



# Submission to the Queensland Skills and Training Taskforce

**September 2012**

## Background

AMMA is the largest national resource sector employer organization. It has an extensive membership base serving industries including:

- metalliferous mining, refining and smelting;
- energy;
- coal;
- exploration;
- hydrocarbons;
- on-shore and off-shore drilling;
- transport and logistics;
- maintenance;
- maritime;
- construction; and
- contractors servicing each of these industries.

Since 1918, AMMA has built an Australian reputation as the most influential employer organization. The reputation is due to AMMA's extensive knowledge base and its ability to communicate changes in workplace issues to relevant sectors.

In relation to skills and training, AMMA works with both industry and government towards the development of a productive, skilled and competitive workforce. It is integral to the development and delivery of Federal, State and local government reforms directed to ensuring an efficient resources sector, supporting skilled job opportunities to the benefit of the whole Queensland economy. AMMA initiatives support directly two of the four pillars of Queensland's economy (resources and construction). Indirectly, support is provided for the other two (agriculture and tourism).

## A growing skills shortage in the resource sector

Recent research commissioned by AMMA into labour demand forecasts indicates that, by the fourth quarter of 2013, the shortage in skilled and semi-skilled people could be as high as 85 000.

The Final Report of the National Resources Sector Employment Taskforce (NRSET) (July 2010) also identified future labour demand exceeding projected supply. The report stated that, by 2015, the projected shortfall could reach 36 000 tradespeople and that the skills shortage was not restricted those directly in mining or construction but extended also to the allied service sector

supporting mining and construction camps; that is, people employed as cooks, cleaners, bus drivers and service workers.

Further, industry reports indicate the shortage of professionals will double throughout 2012, while demand during the construction and operational phases will soar between 2013 and 2016.

## AMMA programs relevant to Taskforce's responsibilities

AMMA works with Federal and State Government entities to deliver a number of important programs of direct relevance to the Taskforce's terms of reference. Current programs include AMMA's:

- Skills Connect;
- Australian Women in Resources (AWRA); and
- Miningoilandgasjobs.com portal.

Further initiatives, to enhance and build upon the current programs, will be rolled out in the near future. They include AMMA's:

- Construction and Resource Industry National Apprenticeship Portal; and
- Resource and Construction Industry Skills Hub.

The current programs and the further initiatives are within the implementation framework of recommendations made by the NRSET. It is noted that the NRSET Final Report sought to provide recommendations for governments, the resources sector and stakeholders to address critical skills needs and to plan for future growth (Final Report, page iii). AMMA was represented on the NRSET Taskforce's Industry Reference Group.

Each of the AMMA programs has the objective of enabling Queenslanders to access skilled job opportunities in the resource sector, related construction sector and other allied sectors. As such, they are of direct relevance to the Queensland Taskforce's consideration of skills and training and its responsibility to 'build a platform on which the Government can deliver an industry-engaged sector producing graduates ready to enter employment and increase Queensland's productivity'.

To assist and inform the Taskforce's consideration of matters within its terms of reference and to inform the Taskforce's recommendations to the Minister, this submission provides an overview of the objectives, key elements and benefit for Queensland of four relevant AMMA programs.

## A. Skills Connect

### **Objectives**

The primary objective of AMMA's Skills Connect is to increase the number of workers trained in the skills required by the resource and construction sectors. It is directed to the growing skills shortage in those sectors.

### **Key elements**

The elements of AMMA Skills Connect are outlined below.

1. AMMA Skills Connect is an innovative mechanism that brings together Australia's peak industry bodies and pre-eminent organisations in workforce related fields to provide member organisations a single point of service delivery. In short, it connects:
  - resource and construction related employers;
  - potential job seekers; and
  - quality industry training providers.
2. It is a partnership model with government, various industry groups and nominated training companies performing roles prescribed in an alliance agreement.
3. AMMA Skills Connect provides a single, comprehensive point of access to services across multiple skill, trade and qualification areas, with all labour segments catered for – unskilled, semi-skilled, trades, para-professional and professional. A variety of mechanisms are used to ensure qualifications and skills are appropriate, including:
  - traineeships;
  - internships;
  - apprenticeships;
  - mentoring through school; and
  - RTO facilities.
4. All facilities for RPL and VoC are being utilised, facilitating access by both employers and individual workers to information about skill requirements.

5. AMMA Skills Connect facilitates connections between projected labour requirements and the upskilling of the workforce:
  - at the specific employer level;
  - via jobs expos; and
  - by way of on-line jobs boards (miningoilandgasjobs.com).
6. Job Search Agencies (JSAs) play a role in:
  - identifying unemployed job seekers who arrive at the Virtual Careers Expo or at miningoilandgas.com; and
  - connect those people to training opportunities available through AMMA Skills Connect.
7. Use is being made of the AMMA Career and Industry Guide, the most comprehensive source of information about employment, training and development in the Australian resource sector. It has specialised sections for apprenticeships, graduates, unemployed people, tradespeople and technicians.
8. A pilot of the scheme was conducted with Wheatstone (in Western Australia) and CCC (in Queensland).
9. AMMA Skills Connect is playing an integral role in the “Count Me In” project in the Surat Basin, which will provide approximately 300 women from local communities with pathways into the coal seam gas and related industries in the region. The pathways include upskilling to enable direct employment in the industry and upskilling to enable women to start their own businesses.

### **Benefits for Queensland**

In the resource industry, significant barriers to entering into a job include:

- lack of awareness about career pathways;
- lack of requisite skills to gain access to those pathways; and
- a disjunction between potential job seekers and both –
  - relevant training; and
  - ‘employer sponsors’ ready to take on candidates who have gained relevant skills.

Further, respondents to an AMMA survey of members regarding this submission strongly identified a need for training to be more demand-driven.

However, AMMA Skills Connect is:

- providing dynamic, employer-specific training solutions;
- assisting workers to move from sectors of the economy experiencing structural adjustment to the resource and construction sectors, where skilled labour is in strong demand;
- providing people with ready access to information about post-training job outcomes;
- improving the match between training and job outcomes for individuals, employers and the resource industry;
- facilitating accurate predictions of skill needs, thereby increasing capacity for workforce planning;
- assisting JSAs to identify and assess training needs of individuals, many of whom will be registered with a JSA in any event; and
- promoting long term co-operation between industry and government.

## B. AWRA

### Objectives

Skilled women are essential to the resource industry workforce. AWRA will work toward a goal of increasing, to 25% of the workforce by 2020, the representation of women employed in resource, allied and construction sectors. It is:

- facilitating the increased attraction and retention of women in the resource, allied and construction sectors; and
- providing employers with two major competitive advantages –
  - a greater pool of talented labour; and
  - strength through workforce diversity.

### Key elements

1. AWRA is an industry-led project, created in partnership with the Australian Government.
2. Gaps in the application of policy and practices at worksites are being identified to improve attraction and retention of women.
3. Appropriate resources to assist construction and resource sector employers to attract and retain women are being identified, developed and disseminated.
4. Organisational change to overcome barriers affecting women's participation is being facilitated by the provision of services regarding:
  - cultural change;
  - the liveability of regional worksites;

- flexible work practices;
- return to work issues; and
- pay equity.

The nature of the services provided includes:

- information programmes;
  - one on one provision of advice; and
  - where requested, guidance to mostly small and medium enterprises (SMEs) (including SMEs that are not AMMA members).
5. Research is being undertaken which builds upon relevant available research and existing best practice in the resources, construction and other relevant sectors.
  6. A network of top executive talent in the resource industry is being grown to:
    - provide oversight and coordination to AWRA; and
    - engage, support and strengthen the work of existing women's networks, other industry peaks and State and Federal government agencies and their respective programs.
  7. With the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA), information is shared and advice is received.
  8. Linkages are being made between companies and existing programs, activities and stakeholder networks by working strategically with:
    - networks of women; and
    - major industry stakeholders, including State and national resources and construction sector representative bodies.
  9. AWRA events include one national conference annually. The major focus of the conference is the implementation of effective organisational change.

### **Benefits for Queensland**

The National Resources Sector Workforce Strategy (NRSWS) identified an opportunity to develop under-represented sources of labour to assist in addressing the skills shortfall. A key under-represented source is women (women represent 45% of the Australian workforce, but only 14.5% of the resource industry workforce). Accordingly, AWRA is in line with the overarching purpose of the NRSWS of assisting the resource sector to meet the demand for skilled labour.

Increased gender diversity results in a more productive and dynamic workforce; enhancing gender diversity makes for better business and increases Queensland's productivity.

Encouraging best practice workplace policies and procedures will facilitate, for the benefit of women and men:

- an appropriate cultural shift towards a more diverse workforce;
- an increase in the industry's talent pool of skilled staff;
- the availability of more flexible work practices; and
- enhanced access to more family-oriented infrastructure.

## C. [miningoilandgasjobs.com](http://miningoilandgasjobs.com)

### **Objectives**

The primary objective of AMMA's [miningoilandgasjobs.com](http://miningoilandgasjobs.com) portal is to address the growing demand for information about how to transition into roles in the resource industry. It connects Australians seeking work with opportunities arising out of the mining boom.

### **Key elements**

1. The [miningoilandgasjobs.com](http://miningoilandgasjobs.com) site was launched in late 2011. The comprehensive nature of it as an online resource sets the website apart from universal jobs boards otherwise available to jobseekers.
2. [miningoilandgasjobs.com](http://miningoilandgasjobs.com) provides jobseekers with information about employment and career planning in:
  - mining;
  - oil and gas;
  - energy; and
  - alternate energy.
3. It includes a Careers and Industry Guide to assist career-planning and, importantly, comprehensive information is provided regarding:
  - living and working in respective regions;
  - migration
  - available career resources; and
  - training and development pathways.



## **Benefits for Queensland**

The NRSET report stated that employers needed to be innovative in their approaches to sourcing and retaining employees. Miningoilandgasjobs.com is a proactive industry measure.

In relation to skills and training in Queensland, it is noted that miningoilandgasjobs.com:

- facilitates job outcomes for those completing training;
- facilitates skilled worker mobility;
- assists skilled workers to move from sectors of the economy experiencing structural adjustment to the resource and construction sectors;
- improves linkages between training and job outcomes;
- is gaining significant industry momentum as the largest, most accessible, source of information about employment, training and development in the resources sector in Australia; and
- encourages workers to plan long-term resource careers.

## **D. Apprenticeship portal**

### **Objectives**

The primary objective of the National Construction and Resource Industry Apprentice Portal is to provide a single online point of connection - regarding the availability of apprentices - between employers, GTOs (group training organisations) and labour hire firms. Via the Apprenticeship Portal, employers will:

- post notice of apprenticeships available due projects commencing; and
- search for apprentices available due to project completion.

### **Key elements**

AMMA's Apprenticeship Portal will operate as follows.

1. It will be a national portal facility with:

- specialised trade and State specific functions, allowing posting and viewing of apprentices;
- a landing page on the AMMA miningoilandgasjobs.com site via which resource and construction companies, and companies in allied industries, may specify -
  - the availability of apprentices coming off a project; and
  - the apprentices' requirements for project commencements; and
- a capacity for GTOs and labour hire companies to post vacancies for apprentices.

2. GTOs and labour hire firms will agree to use the Apprenticeship Portal as a way of ensuring adequate supply of apprentices to resource and construction industry projects.
3. An Apprenticeship Portal co-ordinator will facilitate the connections between employer postings and companies with vacancies and training opportunities.
4. The availability and operation of the Apprenticeship Portal will be marketed to AMMA members, other resource and construction industry employers, GTOs and labour hire firms.

### **Benefits for Queensland**

The Apprenticeship Portal will facilitate the sharing of information about the future movement of apprentices, and upcoming opportunities for them, in the resource and construction industry. Information will include opportunities in Queensland and between other States and Queensland.

It will:

- seamlessly allow apprentices to continue training following the completion of a project;
- provide the flexibility required by employers at different stages of projects;
- encourage flexibility in apprenticeship movements;
- for individual apprentices, provide a rapid solution to completion difficulties;
- for the resource and construction industry and allied industries, provide solutions to the skilled labour demand and supply challenges; and
- for government and industry, provide a data set from a single source, not currently available.

Accordingly, the AMMA Apprenticeship Portal will:

- contribute to the delivery of quality outcomes, including an increase in completion rates;
- improve the match between training and job outcomes for individuals, employers and industry;
- assist VET investment to support demand driven training;
- promote long term co-operation between industry and government; and
- increase Queensland's productivity by promoting flexible, industry-engaged training.

## **Conclusion**

Measures to address skills shortages in the Queensland resource and construction sectors and allied sectors need to be innovative to improve the match between training and job outcomes. The AMMA initiatives outlined above are directed to forging stronger, more effective ties between industry and education.