

Economics Legislation Committee

Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency Repeal Bill 2014

- 1 Thank you for this opportunity to make a submission on the *Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency Repeal Bill 2014*.
- 2 We submit that the *Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency Repeal Bill 2014* ought not be passed.
- 3 In the alternative we submit that the Bill be passed with 2 amendments:
 - 3.1 clause 1 be amended to read –

This Act may be cited as the *Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency Recognition and Repeal Act 2014*.
 - 3.2 after clause 3 insert –
 - 4 The Parliament of Australia records its recognition of the work and achievements of the staff and board of the Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency and of its predecessor Skills Australia.
- 4 We offer 8 points in support of our submission.
 - 4.1 The Agency has been a valuable source of data and analysis informing the planning and decision making of workers, students, employers, institutions and the public. Australia should not lose this valuable source of advice.
 - 4.2 The Agency has been a great source of new ideas stimulating fresh thinking and innovation amongst employers, institutions, sectors and representative groups. Government departments usually don't have the freedom to promote new ideas nor the discretion to advance them provocatively.
 - 4.3 The Agency's research on the demand and supply of skills in a transforming economy has been well received and been particularly influential. It is precisely this work which will be needed as Australia's economy further restructures.
 - 4.4 The Agency has been a source of independent advice on contentious issues, such as the preparation of the skilled occupations list. While this responsibility will presumably be absorbed within the relevant Department, the Agency's recommendations have carried the considerable authority of its internal expertise and prominent and distinguished board members.
 - 4.5 The Agency has been unusually open and consultative in developing its advice, publishing its initial thoughts as well as settled positions. It has thereby informed the large number of bodies and people it has engaged with, raising the level of understanding of its important concerns in the community. While government

departments could and indeed should be equally open and consultative, they rarely are.

- 4.6 Industry and the States find it easier to take advice from an independent body of industrialists, economists and educationalists than the Australian Government Department which they believe has its own agenda.
- 4.7 While Australian Government departments may undertake some of the Agency's functions, government departments are most unlikely to continue the outreach, extensive consultation, advocacy and informal advice offered by the Agency.
- 4.8 The Agency has developed extensive expertise and resources which would be valuable to support continued labour force development and restructuring.

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Gavin Moodie, PhD
Adjunct professor
RMIT

22 Sussex Avenue
Toronto, ON, M5S 1J5
Canada

Leesa Wheelahan PhD
William G. Davis Chair in Community
College Leadership
Ontario Institute of Studies for Education
University of Toronto
252 Bloor Street West
Toronto, ON