

RESPONSE 1

SKILLING AUSTRALIA - DISCUSSION PAPER 2008

Wed 2/04/2008 12:27 PM

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your Discussion Paper 2008.

Our organisation, the Combined Small Business Alliance of Western Australia (CoSBA) is a peak small business owner/employer body, as such CoSBA acts as a representative and united voice for and on behalf of small business organisations, such as Business associations, local chambers of commerce, industry associations and organisations that exist to support small business. In so doing, we actively represent the interests of our Affiliates, and small business in general, by lobbying Governments and in being represented on a number of forums and bodies.

Affiliates of CoSBA have a combined membership comprised of an estimated 3,200 employers, with a conservatively estimated annual turnover of \$800,000,000, employing an estimated 16,000 employees.

In responding to the Discussion Paper 2008, we would submit, as you are no doubt aware, small business comprises approximately 96 per cent of businesses in Australia and employs 50 per cent of the private sector workforce. Accordingly, we seek your consideration for the establishment of small business traineeships as a part of the mix of training initiatives contemplated for skilling Australia for the future.

You may recall small business traineeships were implemented by the previous Government in the mid 1990's, and was in our judgment a very successful program and well received by small business.

Over time there have been many studies/reports conducted by the Federal Government on the needs and aspirations of small business, such as for example, 'More Time for Business', all of which have clearly established that small business has different needs to that of big business and therefore should be treated differently, and that a 'one size fits all' approach should not be contemplated.

It is on this basis that we seek your consideration for the implementation of small business traineeships.

Chief Executive Officer
Combined Small Business Alliance of WA Inc.