



**Phil Reeves MP**  
Member for Mansfield  
Our ref: MC25541



**Queensland  
Government**

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Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister  
for Transport

Senator Judith Troeth  
Chairman  
Standing Committee on Employment,  
Workplace Relations and Education  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Senator

**Re: Response to the Inquiry into Workforce Challenges in the Transport Industry**

Thank you for your letter of 2 October 2006 to the Honourable Paul Lucas MP, Minister for Transport and Main Roads inviting participation by Queensland in the Senate's inquiry into workforce challenges in the transport sector. The Minister has asked that I respond on his behalf.

The transport sector is very important to the economic and social welfare of all Queenslanders and the Queensland Government is supportive of any activity that may contribute to its continued capability. I therefore welcome the conduct of this inquiry.

The skills and labour supply issues being faced by the transport sector are not unique as most sectors of the economy are facing similar challenges in one form or another. However, the particular characteristics of the transport industry with its predominance of small business operators, multiple sectors and a highly competitive market, make it difficult to accurately understand the current situation in relation to current and future employment trends. While there have been a number of studies of the industry (see Attachment A) which have highlighted workforce issues as needing attention, it appears to have been difficult to translate these into sustainable solutions. There has generally been a focus on the various sectors of the transport industry rather than the industry as a collective group.

Queensland has long recognised the need to tackle skills shortages across all industries and the *Queensland Skills Plan*, released in March 2006, is one of a number of initiatives in this area. Of particular note, the *Queensland Skills Plan* has created a new government/industry engagement model to address the skills and labour issues being faced by the transport and logistics in Queensland. In August 2006, Queensland Transport created an Industry Capability Unit to progress work in this area. This unit will address these issues across Queensland including regional and remote areas.

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The department is currently undertaking a consultative project which is engaging a wide range of industry stakeholders. The objective of the project is to clarify skills and labour issues and establish an ongoing framework for engagement with industry to develop and implement solutions. Consultation to date has revealed that a focus on the separate sectors in addressing workforce issues would not be effective and a whole of industry approach is required. The project has also established that any resolution of the workforce challenge will require strong industry/government leadership to jointly identify and define the issues and work together to explore possible solutions.

While Queensland is working with local industry to better understand and address local issues surrounding current and future labour and skills needs, I appreciate that this is a national issue that will ultimately require national solutions. There is a clear need to establish national industry leadership and collaboration in addressing this critical issue in a vital industry. The Queensland Government would welcome any opportunity to work with other state and federal authorities to facilitate and support the industry in developing a strategic framework whereby practical responses to mutual labour and skilling needs can be addressed. The Committee might wish to consider and recommend whether existing arrangements and activities can be adapted or redirected to undertake this work or whether new arrangements are required.

I commend the Senate for initiating this Inquiry. Should you wish to discuss the issue further, please contact Jack Noye, Executive Director (Corporate Office) by email at [jack.z.noye@transport.qld.gov.au](mailto:jack.z.noye@transport.qld.gov.au) or by telephone on (07) 3306 7323. Mr Noye would be pleased to assist.

Yours sincerely



**PHIL REEVES MP**

**Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Transport**

## Attachment A

Industry Studies

- Australian Logistics Council *Freight Logistics in Australia: an Agenda for Action* (Australian Logistic Industry Strategy) 2002.
- National Transport Commission *Twice the Task: A review of Australia's freight transport tasks*, 2005.
- Australian Trucking Association *Driving Australia's Future: A report and action plan addressing the skills needs of the road freight transport industry*, 2003.
- Australasian Railway Association *The Changing Face of Rail - A journey to the employer of choice*, 2006.
- Transport and Logistics Industry Skills Council *Industry Skills Report*, 2005