



Manufacturing Skills Australia

Level 3  
104 Mount Street  
North Sydney  
NSW 2060

PO Box 289  
North Sydney  
NSW 2059

T 02 9955 5500  
F 02 9955 8044

Email [info@mskills.com.au](mailto:info@mskills.com.au)  
[www.mskills.com.au](http://www.mskills.com.au)

Mr Tim Watling  
Secretary  
Senate Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament house  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Watling

**Re : Skills Australia Amendment (Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency) Bill 2012**

Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment on this important amendment to the Skills Australia Act 2008.

Manufacturing Skills Australia (MSA) is the national body responsible for ensuring that manufacturing enterprises have the workforce skills they need to be globally competitive now and into the future. We work with enterprises, employer and industry associations, trade unions and industry advisory bodies to identify what skills are needed and how these can most effectively be implemented in industry.

We are a national Industry Skills Council, owned by industry and managed by a board from across industry, funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

MSA supports the thrust of the Bill and its intention to provide a stronger voice to industry within the education and training sphere. The strengthened voice of industry, particularly in national policy and funding of skills and workforce development is welcomed.

The gradual shift over the last few years in both nomenclature and public policy from a 'training' perspective to one of 'workforce development' has already seen significant gains being reported by enterprises in Australia. The proposed role for the new Agency, with its expanded membership, should greatly assist in dealing with the critical workforce and skills needs in those parts of our economy where growth is booming as well as those where there is a decline in either demand or productivity.

MSA is particularly concerned with some sectors in manufacturing industry where a combination of the relatively high Australian dollar and global competition is providing an increasing challenge to the viability of firms. Like others, MSA believes that the future success of many manufacturing firms will lie in the provision of higher value adding. This in turn requires higher skills levels. Recent initiatives such as the National Workforce Development Fund will provide opportunities for firms to improve their productivity through sound workforce planning and development, with a skills development focus.

One great value of these funding initiatives is that they can better deal with firms that operate across borders and that parochial differences are not an impediment to a strategic approach to workforce and skills development.

A further value is that industry bodies such as Industry Skills Councils can provide an impartial link between federal government funds, participating organisations/enterprises, and training providers.

I would be pleased to provide further information on these brief comments should you wish.

Yours sincerely

Bob Paton  
Chief Executive Officer  
11<sup>th</sup> April 2012

MSA file: Senate EEW Committee Skills Aust Ammendment 11Apr2012.docx