

**Economics Legislation Committee**  
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Industry Portfolio  
Additional Budget Estimates Hearing 2013-14  
27 February 2014

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**AGENCY/DEPARTMENT:** DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY

**TOPIC:** Skills Workshops

**REFERENCE:** Written Questions – Senator Kim Carr

**QUESTION No.:** AI-151

In regards to Skills Workshops:

1. Why were the six initial workshops not advertised?
2. Why was the venue of the Skills Workshops in Canberra kept secret until a RSVP was received (ie the Agenda states that a venue will be provided upon RSVP)?
3. What is the purpose of the Workshops?
4. Who attended the six Workshops?
5. What was the process for choosing invitees for the Workshops?
6. Did the Minister's office over-rule any invitees for the Workshops?
7. Why were unions not invited to participated, noting that unions play a vital role in Industry Skills Councils?
8. Can the agenda for each workshop be provided?
9. Is the Government considering a formal review process along the lines of the Kemp-Norton review of demand driven higher education?
10. When will the outcome of the future Workshops be reported? What is the timeframe for a Government response?
11. Workshops have now been scheduled in each capital city and a new VET Reform website has been launched.
  - a. How were the workshops and the website advertised?
  - b. Was a media release issued? If not, why not
  - c. Did the Department advertise this via social media?
  - d. Was a mailout done to advise people of the new website and scheduled workshops?
  - e. Were stakeholders notified/invited?
  - f. Who were the stakeholders that were notified/invited?
  - g. Were State Governments and/or their representatives, as one of the largest providers of VET, invited to the workshops?
  - h. If not, why not?
12. Why was no media release issued advising of the formation of the VET Reform Taskforce?
13. Who are the members of the VET Reform Taskforce?
14. What are there no Terms of Reference for the Taskforce?
15. Are there official agendas? If so, are these publicly available?
16. When will the outcome of the Taskforce be reported? When does the Government intend to respond?

## ANSWER

1. The initial six workshops, held in Canberra, were the first stage in a broader consultation with stakeholders. Stakeholders were invited on the basis that the Department had previous recent contact with them regarding VET reform related issues as the spaces were limited. Feedback from these pilot sessions helped inform the round of national public workshops.
2. Arrangements for the venue had not been made at the time the invitations were sent out and invitees were therefore advised of the venue after they had provided an RSVP.
3. The purpose of the workshops was to start a consultation process with the sector.
4. Representatives from Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), employers, Australian Apprenticeships Centres and Industry Skills Councils were invited to attend. The invitees are at **Attachment A**.
5. As noted in response to question 1 stakeholders that the VET Reform Taskforce had previous contact with were invited.
6. No.
7. Each Industry Skills Council was invited to send two members to the workshop and were welcome to send a union representative on their behalf. Two Industry Skills Councils representatives were union representatives.
8. Yes, the Canberra workshop agendas are **Attachment B**.
9. No.
10. The national workshops are currently underway. The department will publish the summaries from the workshop on the VET reform website in April. The timing of any policy response is a matter for the Government.
11.
  - a. All RTOs were emailed to inform them about the VET Reform Taskforce, the website and the consultation stage underway. Other employer and industry stakeholders were emailed about the national workshops and the website to disseminate to their members and encourage attendance through their network and communication channels.
  - b. Yes, Minister Macfarlane issued a media release on 12 March 2014.
  - c. Yes, the workshops were mentioned on the VET reform and Industry Linked In pages and were also promoted on the AusIndustry facebook and twitter pages.
  - d. Yes, as noted in question 11a.
  - e. The workshops happening across the country are open invitation. As noted in response to question 11a, 11b and 11c stakeholders were notified through multiple channels.
  - f. As noted in response to 11a, 11b and 11c stakeholders were broadly notified through a range of channels.
  - g. The department invited state government representatives to attend all the national workshops in an observer capacity.
  - h. Not applicable.

12. The decision was made to publicise the VET Reform Taskforce through the department's website.
13. The VET Reform Taskforce is comprised of existing departmental officials. It is headed by Ms Peta Furnell supported by Ms Kathryn Shugg and Mr Martin Graham.
14. The role of the Taskforce is outlined on the Taskforce website at:  
<http://vetreform.industry.gov.au/>.
15. Yes, as noted in response to question 8 the Canberra agendas are at **Attachment B** and an example of the national workshop agendas is **Attachment C**. Please note: agenda items for each workshop were the same only dates and locations were amended.
16. The VET Reform Taskforce will report to the Government over the course of this year. The timing of any policy announcements is a matter for the Government.

## Response to Question 4: Invitees

<b>ORGANISATION</b>
Accommodation Association of Australia
Aged and Community Services SA & NT
Assoc of Superannuation Funds of Aust
Australian Computer Society
Australian Food and Grocery Council
Australian Retailers Association
Australian Security Industry Association
Australian Workforce Productivity Agency
Career Development Association of Australia
Franchise Council of Australia
Furnishing Industry Association of Australia
HIA
Master Builders Association
National Electrical & Communications Association
National Employment Services Association
National Farmers' Federation
Printing Industry Association of Australia
Red Cross College
Restaurant and Catering
The Pharmacy Guild of Australia
Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce
Australian Private Hospitals Association
Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council
Australia New Zealand Policing Advisory Agency
Australian College of Training
Brotherhood of St Laurence
Capital Training Institute
Centacare
Charlton Brown
CIT
Cynergex Group
Dept of Defence (ACT)
Holmesglen Institute
PEER
Train Australia
Navitas Resources Institute
TAFE Illawarra
BPG Training
Learning Options
Evocca College
Djerriwarrh Community and Education Services
Customer Service Institute of Australia
Insources Education
Compass Training

<b>ORGANISATION</b>
AMA Apprenticeship & Traineeship Services
Apprenticeships Melbourne
E-focus (lead agent - Apprenticeships Melb)
Australian Business Apprenticeships Centre
Box Hill Institute (Jobs Plus Apprenticeships Services)
Business & Employment O Group
Business SA, Aust Apprenticeships Centre
BUSY At Work
CCI
CVGT Australia
Housing Industry Association
JobNet Tasmania Inc
MAS National
MEGT AAC
Mission Australia
National Association of Australian Apprenticeships Centres
NSW Dept of Education & Communities
Regional Group Training Limited
Sarina Russo Apprenticeships
Skill360 Australia
The Apprentices and Traineeship Company
Victorian Employers' Chamber of Commerce and Industry
VERTO
Construction & Property Services ISC
Government Skills Australia
Service Skills Australia
E-Oz Energy Skills Australia
Innovation & Business Skills Australia
Auto Skills Australia Ltd
Agrifood Skills Australia
Manufacturing Skills Australia (MSA)
T&L
Community Services & Health ISC
ForestWorks ISC
Industry Skills Council Forum
Skills DMC
TAFE Queensland
SilverChain
TasTAFE
Open Colleges
Qantas
Franklyn Scholar
Chemcert Training Group Pty Ltd
YWCA of Canberra
Maxima Group Inc
Essential Skills
3GPM

<b>ORGANISATION</b>
Roubaix Consulting
NSW Rural Fire Services
Kiama Community College
WORKCO Ltd
McDonald's Aust Ltd
Westpac Group
Adelaide Training & Employment Centre
HTN
Max Employment
Deakin Prime
Australian Lifesaving Academy (Surf Life Saving Australia)
Southern Cross Catholic Vocational College
Master Plumbers Association of NSW
Community College Gippsland
MTC Australia
TAFE NSW - Southern Western Sydney Institute
MTA Apprenticeships Plus
Kaplan Education
NSW Police
Local Government Managers Australia
Australian Institute of Training and Development
REIA (ACT)
Transfield Services Pty Ltd
National Insurance Brokers Association of Australia
FABTAD
Master Grocers Australia
Sports Medicine Australia
National Disability Services
Master Plumbers Assoc of NSW
Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
AIIA
Transport NSW
Adult Learning Australia
Goodstart Early Learning (childcare)
The Frontline Group (International)
Super Retail Group
National Retail Association
GTNT
TAFE SA
Master Electricians Australia
Academia Australia
Educational Partnerships Consultant
Chisholm Institute
HBIA

## Response to Question 8 and 15: Canberra agendas

## SKILLS WORKSHOP AGENDA – REGISTERED TRAINING ORGANISATIONS

Workshop 1: Tuesday 4 February 2014, 2.00pm – 5.00pm

Workshop 2: Thursday 6 February 2014, 9.30am – 12.30pm

9.00/1.30	TEA AND COFFEE ON ARRIVAL
9.30/2.00	Welcome
9.35/2.05	Objectives: to develop a shared understanding of the role of the VET sector in addressing skills needs and to discuss reform directions into the future.
<b>ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION</b>	
<i>MEETING AUSTRALIA'S SKILLS NEEDS</i>	
9.45/2.15	<p>Into the future, Australia is going to need a workforce that is more highly skilled and more mobile. What features of the VET system will help us to meet this challenge?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will this be different across different types of qualifications and skills for particular occupations or industry sectors, or for certain students such as new or existing employees?</li> <li>• How does the VET sector fit alongside other training options (eg non accredited training) or higher education in this respect?</li> </ul>
<i>THE VET SECTOR NOW AND IN THE FUTURE</i>	
10.15/2.45	<p>There has been significant change occurring in the VET sector over the last decade as a more competitive market is being developed with: national standards and regulation for providers and training products; more competitive and demand driven funding arrangements; and better informed consumers.</p> <p>How well is the sector performing now? What would you change within the system to better support you to meet the needs of local employers?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What parts of the sector are working well?</li> <li>• What are the areas of concern?</li> <li>• What role do you see for the Australian Skills Quality Authority in improving the quality of training outcomes?</li> <li>• What could be the future shape of the sector?</li> <li>• What are the tests for success of future changes?</li> </ul>
10.45/3.15	MORNING/AFTERNOON TEA
<i>PRIORITY AREAS FOR THE FUTURE TO IMPROVE THE OPERATION OF THE VET SECTOR</i>	
11.15/3.45	<p>Based on the areas identified in the previous item what actions could be taken by the different participants in the system (governments, business, providers, students)? What should be the priorities for reform in a resource constrained environment?</p> <p>Additional possible areas for discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student outcomes compared to employer needs.</li> <li>• Responsiveness of the VET system to the needs of industry.</li> <li>• Sharing the benefits from and funding of training.</li> <li>• Regulation of training products.</li> <li>• Interaction and incentive effects between different aspects of the system.</li> </ul>
12.00/4.30	Opportunity for open comments from attendees
12.20/4.50	Wrap up and key messages
12.30/5.00	MEETING CLOSES

## SKILLS WORKSHOP AGENDA – INDUSTRY GROUPS

Workshop 1: Tuesday 4 February 2014, 9.30am – 12.30pm

Workshop 2: Thursday 6 February 2.00pm – 5.00pm

9.00/1.30	TEA AND COFFEE ON ARRIVAL
9.30/2.00	Welcome
9.35/2.05	Objectives: to develop a shared understanding of the role of the VET sector in addressing skills needs and to discuss reform directions into the future.
<b>ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION</b>	
<i>MEETING AUSTRALIA'S SKILLS NEEDS</i>	
9.45/2.15	<p>What are employers telling you about the way they use the VET sector to meet their workforce needs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you see as the future skill shortage areas?</li> <li>• Does this play out differently across different types of qualifications and skills for particular occupations or industry sectors, or for certain students such as new or existing employees?</li> <li>• How does the VET sector fit alongside other training options (eg unaccredited training) or higher education?</li> </ul>
<i>THE VET SECTOR NOW AND IN THE FUTURE</i>	
10.15/2.45	<p>There are a number of changes occurring in the VET sector as a more competitive market is being developed with: national standards and regulation for providers and training products; more competitive and demand driven funding arrangements; and better informed consumers.</p> <p>How well is the sector performing now and what changes may be needed for the future?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the core outcomes that the VET sector should be seeking to achieve?</li> <li>• What parts of the sector are working well?</li> <li>• What are your key areas of concern?</li> <li>• One of the concerns consistently raised with the Government is that VET graduates do not have the skills and knowledge required in the workplace. How would you improve the quality of training outcomes?</li> <li>• What are the tests for success of future changes?</li> </ul>
10.45/3.15	MORNING/AFTERNOON TEA
<i>PRIORITY AREAS FOR THE FUTURE TO IMPROVE THE OPERATION OF THE VET SECTOR</i>	
11.15/3.45	<p>Based on the areas identified in the previous item what improvements or changes would you make to the VET sector to better respond to industry needs? What should be the priorities for reform in a resource constrained environment?</p> <p>Additional possible areas for discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student outcomes compared to employer needs.</li> <li>• Responsiveness of the VET system to the needs of industry.</li> <li>• Partnering with RTOs.</li> <li>• Sharing the benefits from and funding of training.</li> <li>• Regulation of providers and training products.</li> <li>• Interaction and incentive effects between different aspects of the system.</li> </ul>
12.00/4.30	Opportunity for open comments from attendees
12.20/4.50	Wrap up and key messages
12.30/5.00	MEETING CLOSES



# SKILLS WORKSHOP AGENDA – AUSTRALIAN APPRENTICESHIPS CENTRES

Wednesday 5 February 2014, 9.30am – 12.30pm

9.00	TEA AND COFFEE ON ARRIVAL
9.30	Welcome
9.35	Objectives: to develop a shared understanding of the role of Australian Apprenticeship support services in addressing skills needs and to discuss reform directions into the future.
<b>ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION</b>	
<i>MEETING AUSTRALIA'S SKILLS NEEDS</i>	
9.45	<p>What key contributions do Australian Apprenticeship support services make in meeting the skills needs of Australian apprentices?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where do AACs see student and employer demands – including industry demand for apprentices; individual demand to become an apprentice?</li> <li>• How responsive is the VET sector in providing 'job ready' skills to Australian Apprentices?</li> <li>• How do you identify quality RTOs? How could quality RTO information be better captured?</li> <li>• How well does the apprenticeship system respond to the needs of enterprises and the economy – i.e. does VET sign off of competence match industries perspective of competence?</li> <li>• What is the best way for AACs to market Australian Apprenticeships? Should a single brand be used?</li> </ul>
<i>THE APPRENTICESHIPS SYSTEM NOW AND IN THE FUTURE</i>	
10.15	<p>How well is the apprenticeships system performing and what changes may be needed for the future?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What parts of the apprenticeships system are working well?</li> <li>• What are the areas of concern?</li> <li>• What could be the future shape of the apprenticeships system?</li> <li>• What are the tests for success of future changes?</li> </ul>
10.45	MORNING TEA
<i>PRIORITY AREAS FOR THE FUTURE TO IMPROVE THE STANDING OF APPRENTICESHIPS</i>	
11.15	<p>Based on the areas identified in the previous item what actions can all stakeholders (government, industry, employers, training providers, AACs) take to improve the standing of apprenticeships as a career path for Australians? What should be the priorities for reform in a resource constrained environment?</p> <p>Additional possible areas for discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for apprentices, employers – including career and training advice, mentoring, pastoral care, incentives, wage support</li> <li>• The role of pre-apprenticeships and other preparatory training (including LLN)</li> <li>• The role of school-based apprenticeships</li> <li>• Reducing the complexity of the apprenticeships system</li> <li>• Student outcomes compared to employer needs</li> <li>• Responsiveness of training products to the needs of industry</li> <li>• Sharing the benefits from and funding of training</li> <li>• Regulation of providers and training products (training packages and accredited courses)</li> <li>• Interaction and incentive effects between different aspects of the system</li> </ul>
12.00	Opportunity for open comments from attendees
12.20	Wrap up and key messages
12.30	MEETING CLOSES

# SKILLS WORKSHOP AGENDA – INDUSTRY SKILLS COUNCILS

Wednesday 5 February 2014, 2.00pm – 5.00pm

1.30	<b>TEA AND COFFEE ON ARRIVAL</b>
<b>2.00</b>	Welcome
<b>2.05</b>	Objectives: to develop a shared understanding of the role of the VET sector in addressing skills needs and to discuss reform directions into the future.
<b>ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION</b>	
<i>MEETING AUSTRALIA'S SKILLS NEEDS</i>	
<b>2.15</b>	<p>What features of the current VET system are assisting industry to meet their current and future workforce needs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does this play out differently across different types of qualifications and skills for particular occupations or industry sectors, or for certain students such as new or existing employees?</li> <li>• How does the VET sector fit alongside other training options (eg unaccredited training) or higher education?</li> <li>• What is the role of VET in foundation skills, technical competence and workplace capabilities?</li> </ul>
<i>THE VET SECTOR NOW AND IN THE FUTURE</i>	
<b>2.45</b>	<p>There are a number of changes occurring in the VET sector as a more competitive market is being developed with: national standards and regulation for providers and training products; more competitive and demand driven funding arrangements; and better informed consumers.</p> <p>How well is the sector performing now and what changes may be needed for the future?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Given your experience in the sector, how would you improve the quality of training outcomes?</li> <li>• What role should Industry Skills Councils play in workforce planning and workforce development?</li> <li>• Given your experience with the National Workforce Development Fund to date, what improvements could be made to the delivery of workforce development and training programs?</li> <li>• Are there other areas of concern?</li> <li>• What could be the future shape of the sector?</li> <li>• What are the tests for success of future changes?</li> </ul>
3.15	<b>AFTERNOON TEA</b>
<i>PRIORITY AREAS FOR THE FUTURE TO IMPROVE THE OPERATION OF THE VET SECTOR</i>	
<b>3.45</b>	<p>Based on the areas identified in the previous item what actions could be taken by the different participants in the system (governments, business, providers, students)? What should be the priorities for reform in a resource constrained environment?</p> <p>Additional possible areas for discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student outcomes compared to employer needs.</li> <li>• Responsiveness of the VET system to the needs of industry.</li> <li>• Sharing the benefits from and funding of training.</li> <li>• Regulation of providers and training products.</li> <li>• Interaction and incentive effects between different aspects of the system.</li> </ul>
<b>4.30</b>	Opportunity for open comments from attendees
<b>4.50</b>	Wrap up and key messages
5.00	<b>MEETING CLOSES</b>

## Response to Question 15: National workshop agendas

**VET REFORM WORKSHOP – AGENDA**

WELCOME	
	Tea and coffee on arrival
<b>5 mins</b>	Welcome
<b>10 mins</b>	Objectives for the workshop: to develop a shared understanding of the role of the VET sector in addressing skills needs and to discuss reform directions into the future.
ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION	
<i>THE CURRENT VET SECTOR</i>	
<b>30 mins</b>	Plenary session – How well is the VET sector performing now and what are your key areas of concern?
<i>IMPROVING THE OPERATION OF THE VET SECTOR</i>	
<b>45 mins</b>	<p>Group work and plenary feedback – examine in more detail three of the key issues identified in the plenary session to identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• possible solutions and ways in which these could be implemented;</li> <li>• impacts on the various stakeholders within the sector;</li> <li>• ways to measure success.</li> </ul>
<i>PRIORITY AREAS FOR THE FUTURE</i>	
<b>20 mins</b>	Group work and plenary feedback – What should be the priorities for reform in a resource constrained environment?
<b>10 mins</b>	Wrap up and key messages
MEETING CLOSES	