

17 May 2012

Dr Anne Rozario
Resources Skills Analysis Section
Skills Australia
GPO Box 9880
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Anne,

Thank you for the opportunity for the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland (CCIQ) to provide input to the *Skills Australia 2012 annual report on the Resource Sector's Skill Needs*.

Historically, Queensland businesses have endured significant skills shortages, which have in turn limited opportunities for growth, reduced productivity and impacted on the State economy. In light of the significant resource sector projects in the pipeline for Queensland, it is imperative that strategies are put in place to address the skills needs of both the resources sector and small to medium businesses.

The following text has been updated for inclusion in the *Industry Perspectives on Future Skill Needs* section of the annual report.

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland (CCIQ) is the peak business and employer organisation in Queensland, representing the interests of over 10,000 businesses and 135 chambers of commerce across the State. CCIQ engages with the business community, undertakes research to support Queensland businesses, advocates policy positions to government and addresses business issues in the mainstream news media.

CCIQ's *The Right People at the Right Time: Developing a Skilled Workforce that meets the needs of Queensland's Economy* reports the perspective of the business community and provides a framework for achieving an efficient education and training system and a more skilled workforce. It notes that the patchwork nature of Queensland's economy presents unique challenges, with some regions experiencing significant skills shortages and tight labour market conditions while others have increased unemployment and high rates of skills underutilisation. CCIQ anticipates that the economic inequality among Queensland regions will continue with major coal and liquefied natural gas projects in the pipeline.

CCIQ reports that difficult trading conditions and reduced business activity during 2011-12 have impacted on the capacity of businesses to commence and retain Australian Apprentices and to invest in development of the existing workforce. CCIQ anticipates that this will further compound anticipated future skills shortages and reduce business confidence in the capacity of the workforce to meet skills needs.

CCIQ believes that achieving a balance between the skills needs of the resources sector and the needs of local business, industry and the community is a critical issue for all Queensland's regions. CCIQ recommends that strategies be developed to address the skills needs of the resources sector incorporate components that support economic growth in regional areas and facilitate a balanced regional workforce incorporating contractors and employees engaged in fly-in / fly-out practices and permanent residents.

CCIQ advocates industry led solutions to skills and productivity, including a 'market driven' workforce development approach. CCIQ believes that skills demands will be best met if the market (employers and individuals) are adequately informed of the broad based skills supply and demand factors within the economy, allowing them to determine where their time and investment should be directed. Provision of reliable information from the resources sector to the education and training sector on skills needs will allow investment to be directed to areas where it is most needed.

CCIQ is committed to working with all levels of Government to ensure the availability of a strong and productive workforce that meets the needs of business. Please contact me on (07) 3842 2279 (nbehrens@cciq.com.au) if you would like to discuss any aspect of this response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Behrens', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Nick Behrens
General Manager - Advocacy
Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland