

21 February 2003

Mr John Carter
Secretary
Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Committee
Suite SG.52
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Mr Carter,

re: Inquiry into Current and Future Skills Needs

I refer to your letter of 17 February 2003, in which you requested that I provide some background information about TRANZNET Association Inc., in preparation for the Senate Committee hearings into current and future skills needs.

TRANZNET is the professional association that represents personnel with any form of involvement in training and related activities in the Transport and Distribution, Plant and Mining Industries in Australia and New Zealand. It has approximately 300 members. Whilst its primary role is linked to advisory and support services for its membership, it also has shown keen interest in training development and procedural requirements that affect its industries. In this context, it has taken a pro-active role to address the critical skills shortages that exist in those industries, especially Road Transport.

One of the initiatives TRANZNET has pursued has been the co-facilitation with the Australian Trucking Association of strategic planning meetings to address the skills shortage and related issues. Consequently, I believe that it has potentially a significant contribution to make to the Senate Committee on:

- basic core skills requirements, especially linked to significant workload increases;
- problems faced by youth because of age / licensing / insurance restrictions;
- the development of career marketing strategies, for both youth and their parents;
- implementation of long-term career development programs;
- workplace employment retention problems;
- utilising funding for skills acquisition through all levels of employment; as well as
- the skills shortage itself.

The skills shortage has been caused, first and foremost, by the ageing workforce, both in operator and management categories in the industry. The average age of drivers, for example, is greater than 50, and the same is true in many of the company management structures, regardless of geographic location. This circumstance has been developing over the last several years, with insufficient “new” employees joining the industry to take the places of those about to retire. When the key points mentioned above are integrated into this workforce problem, a critical situation for the industry is a clear result.

From a personal perspective, my role as CEO of TRANZNET has been instituted because of extensive experience in advisory and practitioner capacities with an Industry Training Advisory Body, a peak body Industry Council and an Industry Accreditation Board.

I hope that this brief summary is sufficient for your needs. I look forward to the hearing in Launceston and, on behalf of TRANZNET Association Inc., I thank you for the invitation to participate.

Should you need to contact me prior to the Launceston meeting, my details are:

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Yours sincerely,

R E (Bob) Mulcahy
Chief Executive Officer