

**Submission
No 50**

SKILL SHORTAGES IN NSW

Organisation: Janison
Name: Ms Jacquie Houlden
Position: Director
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Hi David

Many thanks for the opportunity to give evidence at the enquiry recently and for the opportunity to make some suggestions as per the discussions that were had.

Company Background

Janison is a software company based in Coffs Harbour, and over the last few years we have won a number of awards from this regional base including, Telstra Regional Business of the Year and NSW Business of the year as well as various Australian and worldwide Microsoft partner awards. Our turnover at present is around 8 million a year, and we support over 40 families in our local community through employment, as well as various local initiatives such as the Short Sharp Film Festival. Being a company in a regional area means a lot to the community in which you grow your business, more than just employment or even donations to local charities. We are seen as a symbol of what can be achieved in the local area and as such feel we have a responsibility to continue to grow in our present base if we can.

What we do

Janison plays a significant role in supporting transformational changes in education in Australia and around the world.

Janison works with state education systems providing online assessment platforms that support high stakes assessments in a variety of forms. With the national government and its associated agencies such as ACARA, Janison is providing the platform technology and services to support national trials of online assessments for the National Assessment Program – which, when finally rolled out in 2016, will support over 1.3 million students.

In other countries, Janison is also starting to play a key role in helping governments redesign their strategies for online assessment. In Singapore, Janison is working closely with the Singapore Examination and Assessment Board to transition all of their final matriculation exams online. New projects in Finland and Ireland are planned to perform similar functions. Our company also provides technology platforms for innovative global research programs such as Assessment and Teaching 21st Century Skills (ATC21S) which is sponsored by Intel, Cisco and Microsoft.

Finally, Janison supplies more strategic learning platforms to a wide variety of organisations with large numbers of users, such as Rio Tinto, Deloitte, ASIC, Ramsay Health and Brisbane City Council.

With over 1 million users using our platforms each year, Janison plays a significant role in supporting learning and assessment.

Our current situation

When we first started our business in Tamworth in 1998 and then moved it to Coffs Harbour in 2000, the location was chosen because we couldn't afford a presence in the city. Now, without being able to employ enough people in Coffs Harbour, we face challenges with maintaining our presence in a regional area.

Suggestion for incentive

I was asked if I had any suggestions for incentives for companies such as our own or for others to entice them to move to a regional base.

Our small company has paid over \$650,000 in payroll tax since 2005. This is a huge amount for a small company, and in itself, had we not had to pay it, could have grown our company by 8 staff. We have signed up to the payroll rebate scheme, but haven't been able to claim under it, as it requires you to grow your staff numbers rather than maintaining them. There are no rewards for remaining a consistent and viable company which has taken measured risks and grows organically. We have never had to lay off staff, nor do we intend to.

What I would like to suggest is a recognition of how businesses like ours sustain regional communities. I believe an amnesty for a year for payroll tax payments for companies like ours which are aiming to grow their presence in a regional area, would allow that money to be reinvested in our businesses, and extra staff to be employed (resulting in extra payroll tax in subsequent years).

I'm happy to elaborate further or participate in any process you may have to investigate options for regional growth and sustainability.

Regards
Jacquie