

ENGINEERING WORKING GROUP REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

It is essential that Industry and Government work together to develop the skills Australia needs to compete internationally. A key ingredient in achieving this outcome is ensuring the widespread use of recently developed Training Packages. The Engineering Working Group applauds the Government reforms which have facilitated more flexible access to appropriately directed training. This Report focuses on skills in shortage, reviews barriers to meeting skills needs and recommends some solutions which can be implemented by Industry working in partnership with Government.

Skills in Shortage

Skills identified as being in shortest supply are:

- Generic core skills such as communication, teamwork, literacy, numeracy and computer based skills;
- The capacity to learn and to solve problems independently; and
- Higher trade skills in electronic engineering, welding, toolmaking, computer aided design and machining and in the use of computer numerically controlled processes.

Barriers to Meeting Skills needs

Major barriers identified are:

- Difficulties in recruiting New Apprentices because of a lack of understanding within the education sector, of career opportunities within the manufacturing industries;
- Lack of understanding of recruitment alternatives, including skilled migration;
- Insufficient support for prevocational training;
- Administrative, legislative and regulatory rigidities, restricting opportunities for New Apprentices;
- Insufficient flexibilities in training delivery and assessment of training needs;
- Lack of recognition of prior learning and insufficient support for reskilling and upskilling existing employees;
- Lack of adequate promotion to employers of the commercial benefits of training;
- Inadequate access to training for people in remote and rural areas; and
- A growing dependency on small contractors and labour hire companies to provide skilled short term labour.

Recommended Solutions

The Report identifies six major objectives to achieve solutions to overcoming skills shortages:

- Make a long term paradigm shift to gain the public perception that the industry is global, high tech and personally and financially rewarding;
- Build an industry training culture which supports the continued development of skills;
- Build on the skills of the exiting workforce;
- Expand the provision, variety and takeup of pathways into New Apprenticeships;
- Ensure training providers deliver timely, high quality training;
- Improve the outcomes from recruitment solutions to skills shortages.

This Report is just the start of an ongoing, industry driven, continuous improvement process.