

3 September 2009

## Training for Tomorrow's Industrial Workforce

Premier Colin Barnett today announced the creation of the Department of Training and Workforce Development, formed by splitting off the training aspect of the Department of Education and Training. This has been on the agenda for a long time, and provided there are targets for TAFE to achieve and there is measurement and achievement of better tangible outcomes for industry, it will be a good thing.

It will see the training sector, TAFE, able to become more focused on delivering future workers for industry who are trained to a higher level.

Make no mistake, Kwinana industry will be in great need of many thousands of new, well qualified workers not only to help build the major infrastructure projects being talked about, but also to replace the big proportion of workers who will retire over the next 10 to 15 years.

In the Kwinana Rockingham region we have the ACEPT campus which has a focus on oil, gas and engineering, and the Automotive Training Centre at Gilmore College campus with a focus on automotive engineering, which can lead students into industry careers in mechanical engineering.

We all know Industry needs the university qualified engineers, scientists and accountants. What many fail to recognise is that it also needs the safety, environmental, human resource and corporate services employees, as well as the electricians, process operators, mechanical fitters. The higher-skilled graduates under the new arrangements will not just be limited to the traditional blue collar people we often think of when we think of industry.

Industry needs these people to be available to them with skills and qualifications that are higher than a Certificate 2 or 3. Mostly they need to be trained to a Certificate 4, Diploma, or advanced diploma level.

There needs to be clearer lines of communication between the training system and industry. Removal of unnecessary steps in the communication process is a good thing and is supported by Kwinana industry, which I might add has an excellent working relationship with Challenger TAFE.

There will be many challenges ahead – TAFE will have to find the lecturers, industry will have to change practices to allow more apprentices and trainees to enter, community organisations will be challenged to uplift those within our communities that have remained outside the employment opportunities even during the recent industrial boom times.

Chris Oughton  
Director

**KWINANA INDUSTRIES COUNCIL**