

The Hon Steven Joyce
Expert Vocational Education and Training Review
C/o Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
PO Box 6500
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Mr Joyce

RE EXPERT REVIEW OF AUSTRALIA'S VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET) SYSTEM

The Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia (CME) welcomes the opportunity to provide comment for the expert review of Australia's VET system (Review). This Review, announced on 28 November 2018 will focus on how the Australian Government's investment in VET could be more effective to provide Australians with the skills they need to be successful throughout their working life.

CME is the peak resources sector representative body in Western Australia (WA) and is funded by its member companies who are responsible for most of the State's mineral and energy production and are major employers of the resources sector workforce in the State. Across WA, our sector employs close to 118,000 people¹, many of which are contributing in regional areas.

The WA resources sector invests significantly in training and is a strong user of the VET system. In the 2016/2017 financial year, resources sector employers spent 3.5² per cent of their total payroll on training activities. The sector invests heavily in apprentice and trainee programs with data indicating apprentices and trainees currently make up around 3.5³ per cent of the workforce of CME member companies. An optimised training system is an important mechanism to deliver the skills industry requires for the productive, safe and successful development of resource projects in WA.

CME has consistently argued for an industry-led, demand-driven training sector delivering high quality and consistent training outcomes. While substantial progress has been made to transition to a demand-driven system over time, sovereignty has resided with the student with little influence from industry – the ultimate client of the outputs of the VET sector.

CME considers Australia's VET system be founded upon:

- Strong independent industry advice and partnerships;
- Shared funding responsibility, between government, industry and individuals;
- Flexibility in the design and delivery of training and assessment;
- Responsiveness to technological innovation and the changing nature of work and skills requirements; and
- Positive perception and clear career pathways.

¹ The Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia. [2018-2028 Resources Sector Outlook](#), April 2018

² The Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia. [Training Survey](#), 2017

³ The Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia. [Diversity in the Western Australian Resources Sector Survey Report](#), 2017

CME supports the submission being made by the Resources Industry Training Council (RITC). The RITC is a joint venture between CME and the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association (APPEA). The primary purpose of the RITC is to engage with the industry sectors it represents and gather intelligence on industry developments, workforce needs and strategies. The RITC is well placed to inform the Review of the resources sector's skills needs and how they can be met by the VET system.

As the RITC submission states⁴, increasing rates of change and shorter cycles of change mean we need to have a flexible and adaptable VET system tuned to lifelong learning requirements of individuals seeking to either enter the labour market or improve job prospects. Furthermore, industry engagement and advice is central to a competency based training system. Improved links between industry and the VET system will make certain independent industry intelligence and developments are considered, gaining optimum employment opportunities for people, and ensure the availability of appropriately skilled labour, in the State.

CME broadly supports the submission being made by the Minerals Council of Australia (MCA) for this Review. MCA and CME share a number of common members involved in the mining industry and we are broadly aligned on matters associated with Australia's VET system. As documented in MCA's submission⁵, the resources industry in Australia is a sophisticated and technologically advanced sector that requires a highly skilled workforce. New capabilities and skills are needed and a broader range of people attracted into the sector, requiring adjustments to what is required in the higher education sector, including VET.

Together with the MCA, CME supports the reforms advanced by Resources 2030 Taskforce and the Productivity Commission to generate a high-quality education system that promotes skills formation and prepares students for technology adoption and use. Delivery of a flexible, responsive and industry-led VET system will ensure the resources sector has access to an adaptable, innovative and productive workforce of the future to maintain a strong and growing economy.

Should you have any further queries on the above matters, please contact Susan Cull, Manager – People and Communities, on (08) 9220 8517 or s.cull@cmewa.com.

Yours sincerely



Paul Everingham
Chief Executive

⁴ Resources Industry Training Council. [Delivering Skilled Workers for a Stronger Economy](#), January 2019

⁵ Minerals Council of Australia, [Submission to the expert review of Australia's Vocational Education and Training System](#), January 2019