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Senate Education, Employment & Workforce Relations
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RE: Inquiry into Industry Skills Councils

The Construction Industry Training Advisory Board NSW Limited (CITAB) currently operates with Department of Education and Training NSW, under a performance and funding agreement.

As a part of this agreement, we are required to “work collaboratively with ISCs” in order to represent NSW interests in the “development, review and enhancement of training packages”.

In terms of the Senate reference on 22 June 2010 to the Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee for inquiry and report we comment as follows:

- There is a unique need for the concept of ISCs or the like in that as bi or tri-partite bodies, they are able to provide a diverse range of advice and to achieve a common, acceptable position and outcome.
- CITAB supports the concept of National Advisory Bodies with strong stakeholder involvement.
- CITAB is a member of a strong State and Territory Network of ITABs directly associated with the construction industry. That Network has long established local structures and consultancy arrangements, which should be better recognised and utilised by the relevant national ISC.
- There are significant differences in the ways in which ISCs operate. For example, the Electrician ISC contracts the electrical industry State and Territory Network to research and manage projects. The Construction and Property ISC does not use to full capacity or access, the Construction State and Territory Network.

- The effectiveness of ISCs in providing an efficient flow of NTP product and roll out of projects is directly affected by the manner in which each ISC operates. The CPSISC has not had Network support for the Construction National Training Package CPC08 and there were problems with the CPC08 package. This could have been overcome by using the Network. However, the ISC did not provide funding to enable consultation validation processes and this has led to a number of qualifications being rejected since the package was released.
- Since the Federal Government removed tied funding to the State and Territory Network (\$100,000 p.a., per ITAB) there has been a lack of co-operation between ISCs and State and Territory ITABs. Mr Phillip Bullock, Chair of Skills Australia has referred to the consultation processes surrounding EE-Oz Standards as inclusive and best practice and could provide a template for Federal/State co-operation.
- The experience and detailed knowledge base for determining, validating, reviewing and implementing National Training Packages lies with the Network who converse regularly with workforce operations and can offer sound intelligence.
- It is difficult, if not impossible for a single ISC to implement packages in rural and regional areas and the Network is better placed to do this.
- The development of industry training policy and development of industry training packages should be achieved by proper and sound industry consultation processes, rather than to meet a need often perceived by misconception and often made urgent to meet an artificial requirement.
- For Building and Construction, the current scope of the ISC does not correctly encompass the needs of our constituents. Historically, the Building and Construction Industry covered Civil Construction, but currently Civil Construction has been moved into the Resources ISC. Many construction workers move across the commercial, residential and civil sectors performing identical tasks and this flexibility is essential for the industry to cope with the inevitable peaks and troughs of activity in each of the sectors. Also many of the specialist contractor companies, e.g. painters, plumbers, electricians, concreters, etc, can be engaged on work in all of the sectors concurrently.
- Conversely there is almost no link between the work in the property industry and that in the construction industry. At best the two industries have a client/provider relationship. There is a very strong need for the Civil Construction industry to be amalgamated into a Construction and Infrastructure ISC.
- The qualifications for Spatial, Building Design and Environmental Inspections have been moved out of construction package and into the property package despite strong objection from the Network. These qualifications in the professional or para-professional pathway to university, contrary to industry practice, no longer have their roots in educational VET pathways with the construction training package.

Recommendations:

- That a National ISC structure be maintained.
- That appropriate funding of State & Territory advisory arrangements be restored.
- That the system be industry driven, with intelligence and advice collected from widely representative industry participants who perform the work.
- That Construction be separated from the current Property and Construction ISC.
- That Construction cover competencies in the general construction, specialist infrastructure and plumbing related services and civil construction industries.
- That the structure of industry skills councils be tri-partite.
- That the consultation processes as used by EE-Oz be reviewed as a best practice example.

Yours sincerely,



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Chief Executive Officer