

## Authors

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## Introduction

The purpose of any educational institution is to impart skills and knowledge to the attendees and provide society with a viable and relevant group of people to fulfil the needs of that society.

The Technical and further Education Sector in Australia, has provided the Training and skills necessary for a variety of Industries. In Victoria, the competencies required in these Trades and the subsequent development of a pertinent training package was developed by a co-operative board system known as Industry Training boards.

Industry Training Boards involved all stakeholders; from the manufacturers off products to the people who made the products. Hence the immediate market requirements were met.

In Victoria the current Liberal government defunded these Boards: a short sighted and precipitous action: precipitous, because the market place for many goods is constantly changing and evolving. New skills are required with new materials and new systems of work as new technologies are introduced.

New skills are required in subsidiary academic disciplines to allow small enterprises (including but not limited to Trades) function better as businesses. The best fit for the evolving market place and associated competencies are the TAFE institutes. They have the expertise in the Trades they teach but also have practical and significant experience in the market places where their competencies are required.

Rather than cancelling industry training Boards we should be assisting them with more funds to do more analysis of changing markets to adjust the competencies in line with those changes.

Markets change as circumstances change. Industries decline because of the lack of suitable understanding of why that change is occurring.

An example of such a market is the personal vehicle market. (Cars). People still need to get from A to B, but the factor that has changed and will change this market further is the fuel which the vehicles use to get from A to B.

Another market where much production has gone off shore is the Market in Australia for Beer. Half of the beer drunk in Australia is imported.

Why? Because imported beers give Australians a chance to taste more exotic and 'boutique' beers. Many of the beers produced in Australia are the standard beers of yester-year. There has been a movement away from these traditional tastes to the new Boutique ones.

Can Australia produce these tastes? The simple answer is yes, and we are with the proliferation of small boutique breweries. But Australians have failed to see that the market was changing and rather than innovate and learn new skills in making new beers (which are simply learned) we have sold most of our breweries to overseas companies. With the sale we have a reduction in jobs and hence the trades needed to produce and maintain the equipment and systems of breweries.

The same is the case with the motor vehicle industry. If we fail to innovate and change propulsion types through innovation and a new skill set we will lose the traditional car making skills though the decline of the industry.

## **Discussion on Competitive Training Markets.**

Operating a competitive training system means that a collaborative and cooperative training system is foregone. Many nations enjoy the benefits of a holistic education and training system based on collaboration and cooperation and their outcomes are the envy of the world. Similarly cooperation and collaboration are then reflet in such nation's industrial base.

The origin of competitive training systems resides in the application of a 'market driven' idealology to education and/or the inability of managers and accountants to understand the importance of collaboration and cooperation in the nurturing of a nationally integrated education system.

A 'quick fix' solution to meeting the perceived skill shortages in a rapidly changing world is to allow the 'market' to operate in an unregulated manner, 'dog eat dog', and assumes skill shortages will be met resulting in significant disruption to a host of contingent factors not considered by market forces. E.g. which 'private providers' are to offer ongoing education and provide training for the disadvantaged in the community when there is no monitory incentive for them to do so and more importantly without adequate regulation and accreditation of the subject matter in courses who is to ensure private providers are not going to rort the system.

The recent Victorian experience in 2011 and 2012 demonstrates that private providers in the training and education sector cannot be trusted and have to be regulated and audited to ensure students are the recipients of declared outcomes of subjects in the supposed registered accredited courses.

As an example of the above, one of the authors of this submission lectures in the higher education sector where the measure of whether an engineering course is adequate depends on a set of Engineers Australia (EA) competencies and an EA five year accreditation onsite auditing of the respective course material. It is clear to all the expected competencies are generalities and specific learnings and outcomes rely totally on an accreditation panel that are often ill-equipped to assess sub disciplines for which they have no or little expertise. Also if the panel members are of the appropriate discipline it is highly unlikely for them to offer consistent 'Traditional Evidence and Process Bases Models' across all

the Australian universities and so their efforts are vulnerable to cost cutting Deans (under extreme financial competitive pressures) to drag the course below, what the academics and industry practitioners regard as the minimum professional threshold of knowledge and capability necessary for a graduate.

So what is recommended for the TAFE and for that matter the Higher Education sectors is to strengthen, as a minimum, the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF).

There are two proposed recommendations for *'the operation of competitive training markets'*;

### **Recommendation 1: To strengthen the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF)**

#### ***History :***

The Australian Quality Training Framework(AQTF) changes in 2007 to reduce regulatory burdens and to streamline and standardise audit processes for national consistency by shifting away from the 'traditional evidence and process based model' to an 'outcome based models' has miserably failed in Victoria where the model has been abused by many private providers. This failure was able to occur through inadequate definition of courses during the registration phase hence a more descriptive definition of courses is needed for accreditation, audit and to assist students in their course selection.

#### ***Desired Outcome:***

To strengthen AQTF 'outcomes based models' requirements for accredited courses for Victoria and later nationally with not only a list of competencies but a detailed curriculum and a stated methodology of assessment for the intended learning outcomes.

#### ***Desired Strategy:***

1. Require the Registering/Course Accrediting Body (R/CAB) in Victoria (Nationally) to review all courses on offer by TAFE and private providers to ensure that all such courses are not only defined by a list of competencies but must contain a detailed curriculum and a methodology for assessments that will underpin the Registered Training Organisations (RTO) declared intended learning outcomes.
2. For R/CAB to establish a standardized format for TAFEs and private providers to complete.
3. For R/CAB to promote the strengthening of the competency 'outcomes based models' at the national level.

### **Recommendation 2: To remove Training and Education from the Competitive Training Market**

The removal of the national education framework from the competitive market environment and the replication of a holistic education system similar to others in the world would be by far the most important and durable outcome from this Senate Enquiry: a fundamental change.

The adoption of recommendation 1 above together with the development of a complimentary mix of competent 'private providers' and a modernised TAFE sector could equip the Australian workforce with

the wider range of evolving skills needed for the 'digital' revolution and survival in the twenty first century .

**Recommendation 3: To strengthen the Analysis of Market places where traditional and emerging skills sets are required.**

***Desired Outcome:***

A dedicated Ministry in government which delivers quality analysis of Markets for Goods and Services and identifies changing circumstances which require new and existing skill sets to be changed, updated and/or modified. Re establishment of Industry Training boards with new focus on the macro and micro inputs to an Industry: all in a non-competitive and collaborative training scenario.

***Desired Strategy:***

To integrate training in a more holistic way with existing and emerging markets and industries.

To study market places and industries in order to more closely align competencies required for new and existing/changing industries

To provide the necessary support and expertise for Industry in analysis of trends and innovation.