



Senate Submission

Jobs and Skills Australia Bill [Provisions] 2022

AUGUST 2022





About Australian Industry Group

The Australian Industry Group (Ai Group®) is a peak national employer organisation representing traditional, innovative and emerging industry sectors. We have been acting on behalf of businesses across Australia for nearly 150 years.

Together with partner organisations we represent the interests of more than 60,000 businesses employing more than 1 million staff. Our members are small and large businesses in sectors including manufacturing, construction, engineering, transport & logistics, labour hire, mining services, the defence industry, civil airlines and ICT.

Our vision is for thriving industries and a prosperous community. We offer our membership high quality services, strong advocacy and an effective voice at all levels of government underpinned by our respected position of policy leadership and political non-partisanship.

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Ai Group regards the Jobs and Skills Australia Bill [Provisions] 2022 as a significant step forward in addressing the urgent need for greater investment in, and improved approaches to skills development, education and training - central to lifting Australia's productivity growth. The body should be established without delay.

During Australia's transition to a successful and fully-functioning digital and clean economy, Jobs and Skills Australia must identify for development the skills needed to continue to drive the digital transformation of the economy, and to transition to and operate within a net zero emissions environment.

The provisions of the Jobs and Skills Australia Bill [Provisions] 2022 identify the overarching role of Jobs and Skills Australia as:

- a) to provide advice to the Minister and to the Secretary on Australia's current and emerging labour market (including workforce needs and priorities) and Australia's current, emerging and future skills and training needs and priorities (including in relation to apprenticeships); and
- b) to provide reports on the labour market and workforce skills and training needs and priorities to assist with government policy development and program delivery.

Ai Group agrees these are the critical functions of an independent and objective body to provide advice on skills and training needs. It will provide national influence by connecting industry with skills through its key role of research and data analysis. The creation of Jobs and Skills Australia is a major step in refocussing the national skills system to meet Australia's current and future needs. Within this we see migration as a necessary component of Australia's labour market in meeting these needs.

The investment in skills through Jobs and Skills Australia must ensure that both the skilling and reskilling needs of all Australians are met. This includes ongoing analysis and integration of skills needed for current and future employment of under-represented groups.

Underpinning this, our VET system, as the foundation of skills development, should be seen as integral to a broader tertiary education system. Our apprenticeship system is a fundamental component of skilling and should be a focus into the future.

The involvement of industry (employers and unions) is recognised in the Bill and is indeed vital at all levels of the skills system, as is the connection to State and Territory governments.

Australia's national labour market skills and capacity will drive the growth of our national wealth, productivity and future. Ai Group looks forward to a strong involvement with Jobs and Skills Australia.

