

## ***AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY***

Nationally, the automotive industry employs 372,000 individuals and supports 100,000 enterprises. The industry's annual contribution to the national economy is at least \$1.6 billion. Queensland is the third largest state in terms of employment and business activity for the automotive industry.

The industry is a major contributor to world-wide environmental change which has both economic and environmental significance. The industry is also a world leader in investing in alternative energy and technologies and has invested \$5.8 billion in research and development over the last 10 years.

The automotive industry needs to attract and retain high quality workers to service and repair the 16.1 million vehicles currently on the roads in Australia. To achieve this, the industry is demanding customisation and personalisation of training services to meet the needs of different learner groups, to use new technologies, and to assist learning in the workplace.

## ***AUTOMOTIVE SKILLS QUEENSLAND***

Automotive Skills Queensland (ASQ) is the peak industry skills council for the Queensland automotive industry. It represents over 14,800 businesses and provides support and advocacy in the areas of workforce planning, workforce diversity and workforce development for the automotive industry.

## ***ASQ RESPONSE TO INQUIRY INTO TAFE SYSTEM***

### ***Question 1: The development of skills in the Australian economy***

The automotive industry in Queensland recognises the long-standing and valuable contribution of TAFE in the training of automotive personnel. According to NCVER data, in 2011 approximately 40,000 people across Australia were engaged in training in the automotive industry at TAFE.

There is increasing concern amongst employers about the skills shortages being experienced across a number of occupations which rely on high quality automotive training. Employers recognise that the future of the industry is dependent on attracting good candidates, developing them into skilled technicians, and retaining them in the industry.

### ***Question 2: The development of opportunities for Australians to improve themselves and increase their life and employment prospects***

Technology advances in vehicles require current and future technicians to have higher skills levels. Many employers complain about low levels of literacy and numeracy amongst young people entering the automotive industry. We recommend early diagnostic testing for course applicants, with particular emphasis on literacy and numeracy, to enable individual training/learning plans to be developed. TAFE institutions with existing expertise in this area could be resourced to showcase and share capability to the rest of the training sector.

We would like to see the redefining and promoting of career pathways for older people in the automotive industry. For example, experienced automotive workers who may be forced to leave the industry because of physical incapacity (injury or age) could transition to a viable career in teaching or training if such opportunities were recognised and promoted.

**Question 3:** *The delivery of services and programs to support regions, communities and disadvantaged individuals to access training and skills and through them a pathway to employment*

There is a danger of regional areas suffering greater skills shortages and more unemployment if they do not have access to high quality training facilities.

There is much research that indicates TAFE is a large contributor to the training of people in under-represented groups (people with disabilities, people from culturally or linguistically diverse groups, and Indigenous people). It needs to be recognised that involving such people in training and employment opportunities also improves their prospects of better social inclusion.

**Question 4:** *The operation of a competitive training market*

Queensland is the most regionalised state in Australia and the competitive training market is limited in many regions by geographic and economic constraints. Queenslanders in regional and rural areas often have little choice when it comes to accessing training. For “niche” or specialised subjects, the public provider is usually the only one.

The importance of TAFE to our regional and rural communities, especially when there is an absence of private training providers, cannot be over-estimated. It is regarded as being for the “public good”, not necessarily for a profit.