EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

**SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
2004-2005 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING**

Outcome: 2
Output Group: 2.1 – Funding for Vocational Education and Training

DEST Question No. E068_05

Senator Crossin provided in writing

Question:

What long term plans does the Department have for:

a. reviewing the skill needs of Australia and
b. actually providing funds and programs to meet these needs, in particular in provision of more long term higher skill programs instead of quick traineeships which have become predominant?

Answer:

Skill needs

The Australian Government has been actively working in partnership with industry to address current and future skill needs since 1999. In that year the Department implemented the National Industry Skills Initiative (NISI) program. This effort is continuing under the National Skills Shortages Strategy (NSSS) announced in April 2004.

One of the major elements of the NSSS is the establishment of a taskforce to better inform labour market and supply projections for occupations requiring vocational education and training. Access to industry specific, forward looking labour market and skills data will enhance the effectiveness of industry planning and the implementation of strategies to address skills shortages. Other key elements of the NSSS include:

· skills shortages projects – innovative, practical projects to address skills shortages;
· regional skills projects;
· assisting the transition of young people to further education, training and work.

National Council for Vocational Education Research reports that, as at December 2003, more than 343,000 people were undertaking New Apprenticeships at the trade level or above (Australian Qualification Framework Certificate III and above) compared to about 63,000 people undertaking Certificate I or II training. This reflects an increase of 276% in Certificate III or higher courses over the period 1996 to 2003 compared to a growth of 172% in Certificate I or II courses over the same period.