

Technology, innovation and globalisation are changing the way businesses operate in Australia. In order to better understand the workforce and skills changes being experienced by businesses operating in this environment a national survey of Associations focussed on:

- industry workforce development and planning activities
- specific foundation skills and language, literacy and numeracy (LLN), and
- experiences of training.

Survey respondents were from across IBSA's six industries Business Services, Cultural & Creative Industries, Financial Services, Information & Communications Technologies, Printing & Graphic Arts and Training & Education. Results from the survey will be used to further inform IBSA's Environment Scan (Escan) 2012.

### Workforce Development

Most respondents indicated that 25% or less of their members had a Workforce Development (WD) plan in place and the triggers most likely to result in the formation of a strategy to address skills gaps in their workforce are:

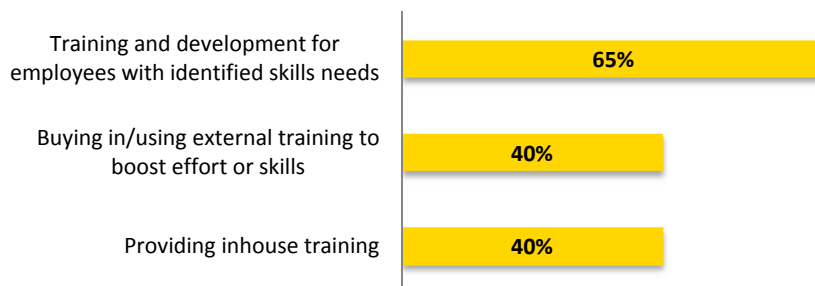
1. difficulty with attraction, recruitment and retention, and
2. introduction of new technology.

Cost of training and skills funding, upskilling and retention were identified as the three most important workforce development issues to Associations' members and the five workforce development initiatives Associations are mostly involved with being:

1. Collaboration with industry - committees, seminars, professional forums
2. Informal links with other businesses - occasional conversations about workforce development issues, recruitment, retention
3. Formal links with other businesses - strategic alliances, formal networks, structured meetings)
4. Facilitated business development programs, and
5. Supporting work experience or job placement programs.

Most associations indicated that 25% or less of their member organisations don't have the skills currently needed in their businesses with greatest skills needs being in professional and technical areas, customer service skills and leadership, coaching and mentoring.

The three main activities through which associations' members are addressing their skills needs are:



Emerging or ongoing skills were reported as having the greatest impact on (1) profits, performance goals and productivity, (2) strategic planning and positioning and (3) increasing employee stress.

### Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN)

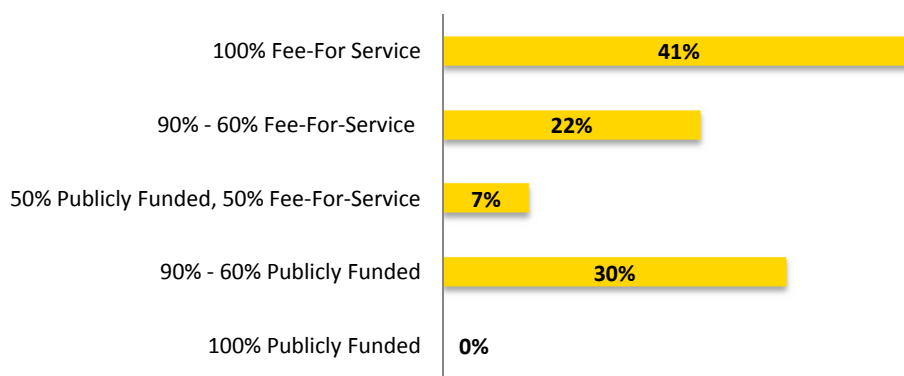
Over 70% of association respondents indicated that:

- their member organisations were generally concerned with workplace LLN, and
- they highlighted the importance of supporting and recruiting for workplace LLN capability with their members

Associations reported that their members' workforces do not have sufficient LLN capability and the main strategy employed to address LLN concerns was to refer employees to training providers for LLN assessment and skilling. The exception to this picture was financial services where associations reported significantly less concern about LLN.

### Commitment to Training

Associations strongly indicated that they promoted training to their members and that the vast majority (96%) of their members support skills training. This correlates with 93% of associations' providing training services to members, 63% of which is fully or mostly industry funded, as indicated in the figure below.



### Technology and business sustainability

Associations (54%) indicated that the NBN and wider availability of digital technologies would not substantially change how their members operate.

Business sustainability is mostly being addressed through:

1. reduce, reuse and recycle policies
2. workforce planning to secure better skilled employees, and
3. increasing use of technology supported processes.

The most common barrier experienced by associations' members is understanding, and taking deliberate decisions on, business sustainability.