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Mr Andrew Laming MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Education and Training
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Dear Mr Laming

Inquiry into innovation and creativity: workforce for the new economy

The Tasmanian Government welcomes the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training's inquiry into matters that will ensure Australia's tertiary system can meet the needs of a future labour force focused on innovation and creativity.

With ever evolving and expanding markets, the capacity of workforces and businesses to embrace new ideas, solutions and opportunities is critical for economic growth.

The Tasmanian Government is undertaking a number of initiatives to support innovation, entrepreneurialism and creativity in our workforces and in our population more broadly. These include:

- through developing Entrepreneur and Innovation Hubs;
- supporting innovation in advanced manufacturing;
- supporting workforce training and development;
- growing skills in Information and Communications Technology; and
- developing partnerships with the University of Tasmania.

Entrepreneur and Innovation hubs

The Tasmanian Government is encouraging entrepreneurship and assisting start-ups commercialise their ideas through the establishment of Entrepreneur and Innovation Hubs.

Through a unique partnership between the Tasmanian Government, the University of Tasmania, education and training providers and the startup community, we are developing and implementing a framework to support Tasmania's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The Tasmanian Government is providing \$500 000 towards the development of leading-edge Entrepreneur and Innovation Hubs in Launceston and Hobart.

Entrepreneur and Innovation Hubs will provide training and hands-on mentoring to develop, evaluate and implement, pre-start-up and early stage business opportunities.

The Hubs will:

- be open to the public and be designed with a view to hosting and nurturing student and community enterprise;
- seek to encourage enrolments into higher-education based innovation/entrepreneurship programs;
- be a locus for networking, mentors and provide appropriate work-spaces for early stage businesses;
- provide access to training and education for members of the Tasmanian community interested in understanding the criteria for, and the creation of, new ventures;
- encourage technically skilled students and graduates to create their own jobs through developing, or working for, startup businesses; and
- leverage the skills and creativity of the University of Tasmania's community of students and staff.

Supporting advanced manufacturing

Advanced manufacturing is a key industry for Tasmania, creating specialised, innovative products that are distributed worldwide.

The Tasmanian Government is committed to developing Tasmania's advanced manufacturing industry, particularly through supporting innovation, creativity and research and development. In the coming months, Government will release a five year Advanced Manufacturing Action Plan, which will outline a pathway to grow the Tasmanian advanced manufacturing sector.

Advanced manufacturing is an innovative and evolving industry that requires highly skilled staff. There are a number of highly regarded programs that have recently been initiated to improve the skills of the advanced manufacturing workforce in Tasmania.

These include the Skills Tasmania Business Action Learning Tasmania program, the University of Tasmania's Lean Learning Pathway program and the Cradle Coast Campus' Collab Lab.

Workforce development and training

Growing the capacity and productivity of the Tasmanian workforce is critical to Tasmania's sustained economic growth.

The Tasmanian Government is working to ensure Tasmanian businesses have access to a skilled and competent workforce and that Tasmanian youth get the chance to acquire real skills that will give them the opportunity to access employment. Embedding the skills to innovate and create in our current and future workforce is key.

The Tasmanian Government's *Investing in Skills for Growth* policy is focused on boosting the capability of the State's businesses and the productivity of the Tasmanian workforce through three goals:

- a more efficient and competitive training system;
- delivering real skills for real jobs;
- investing in skills that drive state growth.

The Tasmanian Government is investing significantly in workforce development programs and initiatives to build capability in leading industry sectors with strong employment growth, such as aged services and disability support; in industries with strong export potential, such as agriculture and aquaculture; and in cross-cutting industries, such as information and communication technology and transport and logistics.

Strategic workforce plans developed by Industries identify required training and skills needs to ensure training provided by Registered Training Organisations is well targeted and meets contemporary industry standards.

Growing skills in Information and Communications Technology

Developing Information and Communications Technology skills is important in ensuring Tasmania's students and employees are prepared for employment needs today and in the future.

The Tasmanian Government is working closely with the Tasmanian Information and Communications Technology community to support graduates and employees to be innovators. This includes through:

- *IT's Your Career – Building ICT workforce capacity*: an innovative school level approach to promoting Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics learning and education. The project links students, educators and entrepreneurial Information and Communications Technology innovation businesses and places. It provides students with opportunities for work experience and work placements.
- *TasICT Idea Innovators*: collaborating with TasICT, Tasmania's peak industry body for the Information and Communications Technology sector, to bring world leaders and innovators to meet with and inspire our Tasmanian industry.
- *Workforce Development Plans*: the Tasmanian Government funds peak industry bodies, such as Engineers Australia and TasICT, to develop and maintain industry specific workforce development plans. The aim of the plans is to deliver industry-owned approaches to increasing workforce skills and to identify approaches to address the rapidly changing skills needs in the workforce.

Partnerships with the University of Tasmania

The Tasmanian Government is working closely with our University to enhance innovation and creativity in the State.

In August 2015, we finalised a new Partnership Agreement with the University of Tasmania, *Making the Future Partnership 2015–2025*, to further strengthen our relationship and support research, higher education, growth, and the delivery of market and industry relevant qualifications across the State.

This Agreement reflects the Tasmanian Government's belief that education and training gives Tasmanians the very best chance of getting a job, living a fulfilling life, and unlocking their potential.

The objectives of the Agreement include to develop new high value industries and improve the capacity of Tasmanian businesses, institutions and enterprises to innovate.

This partnership builds on the existing Collaboration Agreement between the Government and the University of Tasmania's Australian Innovation Research Centre, which provides a platform for policy makers and researchers to collaborate, and to work together on specific initiatives such as the Tasmanian Innovation Census.

The Tasmanian Government is also a founding partner of Sense-T. With the support of its partners in the Tasmanian Government, the University of Tasmania, CSIRO and the Australian Government, Sense-T is creating an economy-wide sensor network and a digital view of the State to provide a shared resource for communities, businesses and industries.

Data is being collected on environmental conditions and variables, and fed into a central data platform to provide a shared resource available to business, researchers, government and individuals.

The recently launched Sense-T National ICT Australia Logistics Lab, is a \$2 million collaboration which will extend Sense-T's data research program into freight, logistics and supply-chains by bringing together a team of transport and logistics experts, software engineers, mathematicians, and software developers to provide a multi-disciplinary approach to developing customised solutions.

The Tasmanian Government recognises the importance of equipping our workforce with the skills and capacity to innovate and create, to unlock our State's economic potential. Through the various initiatives outlined above, and countless other activities occurring across Government and across the State, we are working to grow Tasmania and create a State where innovation, entrepreneurship and creativity is embraced.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this important inquiry and I look forward to seeing the outcomes of your work.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Groom MP
Minister for State Growth