

By email: VET-Reforms-Engagement@dese.gov.au

Industry Clusters Model

Civil Contractors Federation National (CCF) is pleased to provide a submission on the proposed Vocational Education and Training (VET) reforms announced by The Hon Stuart Robert MP Minister for Employment, Workforce, Skills, Small and Family Business, on 28 October 2021.

CCF is the peak industry body for the civil construction industry. It has around 1900 members Australia-wide, who are responsible for the construction and maintenance of Australia's civil infrastructure, including roads, bridges, pipelines, drainage, ports and utilities.

CCF is the owner of 'CivilTrain' one of the largest private Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) in the civil construction sector. CivilTrain is registered with the Australian Skills Quality Authority nationally, and its programs include qualifications under the nationally recognised Civil Construction Training Package and various state endorsed industry and regulatory courses. CCF is also represented on the Civil Infrastructure Industry Reference Committee (IRC) which, as you would be aware, is responsible for national training package qualifications relevant to civil and industrial infrastructure work.

CCF supports the establishment of Industry Clusters to lead and drive the performance of the VET system to meet the evolving skills and training needs of industry and employers. CCF does not support however civil infrastructure being clustered with building, construction and property as proposed. Notwithstanding the fact that a number of our members provide early-stage development works for the vertical build sectors, in the past civil infrastructure has been under-represented and/or overlooked in many instances when linked with building and construction. This has delivered less optimal outcomes for the civil infrastructure sector. This reform process provides an important opportunity to address this challenge, and in so doing, address current workforce challenges and prepare for new and emerging skills needs.

Preferred Approach – Recognising Civil Infrastructure as its Own Cluster

In light of this, CCF respectfully requests that the Department considers the establishment of a stand-alone Civil Infrastructure Cluster. With more than \$110 billion committed to infrastructure at the federal level over the next ten years, a Cluster specifically dedicated to Civil Infrastructure will help to ensure the vocational education and training needs of the sector are appropriately recognised and delivered in a way that maximises efficiency and productivity outcomes. This would deliver superior benefits to the proposed arrangements by more effectively delivering on the Government's objectives to improve outcomes for both learners and employers, and to ensure training product development is aligned to skills in demand and meets industry need.

Alternative Approach – Establishment of a Mining, Resources, Infrastructure and Energy Cluster

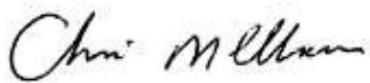
An alternative, albeit a less preferred option, is including Civil Infrastructure in the Mining, Resources and Energy Skills Cluster and renaming it 'Mining, Resources, Infrastructure and Energy'. Aligning civil construction with this Cluster would deliver the following benefits:

- the training package is integrated in the Resources and Infrastructure operations (RII) training package. CCF is concerned delays or unintended errors would occur if development were to be treated separately.

- there is likely to be greater occupational alignment in the required competencies between resources and energy infrastructure
- there are significant synergies in our Workforce Development Plans
- there are similar training RTO's and interchangeable skill sets, with similar career pathways available
- similar workforce issues affecting industry and national training system policy issues

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Industry Skills Cluster model. I remain at your disposal should you wish to discuss this submission further.

Yours sincerely



Chris Melham
Chief Executive Officer
Civil Contractors Federation (National)

1 December 2021