

Hi there

Here are 4 key points about the role of ISCs in supporting effective skilling in the regions:

- ISCs need to be supported to be visible in regional areas. They could make better use of mechanisms such as local-government led Skills Forums (there are several along the north coast – the strongest are in Port Macquarie, Coffs Harbour and Grafton) or Regional Development Australia Committees (who are often very focused on skilling as a regional development priority).
- ISCs need to be supported to be accessible to small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Some are finding ways to do this, but the shape and nature of the enterprises in their industries has a big impact on communication. Most SMEs don't have a dedicated Human Resources Manager to spend time making contact with the ISC to get their views heard. Some kind of support for ISC engagement with enterprise clusters and skill ecosystems would help.
- If ISCs are to continue having a decision-making role in funding training such as the Enterprise-Based Productivity Places, they must develop mechanisms so SMEs can access places in the same way that large businesses can. In the last allocation of this funding very few SMEs in our region knew about or were successful in attracting this funding. Most places were allocated by ISCs to large companies with metropolitan head offices and to regions with mines (run by large companies).
- Some Industry Skills Councils do not take feedback or ideas passed on through RTOs, as RTOs are not a direct part of industry. This is not helpful if an employer wishes to pass on feedback through one of their RTOs, especially as owners of SMEs don't have time to follow up the ISC themselves, and often see their direct relationship with the training system as being through one or more RTOs. At the very least, the ISC should be positively disposed to the information from the RTO as a 'contact' that they will follow up.

Kind regards
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