

# THE CANBERRA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

The ACT is experiencing the most serious skills shortage in the history of the Territory. This skills shortage is a part of a national problem but has been exacerbated in the ACT by the approach of the Carnell Government which reduced funding to CIT over the period in office by \$12m in real terms. The Stanhope Government's last two Budgets cut a further \$3m to a total of \$15m since 1996.

The CIT has also experienced significant reductions in Federal Government funds over the last 11 years.

Throughout the last 12 years the impact of repeated Budgets at both Territory and Federal level has been to reduce training options, increase class sizes, increase student fees, and to create a potential public probity issue with fewer actual hours delivered against course requirements. The CIT has lost much of its capacity to meet the changing needs of the Canberra community, industry, business and government.

The lack of capacity and flexibility in the workforce has seen a significant cost paid by Government, industry and the community.

The neglect of the CIT's physical infrastructure has also undermined the capacity of the CIT to respond adequately to the growing need for training and further education in the ACT. The last major works expenditure at the Institute was in 1991 with the new facilities for the School of Tourism and Hospitality.

The fact that CIT has been able to meet the training quantum demanded by Government over the last decade has been due to the efforts and goodwill of staff, despite the lack of government support at both the Territory and Federal level.

It has also been undermined by the ideological preference of the Federal Government to support the private training industry, and past neglect within the ACT bureaucracy.

There is an opportunity now to reconfigure the CIT in a significant way to enhance its capacity to support the ACT's community, business and industry needs. The ACT Government Service itself can also utilise the skills and expertise of the Institute.

In order to begin the process of building capacity at CIT, we would recommend to the ACT Government the following specific initiatives.

## 1. **Additional training provision**

CIT will deliver an additional 100,000 hours annually in skill shortage areas of vocational training provision. The additional hours will adjust the required CIT annual target from 3.735 million hours to 3.835 million hours.

Funding sought to enable the provision is an additional \$1,700,000 per annum on an ongoing basis [Average Government payment of \$16.35 indexed by 4%].

Earliest commencement of additional provision from Semester 1 2008. Lead time of at least three months required to enable planning and employment of additional teaching resources.

2. **Update technology standards**

CIT's standing as an Institute of Technology requires that the equipment used for training is of at least the same standard as equipment that students will be expected to use in their workplace.

CIT has a significant stock of plant and equipment that requires replacement and/or enhancement to ensure currency with contemporary industrial standards. The requirement extends across all Faculties with a particularly wide need within the Faculties of Tourism and Hotel Management and Science and Technology. These two Faculties are also those most heavily involved in User Choice Trade Training, areas where equipment provision is not funded by the funding provider.

An injection of \$8.0m is sought to enable the required technology upgrade. The funding would be best provided over 4 years in equal contributions of \$2m and could be tied with a requirement to gain industry contributions of a further 10% over the period.

3. **Recognition of prior learning**

CIT will increase the level of Recognition of Prior Learning [RPL] by an additional 100,000 hours. The additional hours will increase the CIT annual target from 3.835 million hours to 3.935 million hours.

This initiative will assist the ACT Government meet its targets under the Skilling Australia's workforce obligations and is in line with the COAG agenda.

In order to achieve this goal, CIT would need to secure additional investment from the ACT Government for the equivalent of 100,000 nominal hours of recognition effort at the cost of \$1.7m per annum.

4. **CIT building improvements and site consolidation**

The CIT is developing a Master Plan relating to its major infrastructure needs. This Master Plan requires the same commitment from Government that has been made to the upgrading of the physical infrastructure of the schooling system. The neglect of buildings in CIT since self government has paralleled that in schools. Recent politically motivated Federal Government support for private training infrastructure, eg the \$7m grant to the MBA, highlights the need for CIT to be supported to maintain and improve its physical infrastructure.

5. The ACT Government should work towards the full utilisation of CIT as the preferred training provider for the ACT Government workforce. This requires clear policy and resource allocation changes to ensure that ACT Government resources are not lost to the private training sector. Partnerships between ACT Government agencies and CIT will have a multiplier effect to the long term benefit of the agencies and the CIT.

The Chief Executive and Director of CIT Dr. Colin Adrian has recently announced a radical reorientation of the Institute's goals and focus with a major organisational restructure to be put in place from the commencement of 2008. This reorganisation is intended to:

- *Grow the business*
- *Promote quality education and learning*
- *Expand organisational capability*
- *Establish contemporary client services and facilities*

- *Pursue industry, community and Government partnerships*

The AEU wishes to work co-operatively with the CIT to achieve these objectives. A major vehicle for discussion of the restructure will be the recent Enterprise Agreement. The success of the restructure and positive outcomes for the ACT community will depend on the capacity, professionalism and flexibility of the Institute workforce.

Immediate and ongoing improvement in ACT Government support for the CIT will be an economic and social driver towards a more dynamic and inclusive ACT community and better student outcomes.