

## Statement of Victorian Skills Commission Policy

The Victorian Government and the Victorian Skills Commission are committed to the COAG Resolution of 2006 which (in part) states that:

*“Once apprentices or trainees have demonstrated competency to the satisfaction of their employer and Registered Training Organisation (RTO), they will be able to be certified as competent by the State Training Authority (STA), without the need to make special application for this or the need to serve a minimum time. To ensure standards are maintained STAs will monitor the duration of apprenticeships and traineeships and will intervene, where necessary, where completion patterns appear irregular.”*

In implementing this commitment, the Victorian Government’s policy, outlined in Government’s Skills Statement *“Maintaining the Advantage Skilled Victorians,”* is that:

*“The Government will work with industry to ensure that early completion is a common feature. The key to maintaining a highly skilled workforce while accelerating apprenticeships will be to ensure that the quality assurance system for training organisations is rigorous.”*

To meet the COAG timelines, a basic process was implemented from mid 2007. This places the onus on the employer and apprentice to instigate an early completion. The employer and apprentice notify the RTO that the requirements of the training plan have been completed, the RTO satisfies itself that the qualification has been attained, the RTO has the parties sign a “completion agreement” and this results in the RTO issuing the qualification and notifying Skills Victoria of completion of the contract.

The Victorian Skills Commission notes that Registered Training Organisations have the prime responsibility for assessment of competency, consistent with the provisions of the Australian Quality Training Framework, but that meaningful and on-going consultation with the employer and the apprentice around the development, delivery and monitoring of a training plan and the attaining of competencies within the relevant qualification is required.

The process must allow for timely notification of competency attainment, the opportunity for an employer/ apprentice to challenge an RTO’s assessment if that assessment is considered to be inconsistent with the performance of the apprentice in the workplace and include a role for Apprenticeship Field Officers in referring disputants to an independent third party for mediation.

Such a model has been trialled in Victoria in the Engineering Industry during 2008 and must now be rolled out across the remainder of industries with apprenticeship arrangements in place, consistent with government policy. In doing so, it must be noted that the existence of competency based wage progressions is currently limited to the Engineering sector and therefore the requirement to notify an employer of the attainment of a wage progression point does not apply to any other industry at this time.

A work plan for 2008-2010 has been prepared to facilitate the roll out across all industries, against which the Commission is to receive regular progress reports.

To ensure on-going quality assurance and effective implementation, there will be a process of data collection, reporting and monitoring of the implementation of competency based progression and completion. This will be done in conjunction with the relevant ITAB. There will also be regular reporting to the Commission.