

## Government Senators' Report

### Conduct of the inquiry<sup>1</sup>

1.1 The Australian Technical Colleges (Flexibility in Achieving Australia's Skills Needs) Amendment Bill 2006 was introduced to the House of Representatives on 30 March 2006, and it was referred to this committee on 11 May 2006, through the Selection of Bills Committee. The committee's inquiry was advertised on 12 and 17 May, and one submission was received. This came from the Department of Education, Science and Training.

1.2 The Bill seeks to amend the *Australian Technical Colleges (Flexibility in Achieving Australia's Skills Needs) Act 2005*, which sought to implement a 2004 election promise for the establishment of 25 Australian Technical Colleges (ATC's) intended to offer courses to up to 7,500 year 11 and 12 students in 24 nominated regions across Australia. College locations are set out in the table below.

NSW	Central Coast (Gosford); Dubbo; the Hunter; the Illawarra; Lismore/Ballina; Port Macquarie; Queanbeyan; Western Sydney
NT	Darwin
QLD	Gladstone; Gold Coast; North Brisbane; North Queensland (Townsville)
SA	Adelaide (2 ATCs); Whyalla/Port Augusta
TAS	Northern Tasmania
VIC	Bendigo; Bairnsdale/Sale; Eastern Melbourne; Geelong; Sunshine; Warrnambool
WA	Perth South; Pilbara

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1 Australian Technical Colleges (Flexibility in Achieving Australia's Skills Needs) Amendment Bill 2006, Bills Digest no. 125, 2005-06, Parliamentary Library, 2006, pp.2-4

## Purpose of the bill

1.3 This Amending bill seeks to do two things. First, to reallocate funding from 2008 and 2009 to 2006 and 2007. This is made necessary by the faster than expected establishment of colleges in several locations, and the fact that several had to be established from scratch rather than through incorporation with existing schools. The Department submitted that twenty ATCs are expected to be in operation by February 2007. The measure to shift funds between program years has no financial impact because the total amount of funds is unchanged at \$343.6 million. Details of the changes in appropriation for individual years are contained in the table below.<sup>2</sup>

	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>\$m</b>	<b>\$m</b>	<b>\$m</b>	<b>\$m</b>	<b>\$m</b>	<b>\$m</b>
Current Appropriations	15.810	47.950	84.034	101.419	94.380	343.593
Proposed Appropriations	15.810	110.000	110.000	55.000	52.783	343.593

1.4 Second, the bill seeks to introduce a regulation-making power to enable funding changes between program years, without requiring an amending act of parliament. As usual, regulations made under the power are subject to disallowance by either House under the provisions of the *Legislative Instruments Act 2003*. Thus, no dilution of parliamentary accountability will result.

## Recommendation

**The committee recommends that the bill be passed without amendment.**

**Senator Judith Troeth**  
**Chairman**