

**REPLY TO QUESTIONS
SENATE FADT COMMITTEE PERTH HEARINGS 3 APRIL 2006
CHALLENGER TAFE AND DEPT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

QUESTION 1

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS—In the submission—I think Senator Bishop made reference to it; perhaps I would be grateful if you could have a look at it because I would appreciate your comments in relation to it—there are graphs in there of peaks and troughs which Senator Bishop was referring to. If I recall the evidence that was given last week it was that in coming to this assessment, if I can put it that way, consultation had occurred with various stakeholders and industry bodies. Have you had any consultation at all in relation to providing input into projected skill requirements for future naval shipbuilding in Australia?

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS—I would be grateful if you would have a look at the Department of Defence submission, particularly as to the references that Senator Bishop made.

RESPONSE

We have examined the Defence Force submission and offer the following comments regarding the section on workforce requirements.

1. The submission identifies workforce requirements for the relevant projects in total. The submission makes no assessment as to the capacity of the labour markets capacity to meet this demand. The submission identifies the source of the data as gathered mainly through survey, however no particular breakdown is provided or the specific source identified. As such WA is not in a position to comment on the accuracy or otherwise of the estimated workforce requirements provided in the submission.
2. The submission identifies the peak workforce requirements of the Naval projects to be in 2010 and 2025. Western Australia considers that it would be well placed to meet the demand, for example for the amphibious project, as it corresponds with the projected flattening in demand for construction workers in the resources sector. This trend is identified in the report on WA's Employment Demand and Predicted Skill Requirements produced by the Resources and Infrastructure Skills Council. WA is well placed to provide the workforce required for this project, based on the numbers estimated in the submission.

QUESTION 2

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS—Is there evidence that we can go to in respect of other countries that may have an interest in what we are doing in terms of shipbuilding and whether there are going to be perceived skill shortages, countries which may have done projections themselves? Would that be available through the OECD?

RESPONSE

The Dept of Education and Training has a general understanding of the ship building industry in France and Spain, but is not in a position to provide the Senate Committee with expert advice on its labour market capacity.

QUESTION

Senator GEORGE CAMPBELL—Yes, it is a follow-up question on that issue. Obviously, there is a peak which you cannot exceed in terms of the number of apprentices physically in training for any companies. How many people are in apprenticeships in the shipbuilding industry here? What is the estimate of the peak for the industry?

Senator GEORGE CAMPBELL—If you are going to supply them, would you do that on the basis of the maximum that you believe you can train in the industry, how many are currently employed and what the surplus might be. If you could break them up into years that would be helpful too. That will give us a profile.

RESPONSE

The Skilling WA's Defence Industry Taskforce has commissioned a consultant to conduct a survey of the existing and projected skills requirements of the sector with a view to adjusting training policy to ensure the sector's needs are met into the future. Survey data are not yet available. The question as to how many can be trained, therefore, is to say that the State intends to ensure the needs of the industry sector are met.

Challenger TAFE is already involved in a paradigm shift in training delivery that itself removes physical capacity constraints. This entails working hand-in-glove with industry to the extent of engaging their trained staff to deliver training on their premises whilst providing all the advantages of a training institution in terms of training process, management and quality control. By this means students receive the most up to date and industry relevant training to meet the demands of industry without the traditional constraints.

As our students are apprentices or trainees, all are currently employed.

Challenger TAFE's enrolments 2006 are as follows:

Fabrication/Welding	116
Shipwrighting/Fit-out	36
Estimated mid year intake	28
Total	180

It should be noted that TAFEWA carries out fabrication/welding training at other colleges in both the metropolitan and regional locations.

