

## Fact Sheet 4 - The History of Government Skills Australia

### The first anniversary of GSA

Government Skills Australia (GSA) is one of the ten national Industry Skills Councils registered by the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) to replace national Industry Training Advisory Boards (ITABs). GSA was formed in July 2005 and replaces the national advisory boards for Local Government and Water (ALGT), Public Sector (PSETA), Public Safety (PSITAB), Correctional Services (NCSAC). The ITABs are no longer recognised by DEST and have ceased to operate as industry advisory agents. The industry coverage of GSA is Government and Community Safety.

### Governance Structure

GSA is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee with governance structures defined in its constitution and document of declaration to DEST. The structure and governance of GSA were negotiated by the representatives of the ITABs it replaced, on the understanding that they were acting as the agents of the industries they represented and with the support and endorsement of those industries.

The Directors of GSA are equally representative of employers and employee interests, with the employer membership nominated by the peak industry groups for each sector, and the employee representatives nominated by their unions. As a result of the evaluation of Industry Skills Councils by DEST, the constitution and governance structures will be strengthened on direction about industry representation and involvement and through a review of GSA's governance and processes. This is being addressed by the Directors with the aim of strengthening the role of industry in its influence on the company, consistent with DEST's key performance indicators for Industry Skills Councils.

### Industry Representation

The GSA Industry Advisory Committees are the essential link between GSA and each of its industry sectors and their wide constituencies. Industry Advisory Committees (IACs) are required to demonstrate that they represent a wide and comprehensive range of interests in each sector. This will include a balance of employer and employee interests, state and territory interests, national peak bodies and professional associations, and training providers. Members of the IACs are nominated by the bodies they represent and are accountable to their nominating body and GSA for the quality of the advice they provide. IACs meet about four times per year.

IACs are expected to:

- actively consult with their sector constituency to ensure the accuracy and reliability of advice,
- provide information to the Directors of GSA through their Director positions,
- provide information to the staff of GSA on project and services,
- promote the work of GSA and its performance indicators, Training Packages and vocational education and training within their sector,
- nominate the employer Director for their sector,
- assist in the development and management of projects.

GSA has developed guidelines for roles and responsibilities of IAC members. Each IAC is supported by a GSA Industry Liaison Officer. Meeting costs for IACs are covered by GSA, and GSA funds the projects nominated by the IACs and included in the annual Business Plan.

Membership of sector Industry Advisory Committees can be found on the GSA website:

[www.governmentskills.com.au](http://www.governmentskills.com.au)

## Contracts and funding

GSA is contracted by DEST to provide a range of services which deliver the DEST Key Performance Indicators. These are:

- Develop quality training resources and progress the Training Package priority areas of rationalisation, Employability Skills, cross industry competencies.
- Maintain strong engagement with small, medium and large enterprises and State advisory groups through active representation and consultation with as wide a range of industry and VTE stakeholders.
- Establish formal consultative mechanisms with training providers and industry stakeholders through membership of Industry Advisory Committees, Project Steering Committees and through seminars, promotion and the website.
- Support Registered Training Organisations to deliver and customize Training Packages through the development of support resources and by responding to requests for advice and information.

GSA's annual budget is approximately \$1.6m.

## Current Issues

DEST has evaluated the roles and effectiveness of Industry Skills Councils and the results of the evaluation are reflected in the new contract negotiated by DEST which places increased emphasis on sound governance and the management of high quality training resources.

GSA has convened concurrent meetings of IACs in November 2006 to begin the process of reviewing the Strategic Plan and developing the Business Plan for 2007. These meetings, held in Adelaide to coincide with the National Training Awards have provided a framework for the priorities of each of the sectors.

The reviews of the Water and Correctional Services Training Packages were completed at the end of 2006. The review of the Public Safety Training Package is expected to be completed by the end of 2007. Local Government and Public Sector have projects to develop support resources for their Training Packages and to manage continuous improvement of the Training Packages through strong industry engagement and the maintenance of an improvements register on the GSA website.

DEST uses data and information provided by a range of sources to produce Industry Skills Reports which identify workforce and skills needs, gaps and activity, at a national, state and regional level. These form an important component of government priorities for training. The Industry Skills Report for government and community safety will be released in April, 2007.

GSA sponsors a three year, DEST funded project, the National Industry Careers Specialists. The purpose of this project is to provide accurate, relevant and reliable information on industry recruitment and skills needs for careers advisers. Full information is available on the GSA website: [www.careergov.com.au](http://www.careergov.com.au)

