06 August 2010

RACING
QUEENSLAND

Dr Shona Batge
Committee Secretary
Senate Education
Employment and Workplace Relations Committee
PO Box 6100 Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

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Dear Dr Batge

Racing Queensland Limited (RQL) is a private company limited by guarantee and holds a control body license for the conduct of the thoroughbred, harness and greyhound racing. RQL is the peak industry body for racing in Queensland and as such represents all industry skills, workforce development and training issues for racing in Queensland on the Racing Industry Standing Committee of Agrifood Skills Australia. RQL also has a direct engagement agreement with the Queensland Government Department of Education and Training for the purposes of industry engagement for the racing industry. RQL is also a registered training organisation and is the sole provider of training to the industry including traineeships and apprenticeships under User Choice and other agreements.

Prior to the commencement of Agrifood Skills Australia and all industry skills councils or ISCs, racing industry training in Australia was coordinated and supported by a peak body known as Race Training Australia (RTA) which represented all the Principal Racing Authorities, major stakeholders in workforce development and training development and delivery. RTA reported to the Australian Racing Board. However there was no capacity for RTA to engage government at any level. RTA agreed to fold its workings into the Racing Industry Standing Committee at the request of Agrifood Skills Australia on the commencement of the ISC model.

The experience of the Racing Industry Standing Committee as supported by Agrifoods, in providing current industry intelligence, advising on emerging issues and ensuring the inclusion of key issues in advice has been a key factor in its role to date. The most critical factor however has been the success of Agrifood Skills Australia in establishing itself and operating as the driver of critical issues, advice to Government and implementation of solutions by coordinating this advice through the committees and the annual environmental scan. It has an excellent record of technical and administrative success in the review of training packages as shown by the very successful and extensive changes to the racing industry training package RGR08.

Despite the vast range of challenges encompassed by the 5 major industry groups within Agrifoods, ASA support for the work of the standing committees and willingness to take up issues and engage governments at all levels across Australia has been impressive.

There is an absolute and critical requirement for the role performed by ISCs and this role needs to be closely aligned to industry through hard work and achievement on industry's behalf. It is clear that close cooperation and continuous engagement is the only workable approach to ensure that industry needs are communicated thoroughly, professionally, timely and with an appropriately formed consensus viewpoint directly to the government.

Other models in training and workforce development where projects and services are continually reorganised and redeveloped through periodic tender processes have in our view been a failure. The tender process approach for contracting Australian Apprenticeship Centres is one of the worst examples and has caused considerable waste, confusion and loss of networks, trained staff and carefully developed processes that actually work.

We commend Agrifood Skills Australia for its support and expertise at all levels in ensuring that racing industry needs are acknowledged and acted upon. No other organisation can provide the continuous support and activity required. This can only occur through a considerable period of prolonged stability, continuous effort and application of expertise that is fully informed by closely working with industry.

Yours faithfully

R.G. BENTLEY
Chairman