



RTBU

Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport and Cities
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By email: ITC.reps@aph.gov.au

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Dear Committee

RE: INQUIRY INTO AUTOMATED MASS TRANSIT - ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 28 February 2019, the Rail Tram and Bus Union (RTBU) undertook to provide the Committee with further information about Singapore's Land Transport Industry Transformation Map (ITM), particularly the Public Transport Skills Framework (PTSF). This information is outlined below.

By way of background, the Singapore Government established the ITM process to bring together government, industry and unions and develop a response to challenges associated with the future of work. These challenges included technological change and an ageing population. The process was driven by a shared belief in the importance of improving public transport quality and maximising the social, employment, economic and environmental benefits of public transport.

According to the Singapore Government -

*Developed by the Land Transport Authority (LTA) in close consultation with union and industry partners, the ITM ensures that the land transport industry and **its workers continue to stay relevant despite long-term challenges such as an ageing population as well as land and fiscal constraints**. The ITM also responds to disruptive technologies such as Autonomous Vehicles (AVs), Big Data and Artificial Intelligence, and harnesses their transformative potential as an opportunity to enhance the land transport system and **create even better jobs for the industry**.*

*To achieve our overarching vision for a people-centred land transport system by 2030 with more connections and better service for all, the Land Transport ITM has outlined numerous initiatives which leverage emerging technologies to make the land transport system smarter, drive productivity growth and deliver better services to commuters; **as well as to future-proof the workforce through comprehensive programmes for up-skilling and re-skilling**.*

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Despite technological change and automation, the plan forecasts employment in the industry to grow by 8,000 by 2030.

The process identified areas of new and emerging skills arising from technological change. For instance, the *Skills Framework for Public Transport* has been developed to identify emerging skillsets, and map these against possible career pathways, especially for workers who are currently employed in occupations at risk from automation. Please find attached a copy of Singapore's transport *Skills Framework*. Specifically, we refer your attention to the Career Map on page 138 (the last page).

Applying a similar approach to the Australian transport industry would not be difficult, especially given our Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) and competency-based training (CBT) system. Indeed, such an approach reflects the underlying objective of our skills and training system. Further, by drawing out workers' capabilities and underpinning knowledge, it is possible to establish clear, linked and seamless pathways to new career opportunities within the transport industry as new technologies are introduced.

It is clear this process cannot be left to the market. There have been far too many instances where companies, citing technological change, pursue redundancies with little or no thought given to retraining and upskilling workers for new positions that are likely to be created. This creates a free rider effect, whereby companies argue there is a skills shortage and call for government funding/action to address potential skills shortages (that have primarily been caused by the companies' decisions to retrench workers, rather than invest in retraining and upskilling). For instance, Telstra has recently announced it is making 9,500 staff redundant, while also creating 1,500 new positions. There does not appear to be any attempt to retrain existing staff to fill these new roles, but rather the company's CEO has called for Federal Government intervention, including changing overseas work rules. As one observer recently commented: "*It is really saying 'taxpayer, subsidise my business'*" (The Australian Financial Review, 12 February 2019).

A national transport workforce development strategy, that brings together industry and unions, is key to avoiding similar issues occurring in the transport industry.

Importantly, we do not need to reinvent the wheel. By applying the lessons from Singapore's Industry Transformation Map process to Australia's AQF and CTBT systems, we can ensure the introduction of technology and automation is managed in the interests of transport workers.