

NSW DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

SUBMISSION TO THE SENATE EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO INDUSTRY SKILLS COUNCILS

In NSW, Industry Training Advisory Bodies are the primary source of industry advice and contact on the training and skill needs of industry. Funding is provided to these bodies for independent and impartial advice and assistance on core services under *the New South Wales Industry Training Advisory Arrangements 2010 – 2013 Performance and Funding Agreement*.

The advice and intelligence from these organisations assists the NSW Department of Education and Training to identify local, rural and regional training priorities, implement training programs and reforms, design industry related strategies and to partner on industry skill initiatives. This work makes a valuable contribution to workforce development meeting NSW Government training priorities and commitments.

The current NSW industry training advisory arrangements reflect linkages and industry groupings broadly aligned to the National Industry Skills Councils. They are also indicative of a mutual convergence of engagement and collaboration between the State Industry Training Advisory Bodies and some of the Skills Councils.

It is critical to the growth and effectiveness of the NSW economy that National Industry Skills Councils collaborate with NSW Industry Training Advisory Bodies. This is particularly important to ensure that national training products and advice adequately reflect state and regional level needs and priorities.

There are 11 NSW Industry Training Advisory Bodies that are funded under the 2010 - 2013 Performance and Funding Agreement. Of these, six are National Industry Skills Councils. Those currently contracted are:

- Agri-Food Industry Skills Council (covering the food and primary industries);
- ForestWorks Ltd (forest and forest product and furnishing industries);
- Manufacturing Skills Australia (manufacturing and engineering, light manufacturing, textiles, clothing, footwear and process manufacturing industries);
- Service Industries Skills Council, known as Service Skills Australia (sport and recreation, tourism & hospitality, wholesale, retail and personal services industries);
- SkillsDMC (resources and infrastructure industry); and
- Transport and Logistics Industry Skills Council (transport and distribution and automotive industries).

The Industry Training Advisory Bodies role under the Agreement is to provide:

- industry skill needs and priorities for funded training under the NSW Training Market;
- ways to promote training to industry and implementation of brokerage (information and referral) services to assist in the take-up of funded training for the NSW Productivity Places Program;

- apprenticeship and traineeship arrangements in NSW including school based arrangements and the establishment of vocational training orders;
- the development, review and implementation of training packages;
- accreditation and registration processes for registered training organisations in NSW; and
- vocational education and training in schools.

Within the last year advice and support has included:

- finalising brokerage arrangement guidelines for the NSW Productivity Places Program as well as promotion, skills priorities and review;
- reviewing and promoting initiatives and projects under the NSW Green Skills Strategy and Energy Efficiency Training for Trades and Professionals Program;
- facilitating industry negotiations impacting on the preparation of vocational training orders which establish or review apprenticeship and traineeship pathways (including competency based progression, shorter term pathways and their suitability as school-based arrangements);
- managing and contributing to initiatives undertaken through the NSW Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Recognition of Prior Learning Program including Skills Express Industry Partnership projects and promotions projects; and
- reviewing applications submitted for the NSW Training Awards in the small training provider and training initiative categories.

As the primary source of information and advice on training packages for training providers in the state, Industry Skills Councils continue to play a key role in the review, continuous improvement and implementation of National Training Packages. They facilitate professional development workshops for training providers on the roll-out of revised training packages and manage projects to develop training resources to support training package implementation or other skill development initiatives.

Industry Training Advisory Bodies have sought to broaden their breadth and depth of consultation in the development of National Training Package qualifications with significant canvassing of views from registered training organisations, large employers and small business.

They are also engaging earlier with registered training organisations regarding training package development and improvements (such as Transport and Logistics) through consultation with Industry Reference Groups, Technical Advisory Committees, consultation forums and informal meetings. They have provided advice on the development of learning and assessment strategies and tools as well.

The provision of information contained in environmental scans and projections for skills development has assisted in managing training delivery across geographic regions and industry sectors.

Both Industry Training Advisory Bodies and registered training organisations face challenges in developing appropriate skill development solutions for increased productivity and new technologies.

The recent changes to training package development rules that increase flexibility in packaging units of competence across training packages will prove to be of significant benefit. While implementation of this, and the inclusion of sustainability units in all qualifications has only recently commenced, this increased flexibility will result in opportunities for more customisation within the national qualifications framework.

The continuous improvement approach to the review and maintenance of training packages has significantly improved the currency and relevance of qualifications. However as there is currently significant qualification development across all Industry Training Advisory Bodies it will be important to ensure that qualification availability is within an appropriate tolerance against identified timeframes, and that the continuous review process is streamlined to reduce any administrative complexity.

Ongoing services provided to the NSW Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board include technical expertise to support compliance audits of registered training organisations, development of the pink slip initiative for training providers to determine their capacity to deliver training and assessment, as well as the accreditation and review of courses by TAFE NSW and private providers.

Furthermore, they also partner in skill strategies for a variety of industry sectors including rural, dairy, native forests and process manufacturing. These strategies involve developing resources and/or training programs to address identified industry skill needs.

Industry Advisory Training Bodies are required to have governance arrangements that include a Board of directors and/or NSW committees to ensure appropriate NSW bi-partite representation and coverage of the industry. They must also have arrangements in place to share information and provide complementary services with Industry Skills Councils and have capacity to provide independent and impartial industry advice on the core services that incorporates views of all aspects of the NSW industry, including small businesses and regions.