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To: Consultation Team
Jobs & Skills Australia

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JSA Workplan development

Thank you for the opportunity for Accommodation Australia (AA) to comment on the proposed annual work plan process for Jobs & Skills Australia (JSA). Overall, the proposed process looks comprehensive and appropriate to the important task given to JSA. Our reflections on what is proposed are outlined below for your consideration.

Consider a Two-Year Cycle

The legislative requirement for an annual report is understood. However, even within that requirement there may be some aspects of the workplace plan process that are best done every second year (on alternating years), so as to give them the attention they deserve. The proposed plan deliverables are ambitious and there is a danger that it becomes like painting the Harbour Bridge – you only just write the last word of your annual report and you begin the process again. JSA should not be process driven – its value will come from analysis, reflection and insight.

Gap in what is proposed – the need to report against the forecasts

At least every second year, JSA should publish in its annual report how the actual job outcomes compared with what was previously forecast. For example, important decisions are made based on the five-year industry and occupation employment projections, but very little is analysed five years later as to whether the initial projections were accurate. Work undertaken by ACCI a couple of years ago indicated that actual growth in certain industries and occupations did not match the initial forecasts. Publishing outcomes compared with forecasts and their level of deviation will help in understanding the degree of uncertainty in the forecasts and also lead to a better understanding of the unpredictability of certain events that change the trajectory of industries and occupations.

Skill Needs are Local

We often talk about national skills needs, but “Australia” does not employ anyone. Only businesses, organisations and governments employ people. Skill needs are local. JSA in its processes needs to be constantly aware that national and regional analysis can only go so far, and that an overreliance on skills priority lists for migration and training funding risks withdrawing much needed support for learners, job seekers and businesses that have genuine skill needs. The consultation and industry intelligence component of the work plan is critically important.

Skill needs can arise in unexpected areas

Related to the above point, sweeping assumptions are often made about skill needs for certain industries without understanding that the skill requirements may be much more complex than

generally assumed. For example, in the accommodation sector, which embraces resorts, luxury hotels, motels and related establishments, there is an assumption that the only needs are for “hospitality workers”. However, our members’ needs are much broader, including gardeners, maintenance workers, electricians, plumbers, drivers, finance and clerical staff, health/wellness, and a whole host of other skilled personnel.

In depth capacity study

AA would be keen to see JSA undertake an in-depth study in our sector either for accommodation as a stand-alone sector, or accommodation and food service more broadly. Our sectors often get caught up in problems relating to defining tourism, or even hospitality. Accommodation and food service is one of only four industries that is expected to generate almost two thirds of the total projected employment growth to 2026 (NSC:2022). An in-depth capacity study of the sector would be beneficial in identifying the broader range of skills needed (see above) and also the problems associated in having the skills and labour available in the locations needed. Mobility of the workforce is a critical issue for us, as is seasonal fluctuations in demand. This is why, for example, working holiday makers are an important part of the labour mix due to their mobility and willingness to serve in a wide range of roles to fulfil short term seasonal needs.

Taking this request to the broader discussion question posed in your consultation paper, some of the criteria that could be used to assess the benefit of an in-depth study could be:

- Potential impact on future jobs growth
- Complexity of labour and skills – not just in the range of skills and jobs, but location.
- Cycle of industries – the length of time since an industry was last examined. There seems to have been a range of government-led in-depth studies on mining, IT and health, but very little on industries such as ours.

JSA Products

We are regular users of the outputs of JSA. We recognise that there is still a transition process in place from the NSC to JSA. As part of that, we would be keen to ensure that all of the previous reports undertaken by predecessor bodies were fully accessible on the JSA site.

If you have any questions on the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully



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