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### **AMCA SUBMISSION TO SENATE ENQUIRY ON INDUSTRY SKILLS COUNCILS**

AMCA is pleased to make this submission to the Senate Enquiry into Industry Skills Councils.

The Airconditioning and Mechanical Contractors' Association (AMCA) is the pre-eminent organisation of airconditioning and mechanical services companies who joined together to represent and promote the industry along with the well being of its members. The AMCA is the only truly national employer and industry association that is exclusively dedicated to the airconditioning and mechanical services industry. Every major airconditioning and mechanical services contracting companies in Australia is a member of the association.

AMCA acts as the industry's voice in dealing with government at all levels, other construction and service industry groups, and the unions.

Members of AMCA design, install and provide ongoing service of airconditioning and mechanical ventilation systems.

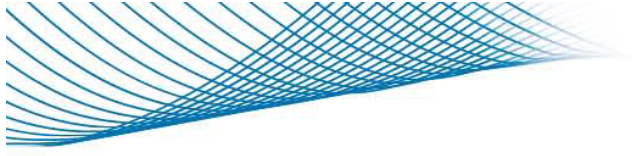
Our members have:

- Years of experience in the airconditioning and mechanical services industry.
- A proven record of achievement in the installation and servicing of mechanical services plant.
- Worked on the most complex construction projects in Australia.

AMCA members, supported by years of specialised experience and with substantial investments in fixed assets, tools and equipment, provide the most cost-effective source of mechanical services and systems. Working within an industry which is constantly influenced by changing technologies, AMCA members deliver the reliability that the work will be done properly, safely and economically in the



Air Conditioning & Mechanical  
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least possible amount of time. Fundamental to the AMCA member's job is knowing and adhering to the various building codes and regulations.

Since its beginning in 1961 the Air Conditioning and Mechanical Contractors' Association (AMCA) has existed to represent, promote and safeguard the interests of its members and the business sectors in which they are engaged by influencing the commercial environment in which they operate by promoting high competence standards, and by providing quality advice and guidance to support all aspects of their business.

AMCA is a federated body with full time staff in every state capital city serving the needs of members and promoting the industry. Several state offices operate a Registered Training Organisation. Through the RTO a range of generic courses are offered as well as industry specific technical specialist programs.

Throughout the country association members employ a large number of apprentices. The trades' occupations that dominate in our industry are:-

- Mechanical services plumbers
- Refrigeration mechanic
- Sheet metal worker
- Draftsman

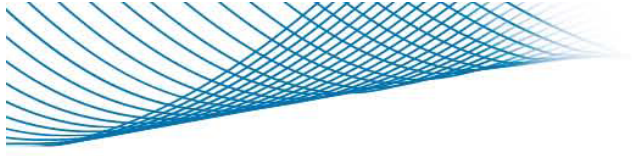
A spread of trades of this nature means that we have experience in dealing with several industry skills councils.

AMCA's basic proposition is there should be one industry skills council to service the airconditioning and mechanical services industry. The industry is important enough in our opinion to warrant one. Consider these facts. In calendar year 2009 AMCA members alone were responsible for: -

- \$1.4 billion of new plant installation
- 8000 employees
- \$500 million of equipment service and maintenance.

The very broad grouping of industry sectors into the current 10 ISC structure often means that important industry sectors can be overpowered by other sectors.

These current groupings have been in place for several years. Sufficient time has elapsed for all parties to have gained an understanding of their effectiveness. Therefore AMCA proposes there should be a Productivity Commission review of their effectiveness and include an examination of the value for money proposition. Especially since the onset of the global financial crisis the government has used the ISC network as a vehicle to release significant tax payer dollars to fund training programs.



All ISC's are tripartite structured organisations. It follows therefore that all policy positions which are advocated will be compromised positions. While on occasions ISC's claim to be the voice of industry on particular issues, we doubt this is true on all occasions, and know that such stated positions are certainly not employer ones.

Industry and employer associations such as AMCA speak on behalf of its members. In this way we are reflecting the views, needs and aspirations of employers of apprentices and trades people.

In the course of the past 30 years training advisory bodies have been in place. These bodies existed at state and national level. They were in the case of trade committees, funded by the state government and in the national network by the commonwealth government.

In this period of time reviews have been conducted almost on a 5 year basis. There seems to be two common themes emerging from each review. First, the funding made available for the operation of the advisory body was reduced and/or more 'strings' attached to it. So much so that these advisory bodies have become engaged in a range of commercial activities in order to survive. The second theme is that there has been a continual process of consolidation. The impact of this trend has been for the small and specialist trade areas to have their voice and interests lost amongst the numerically large or loudest group in the conglomerate.

Yours truly

David Eynon  
**National Director**