

Enabling a diverse workforce

Individuals, communities and businesses all stand to benefit when there is equity in participation and achievement in training and employment. Access to work and development opportunities for all groups within society can contribute to economic prosperity, social cohesion and a healthy business environment.

Demographic drivers

Major demographic trends are impacting on the Australian workforce, creating:

- ▶ Growth in the numbers of mature aged workers
- ▶ Declining numbers of young people entering the workforce
- ▶ A shrinking labour pool
- ▶ Fewer homogenous workplaces – in terms of employee age, cultural background, education and ability

More than ever businesses need to maximise the effectiveness of available workers. Workforce development solutions that address the needs of ALL potential employees are critical to business success.

Business benefits

Building equity and diversity into business is not simply an act of desperation when faced with skill shortages, or an idealistic feel good exercise. When diversity in the workforce is well-managed businesses reap significant rewards. These can include:

- ▶ Improved creativity, innovation, problem solving and teamwork
- ▶ Higher staff morale, greater loyalty and reduced absenteeism
- ▶ Better external networks and the ability to reach wider markets

Additionally, workers from some disadvantaged groups can bring particular skills to the workplace such as resourcefulness, experience, maturity, conscientiousness, determination and dedication.

Unlocking potential

Certain conditions are needed within the training and employment environment to build a diverse workforce. These include:

- ▶ A commitment to equity of participation and achievement in training and employment
- ▶ The availability of inclusive training products and services
- ▶ The use of responsive approaches to teaching, learning and assessment
- ▶ An expectation of success among individuals and employers

Taking action

Innovation and Business Skills Australia (IBSA) will support the development of a diverse workforce by:

- ▶ Developing inclusive training products, services and operations that meet the needs of all potential users
- ▶ Reviewing training products to ensure that students with disabilities are able to access and participate in education without experiencing discrimination
- ▶ Seeking strategic advice from relevant stakeholders with an equity perspective for the development and review of all training products
- ▶ Using an equity evaluator during the development and review of all Training Packages
- ▶ Conforming with DEST's Good Practice Guide for Industry Skills Councils to implement the Disability Standards for Education 2005
- ▶ Attending to the language, literacy and numeracy requirements of industry in training product development without creating unnecessary barriers to existing or potential workers
- ▶ Communicating the business benefits of a diverse workforce to industry
- ▶ Promoting quality teaching, learning and assessment through the implementation and continuous improvement of the Training and Assessment Training Package

About IBSA

Living its charter to build capability and professionalism within the business community, IBSA actively engages in sharp-focused consultation with industry to gather market intelligence on trends and skill needs, enabling it to develop training products for the VET sector designed to foster innovation in thinking and practice.

IBSA is one of 10 authorised Industry Skills Councils, and is the official voice on skills and training for a diverse range of industries leading the innovation economy:

- ▶ Information and Communication Technologies
- ▶ Business Services
- ▶ Cultural and Creative Industries
- ▶ Financial Services
- ▶ Printing and Media
- ▶ Education