



**Minister for Commerce  
Minister for Finance  
Minister for Industrial Relations  
Minister for Ageing  
Minister for Disability Services  
Leader of the Government In the Legislative Council**

**\*\* Embargo: Thursday 23 November 2006 \*\***

## **NSW Government supports school-based apprenticeships**

Minister for Industrial Relations, John Della Bosca, said the NSW Government would today formally intervene before the Industrial Relations Commission to support school-based apprenticeships.

The NSW Industrial Relations Commission has listed a Unions NSW application to make an award, covering students undertaking school-based apprenticeships.

"The award will ensure these students receive fair pay and the protections of an award," Mr Della Bosca said.

"Today's intervention is another demonstration of the lemma Government's commitment to supporting fair wages and conditions in NSW workplaces.

"We have legislated to protect young workers, injured workers, frontline public sector workers and millions of hardworking NSW families.

"Today NSW intervenes to support an award for students undertaking an apprenticeship.

"Unlike the Debnam Opposition, the lemma Government is standing up to John Howard and opposing the unfair Work Choices legislation.

"As it was designed to do, Work Choices is already reducing wages.

"The evidence has now been reported by both the Australian Bureau of Statistics and even Commonwealth Workplace Relations Minister Kevin Andrews' own department.

"Young people simply do not have the skills or experience to bargain and achieve pay and conditions that best suit their needs.

"It is vital that any new training scheme is supported by award-based arrangements that reflect the protections in our state industrial relations system by securing entitlements and fair working conditions for school-based apprentices.

"The lemma Government is committed to providing quality training and employment opportunities for young people and school-based apprenticeships will deliver excellent opportunities for both students and employers," Mr Della Bosca said.

.../2

- 2 -

"Awards provide vital protection and it's why the Howard-Debnam Work Choices laws are completely unfair to young people," Mr Della Bosca said.

"The *Young People and Work Survey* commissioned by the NSW Government graphically illustrates this fact – revealing that young workers have a limited understanding of their workplace rights, make them an easy target for exploitation," Mr Della Bosca said.

The findings are supported by a recent study undertaken by the Youth Action and Policy Association (YAPA) where:

- less than 20 per cent of young workers believed they were better off negotiating their own pay and conditions
- nearly 50 per cent thought that a workplace award would be better for them.

"The NSW Government agreed to implement school-based apprenticeships in five key trades at the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) meeting in February this year," Mr Della Bosca said.

"It's vitally important to ensure that young workers commencing an apprenticeship and their employers fully understand their workplace rights and responsibilities.

"NSW child employment laws introduced this month will go some way to ensure that young workers receive a pay and conditions safety net to at least the minimum level provided by NSW awards and legislation.

"Our young workers, including school-based apprentices, deserve a chance at a decent start to their working lives and to have their workplace rights and entitlements clearly set out.

"Unions NSW and employer organisations are working in partnership with the Lemna Government to ensure a positive outcome for this significant NSW initiative," the Minister said.

**Media contact: Andrew Plumley 9228 4777 or 0438 455 562**