



# Skills Australia

Annual Report  
2008–09



ISSN: 1836-4748

© Commonwealth of Australia 2009

This work is copyright. Apart from any use as permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968*, no part may be reproduced by any process without prior written permission from the Commonwealth. Requests and inquiries concerning reproduction and rights should be addressed to the Commonwealth Copyright Administration, Attorney-General's Department, Robert Garran Offices, National Circuit, Barton ACT 2600 or posted at <http://www.ag.gov.au/cca>

October 2009

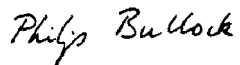
The Honourable Julia Gillard MP  
Deputy Prime Minister  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Deputy Prime Minister

Re: Skills Australia—Annual report

I have the pleasure in submitting the Annual Report of Skills Australia for the period 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009, in accordance with section 27 of the *Skills Australia Act 2008* (the Act) which requires that Skills Australia prepare and provide to you a report on Skills Australia's operations during the financial year.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Philip Bullock". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Philip Bullock  
Chair





# Table of Contents

<b>Chair’s Review</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Overview of Skills Australia and the Secretariat</b>	<b>4</b>
The Role of Skills Australia	4
<b>Skills Australia Board</b>	<b>6</b>
Skills Australia Secretariat	9
<b>Strategic Priorities</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Our Achievements</b>	<b>11</b>
Identifying priority skills needs across industry	11
Planning for an uncertain future	11
Maintaining skills development during the downturn	12
An education and training system that meets future skills needs	12
Review of ANZSCO and skills needs in the construction industry	13
<b>Stakeholder Engagement</b>	<b>14</b>
Our Stakeholders	14
Strategic partnerships with Industry	14
Communication	15
<b>Future Directions</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Key Dates</b>	<b>17</b>
Skills Australia Board Meetings	17
Presentations and Meetings	18
<b>Management and Accountability</b>	<b>21</b>
Funding and Budget	21
Conflict of Interest	21
Contacting Skills Australia	22



# Chair's Review

It gives me great pleasure to present this, the second annual report for Skills Australia covering our first full year of operation.

Writing the report provides an opportunity to reflect on the year and our achievements over that time. This has certainly been an interesting and busy year for Skills Australia. At the start of this financial year we were operating in the context of a still buoyant economy and an environment where industry's key concern related to skills and labour shortages. By the middle of the year there had been a significant shift in skills needs brought about by the global financial crisis. As a result the focus turned to reducing the adverse affects of unemployment. It now seems that the Australian economy is emerging from the downturn sooner than expected. The most recent employment forecasts are revising down the levels of unemployment from the high levels anticipated at the beginning of the crisis. Indeed, with the onset of major resources projects, planned infrastructure activity and other priorities such as the national broadband network, we face the prospect of a return to skills shortages.

This situation illustrates the dynamic nature of the economy, the flexibility of the labour market in adjusting to the economy and the importance of taking a longer term view in developing our advice on future skills needs.

Thanks to the commitment of the board and input from key stakeholders we have made advances against a number of the priorities outlined in our strategic plan. Key outputs this year include:

## **Priorities for allocation of the productivity places**

In August 2008, Skills Australia collaborated with the national Industry Skills Councils and state industry advisory bodies to obtain industry's views<sup>1</sup> on the current and emerging areas of skills and labour demand. This process also provided an opportunity to explore in more detail the drivers of change and reasons for shortages. The list that emerged from this process was then tested with state and territory governments to ensure these priorities captured skills they require to support regional economic priorities.

## **Maintaining a focus on skills development during the economic downturn**

By October 2008 it was apparent that the global financial crisis would have economic implications for Australia, particularly in areas of traditional trade skill development such as manufacturing and construction industries. Skills Australia provided advice to government, the key objective of that advice being to ensure that we avoid the mistakes of past recessions. In

---

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.skillsaustralia.gov.au/Publications\\_and\\_Resources/#NOUS\\_Group](http://www.skillsaustralia.gov.au/Publications_and_Resources/#NOUS_Group)

the past there had been a significant reduction in training effort resulting in a dearth of skills when the economy recovered. The main focus of the advice was to stimulate the economy and use stimulus to give priority to engaging apprentices and to provide early support to people in the event of redundancy. We have also provided input to other related work such as COAG's Australian Apprentices Taskforce.

### **An education and training system for the future**

In June 2009 we published *Foundations for the Future*<sup>2</sup>—this sets out our proposals for future governance, architecture and market design of the national training system. This report is the culmination of a process that started in August 2008 and involved extensive consultations with key stakeholders. The proposals outlined in the paper recognise several aspects, one of these is the importance of the partnership between government and industry in the governance of the system. Another is the need for a shared national policy agenda on workforce and economic development using input from industry to inform the investment. Also recognised is the need for a strengthened and more consistent national framework of regulation, including the establishment of a national regulator for VET to continue to improve the quality of the existing system.

### **Collaborative working relationships**

Over the past year we have worked hard to fully engage with those stakeholders who have an interest in workforce development. This has included establishing a Strategic Industry Forum. The inaugural meeting of the Forum was held in February 2009 and was the first time that all of the industry stakeholders from the national bodies, state and territory industry representatives and training providers had come together to set out the priorities for the education sector from an industry perspective. Skills Australia has also developed MoUs with each of the industry bodies, state training boards and with Universities Australia to support cooperative working arrangements for workforce development across the key stakeholders. Supplementing these activities, either the Chair or a Board member, delivered over 60 presentations to stakeholder groups as part of an ongoing communications and consultative process. In March 2009 the Deputy Prime Minister expanded Skills Australia's role to encompass the full scope of Australia's labour market needs. Since that time Skills Australia has had a greater focus on working with the higher education sector.

### **A national strategy for skills and workforce development**

Part of our core business is to provide advice on future skills and workforce development needs. Throughout the year we have undertaken a range of activities to assist in this role, commencing with a seminar held in conjunction with the Academy of Social Sciences to consider the issue of planning for an uncertain future, and followed with a forum involving

---

2 [http://www.skillsaustralia.gov.au/Publications\\_and\\_Resources/#Foundations\\_for\\_the\\_Future:\\_Findings\\_and\\_Recommendations](http://www.skillsaustralia.gov.au/Publications_and_Resources/#Foundations_for_the_Future:_Findings_and_Recommendations)

industry and state officials to discuss the commonalities and differences across the current planning processes. We took the view that due to the uncertainty of the future we would use a scenario planning approach and have applied economic modelling against three different scenarios.

We have established a steering group to assist with this task and I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the tremendous contribution of Dr John Buchannan, Dr Tom Karmel, and Dr Glenn Withers. Each have given their time and shared their wisdom as members of the steering group that is providing oversight to Skills Australia's work on the national strategy.

The economic modelling and other research has culminated in the development of *Workforce Futures*, discussion papers<sup>3</sup> which will form the basis of our final strategy document which is due to be published in early 2010.

In conclusion, I would like to thank my fellow board members for their commitment, dedication and attention to detail. Their time commitment has been substantial. I would also like to recognise the excellent work of the Secretariat in providing support to the Board. Last but not the least, my sincere thanks go to our stakeholders for the valuable input they have provided and for the support they have shown in assisting to progress the work of Skills Australia. This is a complex and challenging sector, where progress can only be achieved by co-operation.

I am delighted to chair Skills Australia and I look forward to continuing our work.

Philip Bullock  
Chair

---

3 [http://www.skillsaustralia.gov.au/Publications\\_and\\_Resources/#Australia](http://www.skillsaustralia.gov.au/Publications_and_Resources/#Australia)

# Overview of Skills Australia and the Secretariat

Skills Australia was announced in the Australian Government's Skilling Australia for the Future policy and was established by the *Skills Australia Act 2008* which received Royal Assent on 20 March 2008. The Act sets out Skills Australia's role and establishes the operational arrangements to support it as an independent body.

**Skills Australia's mission is to ensure that Australia's skills needs and workforce development needs are anticipated and met and that skills are utilised to secure a prosperous and productive future for Australia.**

## The Role of Skills Australia

Skills Australia's primary function is to provide expert and independent advice to the Minister for Education in relation to Australia's workforce skills needs and workforce development needs so as to:

- Identify training priorities to respond to those needs
- Increase workforce participation
- Improve productivity and competitiveness
- Identify and address skills shortages
- Promote the development of a highly skilled workforce.

Following the Bradley Review of Higher Education, the Deputy Prime Minister announced in March 2009 that Skills Australia's role would be expanded to encompass the full scope of Australia's labour market needs, giving advice on the effectiveness of both the VET and university systems in meeting Australia's skills needs.

To do this Skills Australia analyses current and emerging skills needs across industry sectors and geographic regions and assesses evidence from commissioned research. Its recommendations on current and future skills needs inform government decisions to encourage skills formation and drive ongoing reforms to the education and training sector.

Skills Australia has established and maintains relationships with industry organisations, state and territory agencies and other persons and bodies with an interest in skills and workforce development needs. In addition, the board distributes information from research and consultations with stakeholders to enable entrepreneurs, businesses and workers to have the necessary information to inform their training and employment decisions.



The board aims to provide independent and high quality advice to ensure the government's investment in training is targeted to promote the development of a highly skilled workforce, increase workforce participation, meet the needs of industry, for the benefit of Australia's productivity and for the benefit of individuals.

## ◀ Skills Australia Board



from left: Mr Philip Bullock, Mr Keith Spence, Ms Heather Ridout, Ms Sharan Burrow.

Skills Australia is comprised of an eminent group of seven experts from a diverse range of backgrounds with a breadth of knowledge and experience in academia, the provision of education and training, economics and industry.

### Mr Philip Bullock—Chair

Mr Philip Bullock (Chair) brings an impressive combination of high level leadership skills, a strong industry background and a commitment to education and training to the position of Chair of Skills Australia. Mr Bullock has more than 25 years experience working with IBM, culminating in his appointment as Vice President, Systems and Technology Group IBM Asia Pacific Region. Prior to this Mr Bullock was CEO of IBM Australia and New Zealand.

He also served on the Board of the Australian Information Industry Association, the Business Council of Australia, where he also chaired their Skills and Innovation Taskforce, the Victorian Schools Innovation Commission and the Advisory Committee to the Australian Graduate School of Management. He is currently a non-executive Director of Healthscope, a major provider of health services in Australia and was recently appointed as a non-executive Director of CSG Limited, which is one of Australia's leading IT services companies.

### Mr Keith Spence

Mr Keith Spence is Chair of the WA State Training Board which provides policy advice to the Minister for Education and Training on matters relating to vocational education and training in Western Australia.

Mr Spence recently retired from his position as the Executive Vice President, Enterprise Capability at Woodside Energy Ltd. He had been



*from left:* Dr Michael Keating AC, Ms Marie Persson, Professor Gerald Burke, Mr Robin Shreeve—Skills Australia CEO.

with Woodside since 1994 in a number of roles including Chief Operating Officer and Acting Chief Executive Officer. Mr Spence brings to the Board extensive knowledge of the resource industry having over 25 years of experience in the oil and gas industry.

Mr Spence is a Non-Executive Director of GESB, Clough and Geodynamics, Chairman of the Industry Advisory Board of the Australian Centre for Energy and Process Training. He is a member of the board of the Australian Institute of Management (WA) and the Curtin University of Technology Council. He also chairs the Carbon Storage Taskforce, recently established by the Federal Minister for Resources, Energy and Tourism.

## Ms Heather Ridout

Ms Heather Ridout is Chief Executive of the Australian Industry Group (AIG) and has previously held the positions of Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director—Public Policy and Communications.

Ms Ridout has responsibility for the overall development and implementation of AIG's policies, strategies and services. Her policy interests embrace the whole range of industry and she has been particularly active in developing AIG's public policy in relation to economic, industry, innovation, education and training. Ms Ridout has broad experience in the fields of corporate and government policy as well as expertise in the areas of education, government, manufacturing, media and regulatory services. She is also a member of the board of Infrastructure Australia and the review panel for Australia's future tax system being led by Dr Ken Henry.

## Ms Sharan Burrow

Ms Sharan Burrow was the second woman to be elected ACTU President and was also the first woman to be elected President of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. This followed an impressive career as a teacher and a range of positions in both the NSW Teachers' Federation and the Australian Education Union, including the President of the Australian Education Union.

Ms Burrow was Vice-President of Education International, the international organisation of education unions, from 1995 to 2000. She is also currently President of the International Trade Union Confederation, a member of the governing body of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and a member of the Stakeholder Council of the Global Reporting Initiative. As part of her ILO responsibilities, she chairs the Sub-Committee on Multinational Enterprises.

## Dr Michael Keating AC

Dr Michael Keating AC is a member of the South Australia Training and Skills Commission, the South Australian Economic Development Board, and Chairman of the Community and Clinicians Expert Advisory Council for Health in NSW. Until recently, he was also the Chairman of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal in NSW.

Dr Keating's principal fields of research interest include the integration of social and economic policy, particularly as it relates to improving labour market outcomes, and research into the factors affecting governance, including how governments, institutions and policies are responding and how relationships between the citizens and the state are changing.

Dr Keating is a former Secretary of the Federal departments of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Finance, and Employment and Industrial Relations. He holds a Bachelor of Commerce (Hons) from the University of Melbourne and a Doctor of Philosophy from the Australian National University. He is an honorary Doctor of the University (DUniv) at Griffith University, a fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences and a Fellow of the Institute of Public Administration Australia.

## Ms Marie Persson

Ms Marie Persson is Deputy Director-General, NSW TAFE and Community Education, the largest vocational education system in Australia with over 500,000 annual enrolments. Ms Persson has over 20 years experience in training and, as Director of Training Reform and Training Initiatives, was one of the original senior executives with the Australian National Training Authority. She is a member of the L H Martin Institute Advisory Board for Leadership and Management in Higher Education, Melbourne University, the Board of the NSW TAFE Commission and a member of the NSW Board of Studies.

Ms Persson has a Master of Education qualification from the University of NSW, is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management and the Australian Institute of Company Directors and is a member of Women Chiefs of Enterprises International. In 2003, she was the NSW Telstra Business Woman of the Year.

### Professor Gerald Burke

Professor Gerald Burke was executive director of the Monash University-ACER Centre for the Economics of Education and Training from 1994 to 2008 and is now an Adjunct Professor in the Faculty of Education. He undertakes research on the finance and organisation of education and training, and on education, training and employment.

He is a member of the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority which is responsible for the registration and audit of schools, vocational and non-self accrediting higher education providers. From 2004 to 2007 he was chair of the Victorian Qualifications Authority, and a member of the Victorian Learning and Employment Skills Commission and the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority.

### Mr Robin Shreeve—Skills Australia CEO

Mr Robin Shreeve began his new role with Skills Australia in October 2009 and is based in Sydney.

Mr Shreeve was previously the CEO of the City of Westminster College, London. This college provides vocationally orientated education and training for over 7000 students across 300 courses. Mr Shreeve has a distinguished history within the tertiary sector including, Deputy Director-General, Technical and Further Education and Community Education, NSW Department of Education and Training.

### Skills Australia Secretariat

Skills Australia is supported by the Secretariat which is responsible for management and provision of resources to facilitate its work. Under the Act, Secretariat staff are to be persons engaged under the *Public Service Act 1999* and made available for the purpose by the Secretary of the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR).

The Secretariat comprises 13 full time staff, including the Head of the secretariat, Sue Beitz, plus two officers seconded from the NSW Department of Education and Training. Staff in the secretariat have experience in policy development, communications and administration and provide support to the board in development of its advice to the Minister and the broad range of activities that support the operation of Skills Australia.

## ◀ Strategic Priorities

Section 27(2) of the *Skills Australia Act 2008* states that Skills Australia must include in its annual report details of any directions given to it by the Minister under paragraph 6(4)(b) or subsection 7(1) during the year. This financial year the Minister for Education requested advice which has underpinned the board's work agenda and has been incorporated into our key priorities.



The key priorities for Skills Australia this financial year were to:

- advise the government on allocation of training places under the Productivity Places Program
- maintain a focus on skills development during the economic downturn
- analyse emerging and future skills needs across industry sectors and across regional areas and the drivers of change in the economy
- report on the effectiveness of current VET governance arrangements to meet the workforce needs of the future
- conduct a pilot project to review occupations within the civil construction industry to inform a broader review of ANZCO
- further develop the relationships with industry, education and training organisations, the states and territories and others who have an interest in workforce development.

## Our Achievements

In the past 12 months Skills Australia has successfully achieved many of these priorities and has made significant progress against others, these are summarised below. The advice that Skills Australia has provided under Ministerial Directions have applied an evidence based approach and relied on extensive research and analysis undertaken by the Secretariat and analysis of reports commissioned externally.

### Identifying priority skills needs across industry

Skills Australia provided advice to the Australian Government on the priorities for allocation of the training places under the Productivity Places Program. This advice was informed by consultations and collaboration with Industry Skills Councils (ISCs), state and territory governments and peak industry bodies as well as commissioned labour market data from DEEWR.

Between 18 August and 28 August 2008, Skills Australia conducted 10 forums with the Industry Skills Councils, together with their key state and territory stakeholders, to gather industry intelligence on current and emerging skills needs for each industry sector.

The forums were facilitated by the Nous Group, a consultancy commissioned by Skills Australia to carry out this work and report on the outcomes of the forums.

Following these forums Skills Australia consulted with state and territory governments to validate the input from industry against regional economic priorities.

The outcomes of these consultations informed Skills Australia's final advice to the Government which was provided in late October 2008.

### Planning for an uncertain future

The advice to allocate the Productivity Places was primarily focused on current and emerging skills needs. Skills Australia also has a role to assist governments plan for skills that will be needed in the future. In order to tackle this more complex problem of planning for an uncertain future, the board has opted to use scenario planning. Scenario planning allows us to consider the implications of different plausible futures and to examine the similarities and differences between these scenarios. In early 2009–10 Skills Australia will be modelling the scenarios to analyse the future skills demand and supply and will be testing these findings with stakeholders through discussion papers and consultation before finalising the National Workforce Development Strategy in early 2010.

## Maintaining skills development during the downturn

Skills Australia was asked to provide advice to the Deputy Prime Minister to inform the Government's response to the Global Financial Crisis.

By late 2008, the global financial crisis was affecting the economy and employment in Australia. The adverse affects of the crisis were most evident in the manufacturing, construction and resources industries. In past recessions there has been a significant downturn in the number of apprenticeship contracts leading to a shortage of skilled labour when the economy recovered. The advent of the 2008 economic downturn raised a risk that the mistakes of the past would be repeated.

In January 2009 Skills Australia sought input from industry stakeholders and provided policy options to government which focused on skills development in relation to the creation of jobs, the retention of workers and early support for redundant workers. The advice also included consideration of the level of intervention required to target assistance in line with changing economic circumstances and local needs.

## An education and training system that meets future skills needs

Skills Australia's position paper *Foundations for the Future: Proposals for the Future Governance, Architecture and Market Design of the National Training System* was released in June 2009 reporting findings and recommendations for a new governance framework for the National Training System. It presented a workable and robust model for the future governance of the Australian tertiary sector.

The paper made the case for investment in skills to be grounded in evidence of demand and priorities. It proposed an integrated approach to planning tertiary education and engagement of industry stakeholder on workforce development to achieve the efficient supply and use of skills. It recommended a central role for industry in the sector's governance to ensure the relevance of training to the demands of the global economy and use of education and skills in employment. The paper also recommended a nationally consistent statutory arrangement for accreditation, quality and regulation.





The position paper was the culmination of a nine-month review process. The process involved the release of an initial discussion paper, research undertaken by NCVET on behalf of Skills Australia which compared governance arrangements in Australia with other countries and roundtables with key stakeholders. This process helped to inform Skills Australia's proposals for governance of the system which were outlined in a second paper.

We received 43 submissions to the paper from a broad range of stakeholders. This input was reflected in and informed the final report to government.

## Review of ANZSCO and skills needs in the construction industry

Skills Australia was asked by the Deputy Prime Minister to conduct a pilot project to review occupations within the civil construction industry and examine the issue of classifying emerging occupations in ANZSCO. As part of this project, Skills Australia was also asked to examine ways to adapt eligibility criteria for skills programs as a means of addressing skills shortage issues identified by the sector. It is anticipated that the project will continue into the next financial year. Skills Australia will be working with the relevant stakeholders including ABS, DEEWR, SkillsDMC, the Civil Construction Federation, the Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Unions and other appropriate bodies to inform the advice that will be provided to the Deputy Prime Minister.

# ◀ Stakeholder Engagement

The VET and Higher Education sectors are comprised of a variety of stakeholders many of whom have a financial stake in the system. Stakeholder engagement is an important factor when providing advice to government.

## Our Stakeholders

Skills Australia aims to build relationships with stakeholders based on trust and collaboration and acts as an honest broker, listening to the views of all stakeholders.

Consultation with stakeholders, who have an interest in workforce development and skills needs, occurs through meetings, requests for submissions and other direct means, such as letters and emails, to canvass views on particular issues. Major presentations and meetings for the financial year are listed later in the report, under the heading 'Key Dates'.



In the financial year 2008–09 Skills Australia met with each of the 11 Industry Skills Councils and various industry peak bodies and research organisations such as the Automotive Training Australia, Australian Industry Group, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, ACTU, Housing Industry Association, Master Builders Association, Minerals Council, National Farmers Federation, Productivity Commission and NCVET.

Since the expansion of Skills Australia's role to include the university system, board members have also engaged with Professions Australia, Universities Australia, the Australian Technology Network and other higher education professional bodies.

Further consultations with industry and government were undertaken in relation to *Foundations for the Future* and the allocation of places for the Productivity Places Program and in relation to the national workforce development strategy. Members of Skills Australia also conducted site visits with both private and public institutions.

## Strategic partnerships with Industry

Together with key industry representatives at the national and state level, Skills Australia established a Strategic Industry Forum on 20 February 2009. This is an important initiative as it was the first time that all of the industry and training representatives had come together to collaborate on key issues for the sector and to ensure that skills development and training did not become a casualty of the uncertain economic times.



The role of the forum is to initiate and develop relationships between key industry bodies across Australia on skills challenges and priorities and to promote a stronger collective industry voice on skills, workforce development and related matters. The forum acknowledged that major change was required to ensure a prosperous and fair future for all and identified key areas to focus on such as quality, equity and fairness, funding, evidence based policy and planning,

sustainability, the image of vocational skills and governance.

Memoranda of Understanding have been signed between Skills Australia and several government bodies and ISCs as well as Universities Australia to formalise collaboration and information sharing in relation to skills and workforce development priorities and planning.

Members of Skills Australia met on a regular basis with stakeholders to canvass their views on a variety of skills issues. These meetings have served to establish stronger relationships, gain a greater understanding of issues of concern, and discuss the role and priorities for skills and workforce development in Australia.

At an operational level, Secretariat staff have met regularly with relevant stakeholders, including officers of various government departments and staff representing peak bodies, to discuss issues as they arose and build ongoing effective relationships for information sharing.

## Communication

Skills Australia is responsible for widely distributing information from research and consultations with stakeholders to enable entrepreneurs, businesses and workers to have the necessary information to inform their training and employment decisions.

The board has achieved this through extensive engagement with stakeholders through a variety of forums such as consultations, meetings, presentations and correspondence. Skills Australia has also provided stakeholders the opportunity to be informed about and provide input to its advice.

The Skills Australia website is the main vehicle for consultation and information sharing, particularly with the wider community. Copies of publications are posted on the site, as are contact details and submission information for formal consultations. The website informs stakeholders of recent activities, provides updates of current projects and advises of current and upcoming consultations.

## Future Directions

Priority areas for research in 2009–2010 include finalising the workforce development strategy.

Skills Australia is well progressed in developing an Australian Workforce Development Strategy. This is being undertaken in conjunction with a number of stakeholders from jurisdictions and industry. The Strategy plans to outline possible actions to increase the number of Australians with appropriate employment skills and to improve the productive use we make of people's skills within organisations, enterprises and workplaces. The Strategy will aim to ensure that Australia has the workforce capability required for a productive, sustainable and inclusive future.

The work on the strategy is being overseen by a steering committee comprised of Skills Australia members, Dr John Buchanan Director Workplace Research Centre, Dr Tom Karmel Managing Director NCVET and Dr Glen Withers CEO Universities Australia. The approach being taken to develop Australia's future national workforce is to analyse current workforce and education trends including historic data, use scenario planning, and engage with Access Economics and other experts to undertake complex modelling and projections.

It is envisaged that the discussion paper will be released in October 2009 and will be followed by extensive stakeholder consultations. The final Strategy is expected to be published in early 2010.

Other priorities for the upcoming year include:

- evaluation of the Productivity Places Program
- a comprehensive vision for the future of the VET sector and
- evaluation of the skills needs for the green economy.

We will continue to work in collaboration with Industry Skills Councils and state and territory training authorities to understand the forces driving change and to implement initiatives to ensure we have the skills that Australia needs to ensure a productive future for the benefit of all Australians.

# Key Dates

## Skills Australia Board Meetings

The Skills Australia board currently meets on a monthly basis. The location of board meetings is rotated throughout the year to enable board members to meet with key stakeholders in a range of capital cities.

Under the Act, a Board Member may be terminated if they are absent without leave from three consecutive board meetings. For the financial year 2008–09 all board members have complied with the attendance requirement.

Dates	Heather Ridout	Michael Keating	Sharan Burrow	Keith Spence	Marie Persson	Gerald Bourke	Philip Bullock
<b>2008</b>							
8 July	P	A	P	P	P	P	P
4 August	P	T	T	P	P	P	P
10 September	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
13 October	A	P	P	P	P	P	P
7 November	P	P	A	V	P	P	P
3 December	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
<b>2009</b>							
6 February	A	P	P	P	P	P	P
6 March	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
3 April	P	P	T	P	T	P	P
8 May	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
12 June	P	P	A	P a/g	P	P	T

P Present   A Absent   T Teleconference   V Videoconference   L Leave of Absence   a/g Acting Chair



## Presentations and Meetings

The Chair and other members of the board are regularly invited to present at external industry, government and private functions and events. Such events serve to inform stakeholders of the role and activities of Skills Australia, but also act as an informal forum for consultation and enable greater understanding of stakeholder positions.

Following is a list of key presentations and meetings undertaken by the Board of Skills Australia for the financial year 2007–2008.

2008	
13 August	Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) Forum Ministerial Roundtable
15 August	National Centre for Vocational Education and Research (NCVER) Chair – Research Forum Presentation
21 August	Australian Skills Network Chair – Panel discussion
22 August	Monash Leadership Forum Chair – Guest speaker
26 August	Government Skills Australia Annual Conference 2020 Chair – Key note speaker
16 September	TAFE Directors of Australia Chair – Keynote speaker – Canberra
25 September	Agri Foods Chair – Keynote speaker – Melbourne
1 October	Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) Chair – Participation in a panel discussion
2 October	AUSTAFE Chair – Keynote speaker – Skilling Australia: the opportunities and threats for TAFE
16 October	Group Training Australia Chair – Opening Address for Group Training Australia National Conference
20 October	EEOz Industry Skills Council conference Board Member – Presentation

29 October	Manufacturing Skills Australia Chair – Presentation and participation in panel discussion
6 November	World Skills Australia Chair – Launch of Team Australia
19 November	Symposium – Creating Centres of Excellence in Remote Areas Chair – Opening Address
20 November	Ministerial Council Vocational Training and Education (MCVTE) Chair – Presentation
20 November	State Training Authority Chairs meeting Chair – presentation
26 November	2008 Industry E-Learning Forum Board Member – Presentation
27 November	VTA Council meeting Chair – Presentation
27 November	Service Skills Australia Chair – Launch user guide
18 December	Council of Australian Governments (COAG)/National Quality Council (NQC) Steering Committee Consultation Session Presentation on VET Training Products for the 21st Century

## 2009

2 February	House of Representatives Roundtable inquiry—impact of combined study and work on youth transitions
4 February	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) OECD Roundtable—Human Capital
10 February	Service Skills Australia Presentation at Service Skills Board meeting
12 February	National Centre for Vocational Education and Research (NCVER) NCVER Competition Policy Roundtable
17 February	Innovation and Industry Skills Australia (IBSA) Chair – Presentation IBSA Board meeting
20 February	Inaugural Strategic Industry Forum
3–5 March	BIG SKILLS CONFERENCE Chair – Presentation and panel discussion
12 March	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) Business and Higher Education Roundtable
2 April	Strategic Industry Forum working group
2 April	Skilling Australia for the future congress Chair – Keynote speaker

16 April	Australian Vocational Education and Training Research Association (AVETRA) Chair – Presentation
1 May	Roundtable – Governance consultations
5 May	Australian Technology Network Chair – Meeting
7 May	TAFE Directors Skills Australia Facilitator – Roundtable discussion Deputy Prime Minister
11 May	Governance consultations
11 May	Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) Chair – site visit
12 May	WA State training conference Chair – Keynote speaker
13 May	Department of Planning and Community Development – Adult Learning unit Chair – Presentation
14 May	Australian Flexible Learning Framework (FLAG) Chair – Presentation
15 May	Governance consultations
19 May	Skills Tasmania Conference Chair – keynote speaker
25 May	Governance Consultations
25 May	Professions Australia Chair – Presentation to the AGM
3 June	Scenario Planning Workshop – Sydney
3 June	National Workforce Development Strategy Steering Group meeting
4 June	Scenario Planning Workshop – Melbourne
12 June	Ministerial Council for Vocational and Technical Education (MCVTE) Chair – Presented to members
16 June	Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry Committee on Education, Employment and Training (ACCI EET) Committee meeting
16 June	DeakinPrime Chair – Workforce Professionalisation meeting
23 June	Universities Australia Chair – MOU
24 June	Education AU Chair – Consultation
30 June	Queensland Studies AQFC pathways project

# Management and Accountability

## Funding and Budget

The Skills Australia board consists of seven members, including the Chair. The members are appointed by the Minister for Education by a written instrument for a term not exceeding three years. Members are paid remuneration based on the Remuneration Tribunal Determination 2008/14 dated 31 August 2008.

Staff within the Skills Australia Secretariat are engaged under the *Public Service Act 1999*, and made available by the Secretary of the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

Funds to cover the operational aspects of Skills Australia, including the conduct of meetings and related travel and accommodation of members are appropriated annually through Appropriation Bill (No.1). Skills Australia's appropriation for the financial year was \$3 million. Expenditure of the appropriation is reported under the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Annual Report, under Outcome 4 Vocational Education and Training.

## Conflict of Interest

Sections 14 and 15 of the *Skills Australia Act 2008*, set out the requirements in case of a conflict of interest for members of the Board of Skills Australia.

Each Member of Skills Australia has disclosed to the Minister all his/her interests, as per Section 14 of the Act.

To assist in managing potential conflict of interest, at the beginning of each board meeting, the Chair invites members to advise of any potential conflict of interest.

There have been no instances of conflict of interest raised to date.



# Contacting Skills Australia

**Skills Australia Secretariat**

**Sue Beitz**

Head of Secretariat

Phone: (02) 6240 7386

Postal address

Skills Australia Secretariat

GPO Box 9880

Canberra ACT 2601

Email: [secretariat@skillsaustralia.gov.au](mailto:secretariat@skillsaustralia.gov.au)

[www.skillsaustralia.gov.au](http://www.skillsaustralia.gov.au)



**Skills Australia**  
GPO Box 9880  
Canberra ACT 2601  
[www.skillsaustralia.gov.au](http://www.skillsaustralia.gov.au)

