A larger majority strongly agreed (77.0%) or agreed (21.2%) that they were happy with the level of supervision from their employer.

These apprentices are generally in agreement that their apprenticeship matches their prior understanding of what an apprenticeship would be like and that they also expect to complete their current apprenticeship. Consistent with the overall happiness and satisfaction ratings, apprentices strongly agreed (68.9%) or agreed (29.0%) that their apprenticeship matched what they expected an apprenticeship to be like. There is a lower proportion of apprentices who agreed (34.3%) or strongly agreed (56.7%) that they are happy with the pay they are receiving.

As shown in Table 2.4, there is little variation between the sites in terms of how confident respondents are that they will complete their apprenticeship. Table 2.5 also shows little difference in the confidence of respondents according to whether they have undertaken a pre-apprenticeship course or not. This was perhaps a little surprising as it could have been expected that those who had pre-apprenticeship training may have seen themselves as having a stronger foundation for completing the apprenticeship they had subsequently started.

Table 2.3: Apprentices’ perceptions of aspects of their apprenticeship

(n=466)	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No response	Total
I am happy with the type of work I have been given to do	70.6	26.6	1.3	1.5	0.0	100
I am happy with the level of training for the work I have to do	72.1	23.8	2.1	1.1	0.9	100
I am happy with the level of supervision from my employer	77.0	21.2	0.9	0.6	0.2	100
I am happy with the pay I am receiving	56.7	34.3	5.6	3.0	0.4	100
My apprenticeship matches what I expected an apprenticeship to be like	68.9	29.0	1.1	0.6	0.4	100
I am confident that I will complete my apprenticeship	82.6	16.3	0.2	0.0	0.9	100

Table 2.4: ‘I am confident that I will complete my apprenticeship’ by program site

(n=466)	NSW	VIC	QLD	Total
Strongly agree	81.2	82.6	84.1	82.6
Agree	16.2	16.8	15.9	16.3
Disagree	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.2
Strongly disagree	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Can't say/refused	2.6	0.0	0.0	0.9
Total	100	100	100	100

Table 2.5: ‘I am confident that I will complete my apprenticeship’ by whether has completed a pre-apprenticeship

(n=466)	Has completed a pre-apprenticeship:	Has not completed a pre-apprenticeship	Total
Strongly agree	84.3	82.1	82.6
Agree	13.7	17.0	16.3
Disagree	0.0	0.3	0.2
Can't say/refused	2.0	0.5	0.9
Total	100	100	100

2.3 Participation and engagement with elements of the program

The section discusses participation, engagement and perceptions of the apprentices in relation to the mentoring and social networking elements of the program.

2.3.1 Participation

Of the 466 apprentices in an MEGT apprenticeship at the time of survey, 373 (80%) of had been contacted by a mentor. As shown in Figure 2.1, of the 602 different forms of contact between an apprentice and their mentor, 209 (34.7%) occurred on-site, and 213 (35.4%) occurred off-site. A further 79 (13.1%) SMS messages and 69 (13.1%) *Facebook* messages were recorded as a means of contacting the apprentices.

Within each of the sites, 92.9% of Victorian apprentices were contacted, compared to 82.5% in New South Wales and 65.0% in Queensland (Table 2.6). There were relatively higher rates of contact with female apprentices in all states and territories. As shown in Table 2.7, 78.9% of males and 87.3% of females were contacted by the mentors.

There was little difference in the average rates of contact per apprentice between each of the sites. Across all sites, there were about 1.6 contacts for every apprentice. As shown in Table 2.8, coverage was highest in Victoria (1.7 contacts per apprentice) followed by 1.6 in New South Wales and 1.5 in Queensland. There were no apprentices that identified more than 4 separate forms of contact with their mentor. As shown in Table 2.9, just over

half (51.7%) had one form of contact with the mentor – a further 36.7% had two, a further 9.9% had three and 1.6% had 4.

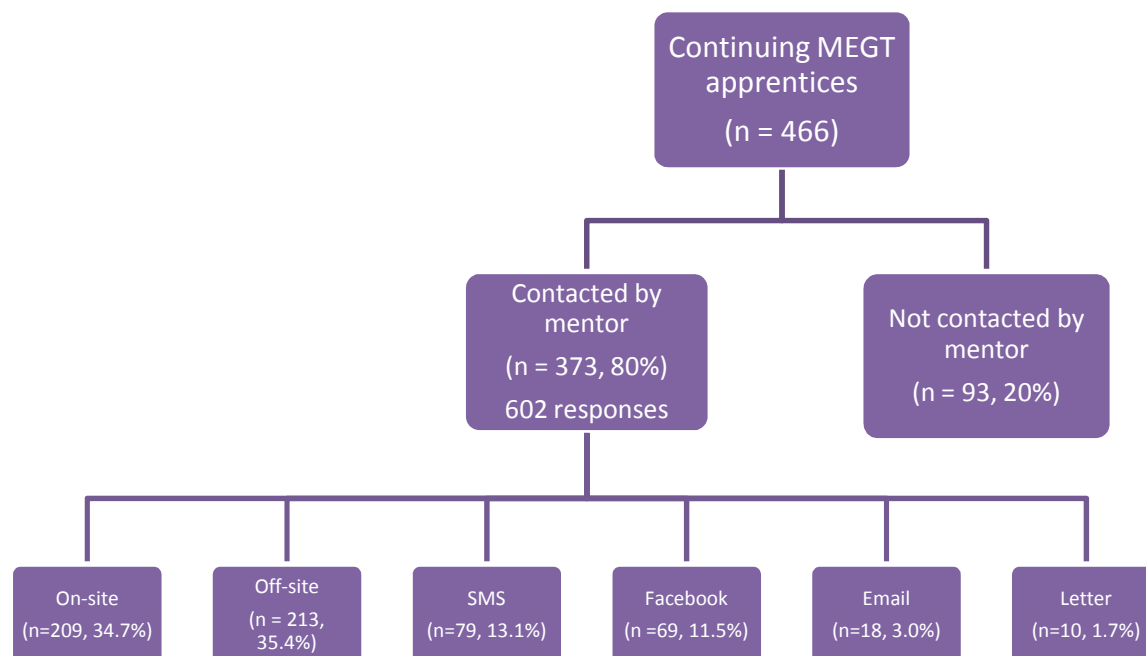


Figure 2.1: Levels and types of contact with mentor

Table 2.6: Levels and types of contact with mentor by site

	Counts				Percentages			
	NSW	QLD	VIC	Total	NSW	QLD	VIC	Total
On site	67	31	111	209	32.2	20.8	45.3	34.7
Off site	91	86	36	213	43.8	57.7	14.7	35.4
SMS	28	1	50	79	13.5	0.7	20.4	13.1
Facebook	19	17	33	69	9.1	11.4	13.5	11.5
Email	1	6	11	18	0.5	4.0	4.5	3.0
Letter	1	7	2	10	0.5	4.7	0.8	1.7
Other	1	1	2	4	0.5	0.7	0.8	0.7
Total	208	149	245	602	100	100	100	100

Table 2.7: Contact with mentor by gender

Gender	Counts			Percentages		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Male	318	85	403	78.9	21.1	100
Female	55	8	63	87.3	12.7	100
Total	373	93	466	80.0	20.0	100

Table 2.8: Contact with mentor per apprentice by site

	NSW	QLD	VIC	Total
Apprentices	127	102	144	373
Points of contact	208	149	245	602
Contact per apprentice	1.6	1.5	1.7	1.6
<i>Face-to-face³ contact per apprentice</i>	<i>1.2</i>	<i>1.1</i>	<i>1.0</i>	<i>1.1</i>
<i>Social networking⁴ contact per apprentice</i>	<i>0.4</i>	<i>0.3</i>	<i>0.7</i>	<i>0.5</i>

Table 2.9: Number of forms of contact with mentor by site

	Counts				Percentages			
	NSW	VIC	QLD	Total	NSW	VIC	QLD	Total
1	64	71	58	193	50.4	49.3	56.9	51.7
2	47	49	41	137	37.0	34.0	40.2	36.7
3	14	20	3	37	11.0	13.9	2.9	9.9
4	2	4	0	6	1.6	2.8	0.0	1.6
Total	127	144	102	373	100	100	100	100

2.3.2 Perceptions of the mentoring

Of the 373 continuing apprentices, the majority had a positive perception of the mentoring provided. As shown in Table 2.10, the agreement ratings were uniformly high in relation to mentor efforts to understand their specific circumstances (98.4%), give useful information and advice (97.6%), help to better understand the apprenticeship (95.9%) and help with post-apprenticeship work options (96.5%).

There were only minor differences in the agreement ratings of mentor quality between sites. There were relatively higher ratings in Victoria on matters relating to understanding specific circumstances and the provision of advice. Although still uniformly positive, Queensland was rated relatively less favourably for the same items. There was a high proportion of Victorian apprentices who cannot say (or refused to say) whether their mentor had helped them better understand their options after finishing (9.7%).

³ On-site and off-site contact

⁴ All non on-site and off-site contact

The areas for improvement suggest that participants would have welcomed further on-site visits in order to become more engaged with the workplace and with the type of work that the apprentice does. Some comments made by the apprentices were:

- *Come out and talk to us one-on-one at work!*
- *Drop by the shop a bit more.*
- *Maybe come out on site more.*
- *More contact every so often like maybe once every couple of months just to know where you are at.*
- *Spend more time with the people you're supposed to be mentoring and not in the middle of a busy salon.*
- *...more contact verbally instead of text messages. Come and see me at work more to check up and see how everything's going.*

Other responses suggest a knowledge or experience gap in some specific circumstances and contexts. For example, some apprentices said:

- *They come off a little un-tradie like. The dude didn't seem like a tradie, if you're going to be mentoring tradies you should seem more like a tradie.*
- *They should, as mentors especially, just be more on a personal level....they don't really take into consideration what's happening with you specifically.*
- *Ask more questions about what we are physically doing in our work.*
- *Conversations about what we do, but a few more conversations over the phone would help.*

Other responses reveal some opportunities to better follow up on specific requests directed to the mentors. For example:

- *The mentor did say he'd call me during the week and didn't.*
- *I think my mentor said he was going to visit, but don't think he ever did.*
- *When they promise to someone to call back, they should call back. The most important thing is respect.*
- *I contacted my mentor on a few occasions regarding a tool bonus. They said they were going to find out the next day - I had to contact them days later and they still hadn't found out.*

Table 2.10: Mentor satisfaction ratings

(n = 373)		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Can't say/refused	Total
My mentor made an effort to understand my specific circumstances	NSW	74.8	23.6	0.0	0.0	1.6	100
	VIC	78.5	20.1	0.0	0.0	1.4	100
	QLD	69.6	28.4	1.0	1.0	0.0	100
	Total	74.8	23.6	0.3	0.3	1.1	100
My mentor gave me useful information and advice	NSW	74.8	22.0	0.8	0.0	2.4	100
	VIC	78.5	20.1	0.0	0.0	1.4	100
	QLD	70.6	26.5	2.0	1.0	0.0	100
	Total	75.1	22.5	0.8	0.3	1.3	100
My mentor helped me better understand my apprenticeship	NSW	67.7	29.1	1.6	0.0	1.6	100
	VIC	72.2	24.3	1.4	1.4	0.7	100
	QLD	70.6	23.5	3.9	0.0	2.0	100
	Total	70.2	25.7	2.1	0.5	1.3	100
My mentor helped me better understand my options after I finish my apprenticeship	NSW	55.9	33.1	6.3	1.6	3.1	100
	VIC	47.9	34.0	6.3	2.1	9.7	100
	QLD	53.9	32.4	10.8	0.0	2.9	100
	Total	52.3	33.2	7.5	1.3	5.6	100

2.3.3 Perceptions of the social networking element

Of the 40 continuing apprentices who had participated in the social networking activities on *Facebook*, the majority had positive perceptions of them. As shown in Table 2.11, the agreement ratings are uniformly high in relation to feeling more informed about their apprenticeship (87.5%), understanding the experience of other apprentices (77.5%), asking questions they wouldn't have otherwise asked (75.0%) and feeling more informed about options after finishing their apprenticeship (72.5%).

Apprentices were less sure that the social networking activities were more helpful than face-to-face mentoring. Around 25% of respondents disagreed and 10% strongly disagreed with the premise that the social networking activities were more helpful than face-to-face mentoring.

The participation rates among respondents in social networking activities were very low. For this reason, the social networking items were not analysed by site location.

The areas for improvement suggest that participants would have welcomed greater clarity around accessing and participating in the *Facebook* activities. For example, some apprentices noted:

- *My mentor told me that if we had a lot of activity on Facebook we would get prizes and cash and stuff like that, but there hasn't been anything like that on my mentor's Facebook page.*
- *Show me how to work the Facebook because I can't find the groups. I've actually looked for about half an hour and I gave up.*
- *Socialising itself is something I have a bit of trouble with. I wanted to go on the Facebook and speak to other apprentices but they said he would give me his email and number and he never got back to me.*

Table 2.11: Social networking satisfaction ratings

(n = 40)	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No response	Total
They helped me understand the experiences of other apprentices	35.0	42.5	10.0	.0	12.5	100
They helped me ask questions that I wouldn't have otherwise asked	42.5	32.5	10.0	2.5	12.5	100
They helped me feel more informed about my apprenticeship	52.5	35.0	2.5	2.5	7.5	100
They helped me feel more informed about my options after I finish my apprenticeship	32.5	40.0	7.5	5.0	15.0	100
They were more helpful than face-to-face mentoring	32.5	22.5	25.0	10.0	10.0	100

2.4 Perceptions of the overall program

The section considers perceptions of MEGT apprentices in relation to recommending and evaluating the overall quality of the mentoring and social networking elements of the program.

2.4.1 Recommending the program

Of the 398 apprentices, both continuing and discontinued, who had some form of engagement with the mentoring and social networking activities, the majority strongly agreed (36.4%) or agreed (50.5%) that they would recommend the mentoring or social networking activities to friends or family. Slightly over 10% of apprentices were unlikely (10.8%) or very unlikely (1.3%) to recommend the program.

As shown in Table 2.12, there were some moderate differences in the agreement ratings between sites. There was a lower proportion of respondents 'very likely' to recommend the program in Victoria (30.5%) compared to New South Wales (41.7%) and Queensland (38.0%). Overall agreement was slightly lower in Victoria (84.8%) compared to New South Wales (87.7%) and Queensland (88.9%).

Exposure to pre-apprenticeships or school-based VET had little impact on whether apprentices would recommend the program. T

Table 2.12: How likely is it that you would recommend the mentoring and/or social networking activities to friends or family if they had the opportunity to take part? (by site)

(n=398)	Very likely	Likely	Unlikely	Very unlikely	Don't know	Total
NSW	41.7	46.0	9.4	1.4	1.4	100
VIC	30.5	54.3	12.6	1.3	1.3	100
QLD	38.0	50.9	10.2	0.9	0.0	100
Total	36.4	50.5	10.8	1.3	1.0	100

Table 2.13: How likely is it that you would recommend the mentoring and/or social networking activities to friends or family if they had the opportunity to take part? (by pre-apprentice experience)

(n=398)		Very likely	Likely	Unlikely	Very unlikely	Don't know	Total
Did you do a pre-apprenticeship course before you started this apprenticeship?	Yes	35.7	50.0	10.7	2.4	1.2	100
	No	38.1	49.3	10.9	0.7	1.0	100
	Total	37.6	49.5	10.8	1.1	1.1	100
At school, did you study a TAFE or training course that led to a qualification?	Yes	31.3	51.5	14.1	2.0	1.0	100
	No	37.2	50.0	10.7	0.8	1.2	100
	Total	35.5	50.4	11.7	1.2	1.2	100
Did you seek any advice or information before starting your apprenticeship?	Yes	39.6	49.7	9.6	0.5	0.5	100
	No	35.6	49.2	12.0	1.6	1.6	100
	Total	37.6	49.5	10.8	1.1	1.1	100

2.4.2 Satisfaction with the program

There were uniformly high satisfaction ratings of the program among both continuing and discontinued apprentices. Of the apprentices that had some form of engagement with mentoring (n=373), the majority strongly agreed (72.4%) and agreed (24.1%) they were

satisfied with the quality of mentoring provided. As shown in Table 2.14, the highest satisfaction ratings for the mentoring element was in Victoria (97.9%) followed by New South Wales (97.7%) and Queensland (93.1%).

Nearly all of the apprentices who had some form of engagement with the social networking activities were satisfied with the social networking element of the program (50% strongly agreed and 45% agreed).

When evaluating the mentoring and social networking elements as a single program, the satisfaction ratings are equally positive. The majority of apprentices were very satisfied (49.5%) or satisfied (47.2%) with the overall quality of the mentoring and/or social networking activities provided. As shown in Table 2.15, the satisfaction ratings were highest in Victoria (98.6%) followed by Queensland (96.3%) and New South Wales (95.0%).

Exposure to pre-apprenticeships had a small effect on whether apprentices would recommend the program. Both groups responded with high satisfaction ratings. Apprentices with an exposure to VET training at school rated the program relatively less favourably than those without the same training at school – that is, 43.4% with school-level VET training were very satisfied compared to 52.5% without school-based VET training.

Those who did seek advice prior to starting their apprenticeship rated the program less favourably than those that did seek information school – that is, 46.5% of those who sought out information were very satisfied compared to 56.0% who did not. Overall, the satisfaction ratings, however, were very similar between those who looked for information (97.8%) and those who did not (97.9%).

The areas for improvement that apprentices identified often focused upon a need for increased engagement with employers to ensure that they understood the program. For example, some apprentices said:

- *It's a really good idea but I don't think my boss understands it.*
- *I don't think he [the employer] knows what is going on because none of his other apprentices had a mentor.*
- *Make it more clear ... what the incentives are for and when you get them.*
- *Ask more questions to the boss about what they are going to give to the apprentice if the apprentice agrees to be a hard worker - it CAN'T ALL be about the apprentice JUST LABOURING, it's more of a learning thing as well.*

Table 2.14: Overall satisfaction with mentoring and social networking elements

(n=373)		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Can't say/refused	Total
Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of mentoring provided	NSW	70.9	26.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	100
	VIC	77.1	20.8	0.7	0.0	1.4	100
	QLD	67.6	25.5	5.9	1.0	0.0	100
	Total	72.4	24.1	2.1	0.5	0.8	100
Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of social networking resources provided (n=40) ⁵	Total	50.0	45.0	2.5	0.0	2.5	100

Table 2.15: How satisfied are you with the overall quality of the mentoring and/or social networking activities provided by MEGT? (by site)

(n=398)	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Can't say/refused	Total
NSW	51.8	43.2	1.4	0.7	2.9	100
VIC	50.3	48.3	0.7	0.0	0.7	100
QLD	45.4	50.9	1.9	0.9	0.9	100
Total	49.5	47.2	1.3	0.5	1.5	100

⁵ Ratings by state not included due to low response rate.

Table 2.16: How satisfied are you with the overall quality of the mentoring and/or social networking activities provided by MEGT?

(n=398)	Response	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Can't say/refused	Total
Did you do a pre-apprenticeship course before you started this apprenticeship?	Yes	50	48.8	0	0	1.2	100
	No	51.7	45.9	1.4	0.3	0.7	100
	Total	51.3	46.6	1.1	0.3	0.8	100
At school, did you study a TAFE or training course that led to a qualification?	Yes	43.4	53.5	2	0	1	100
	No	52.5	45.9	0.4	0.4	0.8	100
	Total	49.9	48.1	0.9	0.3	0.9	100
Did you seek any advice or information before starting your apprenticeship?	Yes	46.5	51.3	1.1	0	1.1	100
	No	56	41.9	1	0.5	0.5	100
	Total	51.3	46.6	1.1	0.3	0.8	100

2.4.3 Extent to which the program featured in decision-making

There were high levels of agreement ratings among continuing and discontinuing apprentices as to whether the program featured in their decision to continue their apprenticeship. Of the apprentices for whom it had featured (n=398), 83.6% said the program had featured to a large extent (34.4%), certain extent (36.2%) or limited extent (13.0%) in their decision to continue their apprenticeship. Just under 15% said that the program did not feature at all in their decision to continue their apprenticeship.

As shown in Table 2.17, the sum of responses where the program featured to a large, certain or limited extent were highest in Queensland (88.4%) followed by New South Wales (83.0%) and Victoria (80.7%). The proportion of apprentices that believe the program did not feature in their decision to continue was highest in Victoria (18.6%) followed by New South Wales (14.0%) and Queensland (10.6%).

Exposure to pre-apprenticeships had some effect on whether the program featured in the apprentice deciding to continue in their apprenticeship. For those apprentices that said the program did not feature at all in their decision-making, the proportion that had completed a pre-apprenticeship was higher (22.6%) than those that had not completed a pre-apprenticeship (12.6%). The exposure to school-based VET subjects at school does not appear to be an influential factor. For those apprentices that believe the program featured to a large extent in their decision-making, the proportion of apprentices who had not sought information on the apprenticeship was higher (38.2%) than those who had sought information (30.5%).

Overall, training background or the decision to seek out information had little impact on how apprentices rate the quality of the mentoring and social networking program.

Table 2.17: To what extent did the mentoring and/or social networking activities feature in your decision to continue your apprenticeship?

(n=398)	Large extent	Certain extent	Limited extent	Not at all	Not sure	Can't say/refused	Total
NSW	38.0	34.1	10.9	14.0	2.3	0.8	100
VIC	30.3	34.5	15.9	18.6	0.7	0.0	100
QLD	35.6	41.3	11.5	10.6	0.0	1.0	100
Total	34.4	36.2	13.0	14.8	1.1	0.5	100

Table 2.18: To what extent did the mentoring and/or social networking activities feature in your decision to continue your apprenticeship?

(n=398)		Large extent	Certain extent	Limited extent	Not at all	Not sure	Can't say/refused	Total
Did you do a pre-apprenticeship course before you started this apprenticeship?	Yes	33.3	29.8	14.3	22.6	0	0	100
	No	34.7	38.1	12.6	12.6	1.4	0.7	100
	Total	34.4	36.2	13.0	14.8	1.1	0.5	100
At school, did you study a TAFE or training course that led to a qualification?	Yes	33.3	34.3	16.2	16.2	0	0	100
	No	32.2	36.8	12.8	15.7	1.7	0.8	100
	Total	32.6	36.1	13.8	15.8	1.2	0.6	100
Did you seek any advice or information before starting your apprenticeship?	Yes	30.5	36.9	14.4	16.6	0.5	1.1	100
	No	38.2	35.6	11.5	13.1	1.6	0	100
	Total	34.4	36.2	13.0	14.8	1.1	0.5	100

3. CONCLUSIONS

The *Australian Apprentice Retention Pilot Project* has received uniformly high satisfaction ratings from the participating apprentices. On the whole, the apprentices reported that the mentoring was of a high quality and featured to at least some extent in their decision to continue their apprenticeship. In learning from the overall positive ratings, there are a set of key areas that future program managers could consider in implementing similar programs.

3.1 Mentoring requires a sustained approach built on trust and respect

Despite the positive responses to the overall apprenticeship and the quality of the mentoring, there was only limited engagement with the social networking activities recorded in the survey interviews. The apprentices emphasised the importance of repeat on-site visits in preference to other forms of mentoring. A potential reason for this is that a single visit may raise interest or expectations which require follow-up. Future programs could consider having follow-up strategies and incentives to ensure that a c flow of support can be provided.

3.2 Mentoring requires an understanding of multiple contexts

There was some evidence from the study that if a mentor is to gain the trust and respect of the apprentice, mentors need detailed information on industry contexts and matters pertaining to industry-specific employment arrangements. Future projects could consider this as part of their implementation planning.

3.3 Transitions from mentoring to social networking ought to be seamless

The social networking activities had a relatively low uptake and were not easily accessible to those who did try to participate. There appears to be some scope for a clearer transition from the direct face-to-face mentoring and the social networking activities. Future programs may also need to consider the boundaries that exist between the young person's social life and working life and the extent to which *Facebook* may attempt to blur these boundaries.

APPENDIX A – SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

INTRODUCTION

(PHONE ANSWERER)

Intro1 Hello, my name is (.....) calling on behalf of the MEGT Apprenticeship Centre. May I please speak to (FNAME, SNAME from list)?

1. Continue (already speaking with named person) (GO TO Intro2 Intro A)
2. Reintroduce to named person (GO TO Intro2 Intro B)
3. Make appointment
4. Language difficulty
5. Named person away duration
6. Refused (GO TO REFUSAL SCRIPT)
7. Named respondent deceased (GO TO TERMINATION SCRIPT)

(NAMED PERSON FROM LIST WAS PHONE ANSWERER)

Intro2 Intro A. I'm calling from The Social Research Centre to conduct a short interview to find out how things have gone so far with your apprenticeship. It should only take about 5 minutes. Is now a good time for us to talk?

(NAMED PERSON FROM LIST WAS NOT PHONE ANSWERER)

Intro B. Hello, my name is (.....) I'm calling from The Social Research Centre to conduct a short interview to find out how things have gone so far with your apprenticeship. It should only take about 5 minutes. Is now a good time for us to talk?

(CONFIDENTIALITY SPIEL)

All the data collected is anonymous and confidential. Participation is voluntary and you are free to terminate the interview at any time.

IF NECESSARY If you have any concerns, you may contact the Australian Council for Educational Research on 03 9277-5471.

1. Continue
2. Refused (GO TO REFUSAL SCRIPT)

(MONITORING SPIEL)

Before we get started, just to let you know that this interview may be monitored by my supervisor for quality purposes – just to check I am doing my job properly. Is that ok with you?

1. Monitoring allowed
2. Monitoring not permitted

Section A

A1 Are you still doing an apprenticeship that was arranged through MEGT?

1. Yes
2. No (A3)

A2 Are you with the same employer you were with when you started?

1. Yes
2. No

GO TO A10b

A3 What would you say is your main activity at present?

1. Working full-time
2. Working part-time
3. Apprenticeship (not arranged through MEGT)
4. Traineeship
5. School
6. TAFE
7. University
8. Other _____

A4 What is the MAIN reason you decided not to continue the apprenticeship arranged through MEGT?

(OPEN, interviewer to offer main reasons (*italicised*), probe for more detail and code response)

Employment-related reasons

1. Got offered a better job
2. The pay was too low
3. Poor working conditions
4. I was not happy with the job prospects in the industry
5. I didn't like the type of work
6. I didn't get on with my boss or other people at work
7. I lost my job/was made redundant
8. I transferred to another apprenticeship/traineeship
9. Left job/changed career
10. Apprenticeship/Traineeship cancelled/discontinued

Training-related reasons

11. I wasn't happy with the on-the-job training
12. I wasn't happy with the off-the-job training
13. I found the study too difficult
14. Studying elsewhere (university/school)

Personal Reasons

15. Problems with travelling/transport
16. Illness/health reasons
17. Family reasons
18. Lack of time
19. Moved

Any other major reason (please specify)

A5 Did you have any contact with a MEGT mentor at any time during your apprenticeship arranged through MEGT?

1. Yes
2. No (A8)

A6 How did they contact you? (*Multiple responses*)

1. They talked to me on-site
2. They talked to me off-site
3. On *Facebook*

4. On *Twitter*
5. They sent me an SMS
6. Other _____

A7 To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding the MEGT mentor?

- a. My mentor made an effort to understand my specific circumstances
- b. My mentor gave me useful information and advice
- c. My mentor helped me better understand my apprenticeship
- d. My mentor helped me better understand my options after my apprenticeship
- e. Overall, I was satisfied with the quality of mentoring provided

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree
5. (Can't say/refused)

A8 Did you take part in any of the MEGT social networking activities on *Facebook* or *Twitter* before leaving that apprenticeship?

1. Yes, on *Facebook*
2. Yes, on *Twitter*
3. Yes, on *Facebook* and *Twitter*
4. No (A10a)

A9 To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding the *Facebook* groups and/or *Twitter* messages?

- a. They helped me understand the experiences of other apprentices
- b. They helped me ask questions that I wouldn't have otherwise asked
- c. They helped me feel more informed about my apprenticeship
- d. They helped me feel more informed about my options after I finish my apprenticeship
- e. They were more helpful than face-to-face mentoring
- f. Overall, I was satisfied with the quality of social networking resources provided

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree
5. (Can't say/refused)

PREA10a IF A3=3 (Apprenticeship (not arranged through MEGT)) DO NOT ASK A10a 'f'.

A10a To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your apprenticeship arranged through MEGT?

- a. I was happy with the type of work I had been given to do
- b. I was happy with the level of training for the work I had to do
- c. I was happy with the level of supervision from my employer
- d. I was happy with the pay I was receiving
- e. My apprenticeship matched what I expected an apprenticeship to be like
- f. I am confident that I will start another apprenticeship

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree
5. (Can't say/refused)

GO TO A11

A10b To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

- a. I am happy with the type of work I have been given to do
- b. I am happy with the level of training for the work I have to do
- c. I am happy with the level of supervision from my employer
- d. I am happy with the pay I am receiving
- e. My apprenticeship matches what I expected an apprenticeship to be like
- f. I am confident that I will complete my apprenticeship

1. Strongly agree

2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree
5. (Can't say/refused)

A11 Have you ever started an apprenticeship before the one arranged through MEGT?

1. Yes
2. No (B1)

A12 Did you complete that apprenticeship?

1. Yes (B1)
2. No

A13 What is the MAIN reason you decided not to continue that apprenticeship?

(OPEN, interviewer to offer main reasons (*italicised*), probe for more detail and code response)

Employment-related reasons

1. Got offered a better job
2. The pay was too low
3. Poor working conditions
4. I was not happy with the job prospects in the industry
5. I didn't like the type of work
6. I didn't get on with my boss or other people at work
7. I lost my job/was made redundant
8. I transferred to another apprenticeship/traineeship
9. Left job/changed career
10. Apprenticeship/Traineeship cancelled/discontinued

Training-related reasons

11. I wasn't happy with the on-the-job training
12. I wasn't happy with the off-the-job training
13. I found the study too difficult
14. Studying elsewhere (university/school)

Personal Reasons

15. Problems with travelling/transport
16. Illness/health reasons
17. Family reasons
18. Lack of time
19. Moved

Any other major reason (please specify)

IF A5=2 (“NO”) AND A8=4 (“NO”) GO TO END (NO PROGRAM ENGAGEMENT REGARDLESS OF WHETHER CONTINUING MEGT APPRENTICE OR NOT)

IF A1=2 (“NO”) AND IF A5=1 (“YES”) AND A8=1 OR 2 OR 3 (“YES...”) GO TO C8 (NO LONGER IN MEGT APPRENTICESHIP BUT HAS SOME PROGRAM ENGAGEMENT)

Section B

B1 What is the MAIN reason you first decided to do an apprenticeship? (OPEN, interviewer to offer responses/code response)

1. Wanted to work in this type of job
2. Wanted a job of any type
3. Have a parent or guardian who works in the same or similar industry
4. Have a brother or sister who works in the same or similar industry
5. To get a recognised qualification or certificate
6. Get paid to learn
7. It was a job requirement
8. It had good job prospects
9. It had good pay once qualified
10. To start my own business
11. Didn't get into uni/ didn't want to go to uni
12. Opportunity to further knowledge and skills
13. Suggested by parent or guardian
14. Recommended/offered by company
15. Other reasons

B2 Did you seek any advice or information before starting your apprenticeship?

1. Yes (probe for information source)
2. No

Who assisted you? _____

Pre-coded list (internet, parent, sibling, friend, teacher, careers advisor, employer, other relative, other apprentice etc)

B3 Did you do a pre-apprenticeship course before you started this apprenticeship?

1. Yes
2. No

B4 When you were at school did you: *(Possible to answer yes to all)*

- a. Study a TAFE or training course that led to a qualification? *(sometimes called VET in schools)*
- b. Do a school-based apprenticeship?
- c. Do any on-the-job training that led to a qualification? *(sometimes called Structured Workplace Learning)*

1. Yes
2. No

IF B4a AND B4b AND B4c =2 GO TO B6

B5 Was any of that training in the same industry or trade as your current apprenticeship?

1. Yes
2. No

B6 Did you have a part-time job or casual job while you were at school?

1. Yes
2. No

B7 At any point have you thought about stopping your apprenticeship?

1. Yes
2. No (C1)

B8 What is the MAIN reason you thought about stopping your apprenticeship?

(OPEN, interviewer to offer main reasons (*italicised*), probe for more detail and code response)

Employment-related reasons

1. Got offered a better job
2. The pay was too low
3. Poor working conditions
4. I was not happy with the job prospects in the industry
5. I didn't like the type of work
6. I didn't get on with my boss or other people at work
7. I transferred to another apprenticeship/traineeship

Training-related reasons

8. I wasn't happy with the on-the-job training
9. I wasn't happy with the off-the-job training
10. I found the study too difficult

Personal Reasons

11. Problems with travelling/transport
12. Illness/health reasons
13. Family reasons
14. Lack of time
15. Moved

Section C

C1 Has a MEGT mentor contacted you since you started your apprenticeship?

1. Yes
2. No (C4)

C2 How did they contact you? (*Multiple responses*)

1. They talked to me on-site
2. They talked to me off-site
3. On *Facebook*
4. On *Twitter*
5. They sent me an SMS
6. Other _____

C3 To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding the MEGT mentor?

- a. My mentor made an effort to understand my specific circumstances
- b. My mentor gave me useful information and advice
- c. My mentor helped me better understand my apprenticeship
- d. My mentor helped me better understand my options after I finish my apprenticeship
- e. Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of mentoring provided

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

C4 Have you taken part in any of the MEGT social networking activities on *Facebook* or *Twitter*?

1. Yes, on *Facebook*
2. Yes, on *Twitter*
3. Yes, on *Facebook* and *Twitter*
4. No (PREC6)

C5 To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding the *Facebook* groups and/or *Twitter* messages?

- a. They helped me understand the experiences of other apprentices
- b. They helped me ask questions that I wouldn't have otherwise asked

- c. They helped me feel more informed about my apprenticeship
- d. They helped me feel more informed about my options after I finish my apprenticeship
- e. They were more helpful than face-to-face mentoring
- f. Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of social networking resources provided

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

PREC6 IF C1=2 GO TO END

C6 Has a MEGT mentor contacted your parent or guardian to talk about your apprenticeship?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know

C7 How valuable do your parents think the mentoring and social networking activities are?

1. Very valuable
2. Somewhat valuable
3. Not very valuable
4. Not at all valuable
5. Don't know

C8 How likely is it that you would recommend the mentoring and social networking activities to friends or family if they had the opportunity to take part?

1. Very likely
2. Likely
3. Unlikely
4. Very unlikely

C9 Taken together, how satisfied are you with the overall quality of the mentoring and social networking activities provided by MEGT?

1. Very satisfied
2. Satisfied
3. Dissatisfied
4. Very dissatisfied
5. (Can't say/refused)

PREC10 The MEGT mentoring and social networking program is about trying to improve the experience of first year apprentices.

C10 To what extent did the mentoring and social networking activities feature in your decision to continue your apprenticeship?

1. Large extent
2. Certain extent
3. Not sure
4. Limited extent
5. Not at all

C11 Is there a particular area of improvement that you can suggest to MEGT to improve the mentoring and social networking activities? (OPEN for review/coding by ACER)

END

This research is carried out in compliance with the Privacy Act and the information you have provided will only be used for research purposes.

IF NECESSARY: As soon as the information processing period has finished, your name and contact details will be separated from your responses to the survey. For the period that your name and contact details remain with your survey responses, you will be able to contact us to request access to the information that you have provided. After this time, your contact details will not be stored with your responses, so you will not be able to be identified from your answers to this survey.

1. Continue

CLOSE

That's the end of the interview. We would like to thank you for passing on your thoughts to this research project. Thank you very much for your time and assistance.

Just in case you missed it, my name is (.....), calling on behalf of MEGT from the Social Research Centre in Melbourne.