



## **CENTRE FOR EDUCATION & TRAINING**

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The Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee

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Dear Committee

The Australian Industry Group (Ai Group) welcomes the invitation by the Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee to make a submission to its inquiry into the provisions of the Higher Education Support Amendment (Response to the Australian Universities Accord Interim Report) Bill 2023.

Ai Group supports the amendments proposed in the Bill. They address two of the priorities for immediate action in the Universities Accord Review Interim Report. Ai Group regards the year long review as a significant initiative - required to improve the tertiary education system in Australia, which in turn will meet Australia's knowledge, skill and societal needs into the future.

Ai Group sees both Parts 1 and 2 of the Bill as important to Australian industry. Both parts tackle lack of opportunity and inequity. They address the plight of Indigenous students as well as the high proportion of students from low socio-economic groups that has been adversely affected by the Job-ready Graduates Package requirement for 50 per cent of units to be passed. These cohorts are more likely to lack support during their studies and the Bill's policy for student support will provide the scaffolds needed to underpin successful outcomes. The policy will provide a structure for adherence by higher education providers.

These amendments will also aid in developing the broadest and highest talent potential in Australia. Crucially, they will contribute to the desperate increase needed to the numbers of students commencing and graduating from higher education.

The need for a larger higher education system is overwhelming and is evidenced through a range of workforce projections, some of which are outlined in the Accord's Interim Report. Ai Group's own data continue to reveal employers are heavily impacted by difficulties in meeting their skill requirements now, and anticipated into the future. Amongst broad technological developments, accelerating digital and clean transformations are creating even more pressure around changing and emerging workforce roles. Major shortfalls are predicted across professional occupations unless participation is increased.

This is an important Bill within the context of the visionary Accord process underway for higher education in Australia.

Yours sincerely

**Megan Lilly**

**Executive Director – Centre for Education & Training**

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