



Public hearing in Canberra 10 August 2006

Education Department to front Committee

Government assisted training packages, skill shortages and industry leadership are likely to be among the issues discussed at a public hearing in Canberra tomorrow (Thursday 10 August). At the hearing, the **Department of Education, Science and Training** will appear before the House of Representatives Employment Committee as part of the inquiry into employment in the automotive component manufacturing industry.

The training and vocational education system is an integral part of developing and strengthening current and future workforce skills needs. Some evidence to the inquiry has suggested that the industry needs to be more proactive in reform of the national industry training arrangements that it sees as necessary to improve training and productivity for all parts of the automotive industry.

Recent announcements of retrenchments in the automotive manufacturing industry are accompanied elsewhere by evidence of skills shortages in manufacturing. The Committee is examining the effectiveness of labour adjustment measures in the automotive industry and holistic mechanisms to ensure there are appropriately skilled workers to adapt to new technologies and possible diversification.

The Committee Chair Phillip Barresi said the automotive components manufacturing industry forms an important part of the Australian economy. "The industry has not only faced the impact of a series of retrenchments by the major vehicle manufacturers, but is also experiencing the same skills shortages as the wider manufacturing sector.

"In addition the industry is being challenged by international competition and the rapid advances in technology," Mr Barresi said. "It is vital that a plan is developed for the industry to meet the challenges of maintaining a skilled labour force and cost competitive manufacturing to ensure its own sustainability."

Submissions have been received to the inquiry from businesses, unions, industry peak bodies, academics and government departments. The Committee has also travelled to Melbourne and Adelaide to meet with component manufacturers and inspect site premises and new developments in smart production design.

The Committee expects to table its report by the end of the year.

Time: 11.00am
Venue: Committee Room 2R1, Parliament House, Canberra
Witness: Department of Education, Science and Training

Further details on the inquiry, including the terms of reference, membership of the Committee and submissions are available at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/ewrwp/> or by contacting the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4162 or emailing ewrwp.reps@aph.gov.au

For media comment, please contact the Committee Chair, Phil Barresi, at his electorate office (03) 9873 8351 or Parliament House, Canberra (02) 6277 4350.
For background information, please contact the Committee Secretary, on (02) 6277 4162