

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT & WORKPLACE RELATIONS
SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE – QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
2008-09 SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome 4

DEEWR Question No. EW 808_09

Senator Mason provided in writing.

Question

Skills Australia Board

- (i) Could the work of Skills Australia be conducted through a stronger National Industry Skills Committee?
- (ii) How many times has the Skills Australia board met?
- (iii) What was discussed?
- (iv) What has the Skills Australia board produced since April?
- (v) What is Skills Australia currently working on?

Answer

Part (i) *Could the work of Skills Australia be conducted through a stronger National Industry Skills Committee?*

The work of Skills Australia is different to the work of the National Industry Skills Committee.

Skills Australia was established by the Australian Government under the Skills Australia Act on 20 March 2008. NISC was established by the previous government under the Commonwealth-State Agreement for Skilling Australia's Workforce.

Skills Australia is a statutory body comprised of seven experts with experience in academia; the provision of education or training; economics and industry and provides advice directly to the Minister for Education, Employment and Workplace Relations on Australia's current, emerging and future workforce development needs.

NISC is a representative organisation made up of nine members from a cross-section of employers from a range of industries and provides a business and industry perspective on the training system and on ways that industry can work with Government to improve outcomes for disadvantaged clients. NISC reports to the Ministerial Council for Vocational and Technical Education (MCVTE).

Part (ii) *How many times has the Skills Australia board met?*

- Seven times

Part (iii) *What was discussed?*

Skills Australia discussions provide an input for advice to government.

Broadly, discussions at the Skills Australia meetings have included:

- Productivity Places Program, including advice on 50,000 health workforce training places and the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme (NEIS)
- Governance and architecture of the national training system
- Research seminar with the Academy of Social Sciences
- Skills for the green economy
- Workforce development and planning

Part (iv) *What has the Skills Australia board produced since April?*

Since its members were appointed in late April 2008 Skills Australia has:

- Undertaken activities to establish Skills Australia, including:
 - setting up a Secretariat to support the body and progress the workplan
 - building a public profile through the establishment of a website, corporate branding and through the Chair's presentations at a wide range of public speaking opportunities at key stakeholder organisations' conferences
 - forging key stakeholder relationships through a comprehensive schedule of stakeholder meetings and activities.
- Provided the Minister with advice in June, for the 4 July COAG Health agenda working group on the allocation of an initial 50,000 additional health focused training places offered through the Productivity Places Program.
- Provided preliminary advice to the Minister on the allocation of the additional training places offered through the Productivity Places Program.
- Put a submission to the Senate Inquiry on the Effects of Climate Change on Training and Employment Needs.
- Hosted a research seminar with the Academy of Social Sciences, to inform the future research agenda of Skills Australia.
- Undertaken a review of the governance and architecture of the national training system (NTS), identifying effective governance relationships within the NTS and also considering opportunities to reshape or strengthen broader governance arrangements.
- Provided the Minister with ongoing advice on a wide range of topics.

Papers published on the Skills Australia website in relation to the work undertaken are;

- a discussion paper 'Future governance arrangements for the National Training System' and
- a report on forums undertaken with the Industry Skills Councils '*Skills Australia: Industry Skills Councils – report on Facilitation of Forums.*'

Part (v) *What is Skills Australia currently working on?*

Skills Australia is currently working on two major projects:

- to provide comprehensive advice on the allocation of the additional training places under the Productivity Places Program
- to review the governance and architecture of the national training system (NTS), identifying effective governance relationships within the NTS and also considering opportunities to reshape or strengthen broader governance arrangements

Skills Australia continues to provide the Deputy Prime Minister with advice on a range of topics on an ongoing basis.