
Communiqué for the COAG Industry and Skills Council Meeting 3 October 2018

The COAG Industry and Skills Council held a joint meeting of industry and skills ministers in Adelaide today. The meeting was co-chaired by the Commonwealth Minister for Industry, Science and Technology, the Hon Karen Andrews MP, and the Minister for Small and Family Business, Skills and Vocational Education, Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash.

The growth of technology and digitisation will continue to increase the diversity of jobs across Australia. A key challenge is for Australians to build the skills necessary to evolve with jobs as they change and as new ones are created. As this transition continues to accelerate, it is important that industry, governments, and education and training sectors continue to work together to ensure Australia's labour market has the right skills to match work needs now and in years to come. The COAG Industry and Skills Council is uniquely positioned to address both sides of this supply and demand equation, and ministers will play a key role in driving policy responses to the challenges and opportunities that are emerging.

Ministers heard from Professor John Pollaers OAM, Chair of the Australian Industry and Skills Committee, and Dr Jens Goennemann, CEO of the Advanced Manufacturing Growth Centre, about some of the ways in which industry skills needs are being addressed. Professor Pollaers articulated the existing engagement between industry and the training system and the role the AISC plays in helping to position the training system to pre-empt and respond to the emerging skills issues of tomorrow.

Dr Goennemann shared analysis that the importance of manufacturing employment is frequently understated and is in fact far more significant when the upstream and downstream connections are included. He also shared insights on the skills manufacturing needs to meet advances in technology. Ministers also discussed how jurisdictions have been responding to these challenges and opportunities and committed to continuing to work together to consider this area of common interest further.

Ministers also received an update on the Review of the Australian Qualifications Framework from Professor Peter Noonan, the chair of the review panel. Council supports a review of the AQF to ensure there is a future framework that is adaptable and flexible to the demands of industry and students and that they can have confidence in the qualification outcomes.

Council also received an update on the investment in projects that will translate into growth in apprenticeships, traineeships and complementary training pathways, including through the Skilling Australians Fund, such as pre-apprenticeships and training with a strong connection to work.