

INQUIRY INTO SKILLS SHORTAGES IN RURAL AND REGIONAL NSW

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Theme:

Summary

“Inquiry into Skills Shortages in Rural and Regional NSW.”

**Submission by:
TAFE NSW, Riverina Institute, Griffith Campus**

Preamble

The following submission relates specifically to points:

(g) The adequacy of current measures used to record and report on the skills shortage;

and:

(h) The methods used by training organisations including TAFE to assess skill needs in rural and regional NSW and their response to identified needs.

from the terms of reference of the NSW Legislative Council’s Standing Committee on State Development, “Inquiry into Skills Shortages in Rural and Regional NSW”.

This submission has been prepared in consultation with key personnel at Griffith Campus.

1. Background Information

Griffith campus of TAFE NSW Riverina Institute is the largest provider of vocational education in the Western Region of the Riverina. For the 2004/2005 financial year the campus accepted in excess of 2500 enrolments across all areas of its activity.

In the context of the Riverina Institute Griffith is a medium sized campus that has demonstrated significant and sustainable growth over the past five years. Over the past 6 years the campus has experienced a significant increase in facilities and a concomitant increase in full time and part time teaching staff. The increased facilities include:

Riverina Wine and Food Centre	\$3,200,000
Hair and Beauty	\$ 500,000
Construction Extension	\$ 450,000
Welding Extension	\$ 500,000
Refurbishments for CSU Partnership	\$ 75,000
Child Studies Refurbishment	\$ 20,000

To address the growing demand for skilled and well trained staff in the region Griffith campus has consistently amended its course offerings and has, on many occasions, provided extra courses to meet unexpected demand particularly in the trade areas.

2. Programs Offered by Griffith Campus

2.1 Core Programs

The campus offers courses in the following areas of study:

- Automotive
- Metal Fabrication & Welding
- Hair & Beauty
- Carpentry & Joinery
- Nursing (Aged Care)
- Children's Services
- Welfare
- Business Administration
- Business Management
- Information Technology
- Wine & Food (Production/Processing) including Laboratory Operations
- General Education
- Aboriginal Education

All study areas offer courses from Certificate I through to at least a Certificate III and in some areas through to Certificate IV and Diploma. In semester I 2004 the campus implemented an integrated Advanced Diploma/Degree program in partnership with Charles Sturt University. This program now has two student cohorts and from semester I 2006 the program will be available for students on a part time basis.

Every teaching department now has a suite of courses available that provide appropriate study pathways to students.

2.2 Short Courses

The campus also offers a wide variety of short courses to meet industry needs and requirements, including:

- Safe Working in Confined Spaces
- Food Handling (HACCP)
- OH&S various
- Senior First Aid and Refreshers
- Owner Builder
- Internal Auditing
- Intermediate Boiler Attendant
- Manual Handling
- and many more.

2.3 Traineeships

Traineeships are also a feature of the campus' business. Traineeships are offered across a broad range of vocational areas and are both New Entrant and/or Existing Worker Traineeships. These traineeships range from Certificate II to Certificate IV. Traineeships are ideal for employers who have a specific need for one Trainee in a given area. Traineeships can be offered/conducted in a variety of ways with the main option taken by employers being an 'On the Job' Traineeship.

2.4 TVET (TAFE – Vocational Education & Training) Link Program

Also worthy of mention is the TAFE Link day program offered by the campus. This program caters for High School students in years 11 and 12. This program runs in partnership with three High Schools and two Central Schools. Programs cover a broad range of areas, including the 'trades' areas offered by the campus. Over the past few years student numbers have increased significantly as the following chart indicates.

Table 1: Dollars funded/expended (over financial years) for TVET Link Program

2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005
240,832	279,232	328,609

Table 2: Traineeship funding

	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005
Existing Worker	0	0	10,300
New Entrant	209,000	305,000	258,000
Contracted Training Provision	52,800	45,700	233,000
Totals	261,800	350,700	501,300

3.5 Apprenticeship Training

The following table is recorded in Actual Student Hours. These hours are calculated by multiplying the course hours by the number of students. For this chart the following applies:

Automotive apprenticeships equates to 6 blocks of 144 course hours (2 block per year for 3 years – 864 hours)

Welding apprenticeships equates to 6 blocks of 144 course hours (21 block per year for 3 years – 864 hours)

Construction apprenticeships equates to 6 blocks of 144 course hours (2 block per year for 3 years – 864 hours)

Hairdressing apprenticeships equates to 4 blocks of 144 course hours (2 block per year for 2 years – 576 hours)

Figures in Table 3 show the Actual Student Hours and student numbers thus 43,084/50.

Table 3: Apprenticeship Training

Department	2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005
Automotive	43,084/50	32,572/38	46,644/54	40,531/47
Welding	15,483/18	15,257/18	15,294/18	13414/15
Construction	19,886/23	12,680/15	10,714/12	16,807/19
Hair & Beauty	12,469/22	7,551/13	15,221/26	17,969/31
Totals	90,992/113	68,060/84	87,873/110	88,721/112

It must be remembered that while Apprenticeship Training has remained fairly constant, training through other funding sources has occurred in Pre-Vocational studies particularly in Automotive and Metal Fabrication/Welding.

Griffith campus, as previously, mentioned, has grown its Government funded business by almost 35% in the past five years and by 500% in all other areas of activity over the same period. The campus continues to address skills shortages and in many cases, labour shortages, through various funding sources.

The campus will always prioritise Apprenticeship training and will continue to fund these programs accordingly. However the campus can only train those apprentices that present for training.

3. Industry Liaison

As part of its normal business campus staff constantly liaise and consult with employers and industry representatives to ensure that programs offered are relevant to local, enterprise specific and legislative needs.

The Institute also has three Heads of Study who advise the campuses of trends within industry sectors. It then becomes the responsibility to act accordingly and develop appropriate course Profiles in consultation with local industry and employers.

4. Conclusion

It is felt that this is an appropriate forum to stress that at least from TAFE's perspective there needs to be an important distinction made in the Inquiry between skill shortages and *labour* shortages. There is much anecdotal evidence about seasonal and in some cases long term labour shortages but comparatively little filters through to Griffith Campus in regards to skills

shortages. Often perceived skills shortage issues can be addressed and dealt with immediately through the provision of short courses, establishment of traineeships and in some cases referral to other campuses who may offer programs not offered in Griffith. In some cases delays in the provision of training can occur through prospective students falling in line with timetabling requirements scheduling – waiting for future intakes eg. A student expressing an interest in a certain course in April may have to wait for the commencement of the next offering of that course in Semester 2 (July).

The increased range and flexibility in TAFE's pre-vocational and vocational programs in recent years has been the result of increased links with industry and employers generally and TAFE's willingness to respond to perceived needs. This paper has identified and indicates that there is certainly a great deal of training activity by Griffith Campus and indeed much of this training is meeting industry's needs right across the board.

Apprenticeships, traineeships, vocational education programs for high school students and other forms of vocational education are clearly contributing to both the ongoing growth of local industry and the broader development of the Griffith community.

Griffith Campus staff welcome the opportunity to discuss its current activities, significant achievements and challenges at anytime with industry, employers and other appropriate stakeholders.

We also are keen to participate further in the proposed Inquiry and support the possibility of the Inquiry being conducted in Griffith. Thanks for inviting Griffith Campus to participate in this Inquiry.

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