

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry Portfolio
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2014-15
Thursday, 23 October 2014

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY

TOPIC: VET Advisory Board

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, 23 October 2014, page 102)

QUESTION No.: SI-102

1. In relation to the announcement on 15 August 2014 from the Minister regarding the appointment of a five-member Vocational Education and Training (VET) Advisory Board:
 - a) What was the process of selecting the Chair and Board Members for the VET Advisory Board?
 - b) Who compiled the list of proposed nominees? Was there an invitation to apply process at all? If not, why?
 - c) Why are there no union, community or public RTO representatives on the VET Advisory Board?
 - d) What experience do the Board members and Chair have in the VET sector?
 - e) Did the Prime Minister's office or the Treasurer's office, or any other Minister, provide any advice to the Industry Minister's office or the Department regarding the Board appointments?
2. In answer to a Question on Notice (Q275) to the Minister in the House of Representatives the Minister has replied to the Member for Cunningham that: "The Board was established following extensive feedback from industry and VET stakeholders undertaken as part of the VET reform consultation process. These consultations included more than 5000 engagements with stakeholders, including businesses, training providers and students."
 - a) How many stakeholders in this process proposed the establishment of such a Board?
 - b) Did any of those consulted propose the abolishing of AWPA or Industry Skills Councils? How many?
 - c) Were consultations on the formation of the Board and its appointments undertaken with any other stakeholders?

ANSWER

1. (a-e). Minister Macfarlane established the VET Advisory Board as a small and responsive body to ensure that industry has a stronger voice in the VET system during early stages of the VET reform process. The Chair and Board Members were selected based on their capacity to provide advice to Minister Macfarlane on issues relating to skills and training, spanning a range of VET and industry sectors.

Each member of the Board brings experience from across industry and the VET sector, from training package development to using new technologies to better link students to employment. The Board is made up of:

- **John Hart (Chair)** - Chief Executive of Restaurant and Catering Australia and a member of the Prime Minister's Business Advisory Council;
- **Patrick McKendry (Deputy Chair)** - CEO Careers Australia Group and former Chairman of the National Quality Council and TVET Australia;
- **Tara Diamond** - Executive Director, Industry Services at the Australian Mines & Metals Association;
- **Dominique Fisher** - Executive Chairman and Managing Director of CareerLounge; and

- **Jodie Hughson** - Manager for Quality, Learning and Workplace Development for Anglicare, Southern Queensland.

2a. The establishment of the Board was a response to the VET reform consultation process, where it became apparent that the VET system was lacking adequate industry representation in policy development, and greater industry representation was required to ensure skills policies were responsive to industry needs. No specific consultation on the formation of the Board and its appointments was undertaken by the Department with other stakeholders.

Through the VET reform consultation process stakeholders also raised the complexity of the governance arrangements, and the duplicative roles and responsibilities of bodies involved in the development of VET policy. To streamline advisory processes, the functions of the Australian Workplace Productivity Agency were brought into the Department of Industry.

2b. A range of views were also put forward on the role and organisation of Industry Skills Councils, with some stakeholders proposing that the Government should undertake a major review of the structure and composition of Industry Skills Councils (ISCs) and the training package development process.

2c. Given the nature of the consultation processes used, stakeholder feedback was generally recorded in a summarised form and a count of the number of stakeholders who supported a particular view is not available. Summaries from the VET reform stakeholder engagement workshops are available on the Department's VET Reform website at www.vetreform.industry.gov.au.