

July 14, 2010

Committee Secretary
Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Dear Secretary.

In reply to your invitation to comment on the Senate Inquiry into Industry Skills Councils (Ag-food skills council) I would like to make the following points and observations as an industry skills educator involved and part of industry steering committee's for many years.

- **There has been a total lack of transparency when dealing with the skills council (AG-Food)**
 1. There been a lack of consultation with industry
 2. The skills council does not listen to industry and implement its recommendations
 3. Transcript of meetings (phone hook ups) are not forwarded on to members in a timely manner
 4. Transcripts do not match the content of the meetings (altered or changed) when challenged the original recorded meetings are unavailable IE. That's what you said.
 5. Project managers/writers use what is already formatted and are reluctant to amend what industry requires in its training packages. The usual debate is that the writer is bound by the directives of the Ag-food skills council.

- **Funding is an issue**
 6. Industry requested face to face meetings. Ag-food skills council. Response, there is no funding for this and we can only do phone hooks ups. Industry has always financed for its own delegates to attend such meetings in the past.
 7. Industry has been informed by AG-food skills that it must meet the deadlines for submissions on training packages or they could lose the funding. Referred to points 3. 4.
 8. Managers/writers are employed (contracted) at considerable cost to

Government by the Ag-food skills council. Writers then approach /delegate industry IE Association members and TAFE's to supply resources and materials for inclusion into training packages. This comes with a deadline and there would appear to be no financial reimbursement offered to the original author or organisation or credit given. IE If the writer can't get it for free it doesn't go into the training package as this would come out of their budget. Refer to points 5 and 7

Summary

The Ag-food skills council has been very good at meeting the protocols of delivery to government. It must be said that it puts on a spin when reporting to Ministerial level which suggest that all is good with industry. The Ag-food skill council in this instance is merely reporting to justify its own existence and pandering to the powers above. The Ag-food skills council should really be working with industry in a fair, proper and honest manner, working together with industry and its needs in training.

Yours faithfully