



## 9 REPORT OF THE SENATE INQUIRY INTO CURRENT AND FUTURE SKILLS NEEDS

In November 2003, the Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education References Committee released a report, *Bridging the skills divide* after a 12-month examination of Australia's skill needs and training system.

The report contained constructive suggestions for improvements to the existing training framework. There was also strong support for the Australian Government's current policy directions and initiatives.

Among its 52 recommendations, the report called for:

- improved labour market and skills needs forecasting;
- responsiveness of the national Training Packages to industry and individual learners' needs, including generic employment skills;
- greater use of group training arrangements;
- consideration of regional skills needs;
- action on careers services; and
- the investigation of innovative and effective models for the local delivery of vocational education by both public and private providers.

The report is available online at [www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/eet\\_ctte/skills/report/index.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/eet_ctte/skills/report/index.htm)

To address many of the recommendations of the Senate Report, the Australian Government has a range of initiatives in place including:

- the National Industry Skills Initiative;
- the targeting of New Apprenticeships incentives rewarding high-skill intensive training;
- the continuing focus of Training Packages on quality training and skills, and flexibilities to meet changing industry skills needs; and
- intensive work to support students' transition from school to work and further training or education.

The *National Skills Shortages Strategy* will further implement the recommendations of the report, working in partnership with industry, education providers and the broader community.