



MEDIA RELEASE

MINERALS COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

REFORM OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM NEEDED TO PREVENT SKILLS SHORTAGES

As global commodity demand recovers, significant reforms to Australia's education and training system will be needed if the minerals sector is to avoid the re-emergence of debilitating skills shortages and Australia is to fully capitalise on the opportunities provided by sustained commodity demand, a new industry submission says.

A joint submission between the Minerals Council of Australia, the Queensland Resources Council and the Chamber of Minerals & Energy, Western Australia to the National Resources Sector Employment Taskforce says the education and training sector should be overhauled to ensure that programs are demand driven (primarily through the workforce development plans of enterprises) rather than supply driven by the training providers.

The submission says the minerals industry is projected to require an additional 31,000 skilled tradespeople to 2020 – out of a projected total workforce requirement of some 86,000 workers – to meet the sector's expected demand for employees.

It says that without a greater focus on Government/industry training partnerships Australia risks revisiting the chronic skills shortages that resulted in a loss of market share to aggressive international competitors prior to the global financial Crisis.

The industry bodies put forward a series of recommendations to the Taskforce in the submission including:

- a consistent national funding regime for Vocational Education and Training delivery, including funding of relevant skills sets; ensuring funding rates for regional and remote VET delivery reflect the real cost of delivery; implementation of genuine national quality, transportability arrangements and regulation of VET systems; and an industry demand-focused approach to funding and delivery of education and training;
- Higher Education minerals industry disciplines be designated 'disciplines of national interest' under the Government's response to the Bradley Review;
- Increased education and training opportunities and access to affordable childcare for women wishing to join the minerals industry;
- Reduced red tape from specifically focused and accessible government employment, education and training programs;
- The development and implementation of an industry-endorsed entry-level qualification for the minerals sector that is capable of customisation at a regional level are required;
- a Government/industry partnership to develop and implement new and improved models for the training of apprentices in the traditional trades that reflect the particular circumstances of the minerals sector work environments;
- a continuing Government focus on expanding programs and outcomes in improved language, literacy and numeracy and work readiness of all Australians, including those living in remote and regional areas of the nation; and
- maintenance of an efficient and effective temporary skilled migration program responsive to the needs of industry

The submission is available at www.minerals.org.au

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