

Inquiry into the delivery of vocational education and training in regional, rural, and remote Queensland

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1 February 2023

Committee Secretary
Education, Employment and Training Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

EETC@parliament.qld.gov.au

Re: Inquiry into the delivery of VET in regional, rural and remote QLD

Dear Sir/Madam,

[Gilmour Space Technologies](#) is Australia's largest employer in the Space Industry. We design, test, and manufacture Australian-made rockets and satellites on the Gold Coast; and will soon be launching them to space from our newly constructed Bowen Orbital Spaceport in north Queensland.

As a growing company with over 180 employees – 60 of which are welders, fabricators, machinists, and technicians across the mechanical, electrical, and composite manufacturing trades – we view the education, training, and re-training of aspiring technical tradespeople as critical to the success of a viable space manufacturing industry in Queensland and indeed, Australia.

Like many local businesses, we are concerned about the growing shortage of skilled technical tradespeople in Australia, particularly for new industries like Space, and how this will impact the future of manufacturing in both metropolitan and regional centres. We are also concerned about the risk of falling education/training standards and basic skill levels, as more and more industries and companies struggle to find talent.

To that end, Gilmour Space is actively engaging with VET organisations like TAFE in Queensland and NSW, as well as with trade colleges and schools across Australia, to inspire and educate the next generation of 'space tradies' (boiler makers, fitters and turners, machinists and technicians) about high-tech jobs in the New Space industry. Since last year, our Gilmour Space Apprentice Program has employed five young apprentices in our welding, machining, fabrication, and composites manufacturing teams.

And we continue to offer exciting new pathways to VET students, graduates and alumni through our [diverse employment opportunities](#) and in-house training.

We believe that VETs play an important role in

- Providing good candidates with relevant competencies to Industry.
- Ensuring a good foundation of skills and knowledge in their Trade.
- Helping to advise students on possible careers and pathways.

- Attracting more people (regardless of age, gender, etc) into skilled trades.
- Enabling 'older' workers to upskill or reskill for other jobs and industries.

We would also encourage the Committee to consider supporting promising industries with strategic import (like Space), with measures to proactively generate a workforce with industry ready skills, e.g., by

- Introducing VET programs/courses that recognise the current and changing needs of key local or regional employers, as well as emerging industries like Space – e.g. the current avionics standard is focused mainly on the aviation industry for aircraft maintenance.
- Working with key employers to develop custom programs and strategies that would deliver VET-certified/recognised apprentices – e.g. industry targeted apprenticeship support programs.
- Considering more direct pathways from Trade to, say, a manufacturing engineer without having to return to university.

We appreciate the focus on this important issue of future-proofing our workforce and driving the growth of advanced manufacturing in Queensland.

Warm regards,

Michelle Gilmour

Director, Marketing & Communications
Gilmour Space Technologies