

Skilling Tasmania Summary of Discussion Points

Skills Tasmania manages and funds the public training system on behalf of the Tasmanian public. It will spend in the order of \$90 million annually and is determined to get best value. To make informed policy decisions it is essential to have locally relevant advice from informed Tasmanians, particularly businesses and people that use or want to use the training system to build skills.

There is also a private training market that is an important and substantial component of the training system, active in meeting a broad range of skill development needs.

The following list summarises where input would be valued:

- Some employers and some industry sectors are not big users of the training system – is there more we can do to meet their needs?
- What will encourage employers to offer more apprenticeships, especially to mature age learners? What help do employers need to provide a supportive environment for their apprentices?
- Have we got the training system products right? Are they understood? Is the Government funding the right things?
- What are the most important “soft skills” from an employer perspective?
- Can we make better use of industry bodies? Can we be better at talking to industry? Can we involve industry more in decision making about funding? Can unions and employers help increase the number of mature age people upgrading their qualifications?
- Should the government have as an objective a better performing private training market? What needs to be done to get better outcomes for private training market clients?
- What will encourage apprentices to complete their training? How important are wages and conditions, would incentives such as a completion bonus work, how important are supportive and mentored work environments?
- Can we make it easier for employers and individuals to themselves invest in skill development?
- University students do, and soon a small number of VET students will, have access to government-subsidised loans and can therefore avoid up-front fees and commercial loans; is there scope to extend these more broadly in VET?
- Should qualifications be prioritised so some are given a higher value for public funding than others?
- Should the government’s third party funding role whereby training organisations are funded to provide training be refined, perhaps shifting more to funding clients to buy their own training? This could apply to client groups, or industry or regional bodies, perhaps in partnership with training organisations.
- Should the policy that restricts to TAFE, funding for a group of apprenticeships, be changed and are any refinements to the apprentice and trainee system needed?

- Have we got the right balance in emphasis between training for existing workers and training new workforce entrants?
- What are the best ways of achieving skills development for people who are disengaged from the world of work and have low skills or other barriers to employment?
- What information would small business like to know about the training system and how would they like to receive it?
- More overall training investment is forecast to be needed to tackle skill shortages and increase productivity – how do we pay for it? What are the relative roles of government, employers and individuals?
- Some industry areas are not big users of the training system – what can the system do better?
- Partnerships between industry and training organisations, rather than one-off contracts, can produce good outcomes, what can be done to extend their use.
- Should the government spend training money on more than just training, and include other things such as brokerage or support that will get skill development outcomes?
- How effective will a cadetship model be for para-professional skills?
- How effective are employment incentives for apprentices and trainees and can they be better targeted?
- Some states are integrating skill development and training with other workforce development and participation strategies. Partnerships between employers, training bodies, communities and government are important for this to work. What would be the best way to make this approach successful in Tasmania?
- What can we do to make workforce development solutions especially accessible to small business?