



8 SCIENCE AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGY CAREERS

Australia's science and emerging technology industries are growing quickly, and have strong demand for skills in innovative, science-related, leading edge activity.

Australia's industries need people trained in science with good technical skills as well as with higher-level and research qualifications.

Skill shortages don't occur only in traditional trades.

Skill shortages occur in any growing industry, where demand for skills outstrips supply.

Today, Australia's science and emerging technology industries are growing quickly, and have strong demand for skills in innovative, science-related, leading edge activity.

Australia's industries need people trained in science with good technical skills as well as with higher-level and research qualifications.

In 2002, 8,500 people trained in science-based VET qualifications. There were 300,000 subject enrolments in science-related subjects.

In January this year, the Australian Government introduced a special additional incentive for innovation industries. The amount of \$1,210 is paid as a special incentive to employers taking on a New Apprentice in an identified innovation training qualification such as Aeroskills, Electrotechnology, Information Technology, Process Manufacturing and Telecommunications at the Certificate III/IV level.

Science Project

The Australian Government is now working on the development of a project to promote the diverse range of science-related career options which are accessible through VET.

It is proposed that under this project, the Howard Government will develop careers materials, a web site, and an education strategy which could be implemented through industry-based science careers liaison officers promoting a range of information products through schools, career expos, industry and trade fairs.

Emerging Technology Project

Through the National Industry Skills Initiative the Australian Government has worked with industry to produce a number of objectives and strategies aimed at addressing the skills development issues associated with the implementation of new and emerging technologies.

This project focused in particular on Photonics and Nanotechnology areas. However, it aimed to provide guidance on new and emerging technologies in general.

An industry-led Task Force will be established to conduct research and analysis to identify and document the skills needs of industries using new and emerging technologies and identify the extent to which existing mechanisms anticipate, forecast and address skills needs.

Research will also be undertaken to identify the skills and competencies necessary for employees to work with new technologies. The establishment of focus groups will help industry stakeholders identify and endorse the skills needed to work with emerging technologies, including the mapping of potential career paths.

The project will ensure that skills and competencies required to work with emerging technologies are identified and included in existing National Training Packages.