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SPEECH – OVERSEAS PASSENGER TERMINAL

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I WOULD LIKE TO SHOW MY RESPECT AND ACKNOWLEDGE THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS FOR THE LAND, OF ELDERS PAST AND PRESENT.

GOOD AFTERNOON AND WELCOME. THE HONORABLE ANDREW ROBB MINISTER FOR VOCATIONAL AND FURTHER EDUCATION, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

I HAVE OVER THE PAST WEEKS WITNESSED A SUCCESSION OF NEWSPAPER HEADLINES HIGHLIGHTING THE CURRENT SITUATION IN RESPECT OF SKILLS SHORTAGES.

A NATIONAL FARMERS' FEDERATION SPOKESPERSON HIGHLIGHTED WITH THE DROUGHT EASING SOME 50,000 WORKERS WILL BE NEEDED TO MEET FARM CAPACITY IN THE RURAL SECTOR.

HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM, NEED TO ATTRACT SOME 65,000 MORE PEOPLE TO THE INDUSTRY.

IN KALGOOLIE W.A. THE MAYOR IS HOLDING OVER 27 MILLION DOLLARS IN CAPITAL WORKS TO THE NEXT FINANCIAL YEAR CITING SKILLS SHORTAGES AS THE CAUSE.

AN AWARD WINNING RESTAURANT IN W.A. CLOSED DOWN DUE TO THE DIFFICULTIES OF FINDING AND RETAINING CHEFS.

A NEW NICKEL MINE IN TASMANIA HAS HAD ITS OPENING TIMETABLE ADJUSTED DUE TO SKILLS SHORTAGES.

EQUALLY, THERE ARE MANY, MANY POSITIVE THINGS HAPPENING IN THE SKILLS ARENA. INITIATIVES THAT DEMONSTRATE COMMITMENT AND RESOLVE ACROSS ALL STAKEHOLDERS BEIT GOVERNMENT, INDUSTRY, EDUCATORS OR EMPLOYERS.

SINCE I WAS APPOINTED TO THIS ROLE 7 MONTHS AGO – I HAVE BEEN CONTINUALLY IMPRESSED WITH THE BROAD RANGE OF ACTIVITIES TAKING PLACE TO ADDRESS THE SKILLS SHORTAGES.

I WAS RECENTLY PRIVILEGED TO ATTEND ALONG WITH THE MINISTER ANDREW ROBB, THE NSW METALS AND ENGINEERING SCULPTURE AWARDS – AN INITIATIVE OF THE NSW SHEET METAL ASSOCIATION FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS – THE FINALISTS DRAWN FROM SCHOOLS THROUGHOUT NSW SHOWCASED THEIR METAL SCULPTURE WORK AT AUSTRALIA SQUARE IN SYDNEY .

YOU MIGHT AGREE A SHEET METAL APPRENTICESHIP COULD BE A HARD SELL FOR ANY CAREER COUNSELOR. BUT, HERE WAS AN INITIATIVE THAT ENCOURAGED STUDENTS TO ENGAGE WITH THAT INDUSTRY - CREATIVELY.

IT MAY COME AS A SURPRISE TO YOU THAT THE FINALISTS, SOME DOZEN OF THEM, CAME FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE. THERE WERE 4 GIRLS AS FINALISTS. SCHOOLS FROM BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR, THERE WERE STUDENTS FROM METROPOLITAN SYDNEY AND REGIONAL NSW.

SO WHAT'S THE POINT OF THIS – WELL, IT IS THE OUTCOMES, THE VERY POSITIVE OUTCOMES, THAT IN MANY WAYS HIGHLIGHT WHAT THE INSTITUTE IS ALL ABOUT.

FIRSTLY, ITS INDUSTRY TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADDRESSING ITS SKILLS NEEDS – WORKING WITH EDUCATORS, WITH GOVERNMENT.

ITS INDUSTRY LOOKING AT CREATIVE WAYS TO RECOGNISE, ENCOURAGE AND HARNESS THE TREMENDOUS TALENT THAT EXISTS IN THIS COUNTRY.

IT'S ABOUT QUALITY TEACHING, PASSIONATE TEACHERS WHO CONTRIBUTE BEYOND AND ABOVE THE CALL OF DUTY. TEACHERS AND TRAINING ORGANISATIONS WHO DISPLAY INNOVATION AND A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE.

ITS BREAKING DOWN THE NEGATIVE BARRIERS THAT HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO DENYING MANY RECENT GENERATIONS OF YOUNG PEOPLE TO PURSUE THEIR TALENT – VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IS NOT, AND SHOULD NOT BE SEEN AS SECOND CHOICE.

THE INSTITUTE HAS THREE PRIMARY OBJECTIVES:

IT WAS ESTABLISHED TO PROMOTE, AND ADVANCE, THE LEARNING, TEACHING, AND TRAINING IN AUSTRALIAN TRADES AND SKILLS, WHILE ALSO ELEVATING THE STATUS OF TRADITIONAL TRADES. MAKING TRADES A RESPECTED FIRST CHOICE FOR SCHOOL LEAVERS AND THOSE SEEKING A CHANGE IN CAREER.

IN PARTICULAR FOCUSING ON AREAS OF SKILLS SHORTAGE.

ADDITIONALLY, AND IMPORTANTLY, ITS ABOUT ESTABLISHING AN INDUSTRY STAR RATING SYSTEM THAT RECOGNISES HIGH PERFORMING REGISTERED TRAINING ORGANISATIONS. PROVIDING EMPLOYERS, CAREER COUNSELLORS, PARENTS AND STUDENTS WITH A HELPFUL, EASILY UNDERSTOOD GUIDELINE AS TO THE CALIBRE OF THE INSTITUTION THEY ARE CONSIDERING.

BUT MORE ABOUT THIS LATER.

THE INSTITUTE FOR TRADE SKILLS EXCELLENCE IS OWNED BY THE AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, THE AUSTRALIAN INDUSTRY GROUP, AND THE NATIONAL FARMERS' FEDERATION, AND IS FUNDED BY THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT.

TODAY THE INSTITUTE IS LAUNCHING THE SKILLSONE BRAND. THE SKILLSONE BRAND HAS BEEN DEVELOPED TO SUPPORT OUR OBJECTIVE OF RAISING THE PROFILE AND STATUS OF TRADES. THE SKILLSONE BRAND CURRENTLY IS MADE UP OF TWO POWERFUL COMMUNICATION TOOLS. SKILLSONE TELEVISION AND THE SKILLSONE WEBSITE.

WE'VE ENTERED THE AGE OF CONTENT ANYTIME, ANYWHERE AND ON ANY DEVICE.

SKILLSONE IS A FULLY INTEGRATED MULTI-MEDIA PLATFORM.

TO THAT END – SKILLSONE.COM.AU IS A CUTTING EDGE BROADBAND VIDEO SITE ENABLING USER-GENERATED TELEVISION. THAT IS, USERS AND VIEWERS CAN CONTRIBUTE TO STORY IDEAS, VIDEO CVS AND PHOTOS TO BE SHOWN ON TELEVISION, AND THE WEB.

THIS SKILLSONE MATERIAL FEATURES ENGAGING TELEVISION AND WEB CONTENT THAT FOCUSES ON PEOPLE WHO ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT WHAT THEY DO. THE EXCITING CAREER OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE. AND THE SKILLS THAT ARE IN HIGH-DEMAND.

THIS INITIATIVE WILL HELP PROVIDE QUALITY INFORMATION IN AN ENGAGING WAY. HIGH-QUALITY VIDEOS WILL BE AVAILABLE 24 HOURS, 7 DAYS A WEEK, AND THE WEB SPACE WILL GROW INTO AN IMPORTANT RESOURCE FOR TEACHERS, STUDENTS, TRAINERS, PARENTS, EMPLOYERS, ANYONE WANTING TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SKILLS, BE ENTERTAINED AND INSPIRED.

WITH THE SUPPORT OF FOXTEL, AUSTAR, SKILLSONE TELEVISION WILL BE BROADCAST ON THE AURORA COMMUNITY CHANNEL.

A SERIES OF PROGRAMS WILL BE PRESENTED AS A BRANDED CHANNEL PROVIDING 18 HOURS OF SKILLS TELEVISION EVERY WEEK. SKILLSONE TELEVISION WILL PROVIDE A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR INDUSTRY GROUPS, CORPORATES, TRAINING BODIES AND INDIVIDUALS TO GET INVOLVED BY PROVIDING

INFORMATIVE, INSPIRING CONTENT FOR CAREER COUNSELORS, PARENTS AND STUDENTS.

MUCH OF THE CONTENT ON SKILLSONE TELEVISION HAS BEEN CREATED BY A DIVERSE GROUP OF YOUNG AND TALENTED FILM MAKERS COMMITTED TO CREATING A WIDE-RANGING LIBRARY OF FACTUAL, EMOTIVE, HUMOROUS AND OFTEN INNOVATIVE SEGMENTS THAT SUPPORT THE INITIATIVES OF THE INSTITUTE, AND I'M PLEASED THAT WE ARE JOINED BY SKILLSONE TELEVISION WHO ARE FILMING THIS EVENT.

THROUGH THESE CHANNELS WE WILL BE ABLE TO PROMOTE TO SCHOOL LEAVERS AND THOSE LOOKING FOR A CHANGE IN DIRECTION THE SUCCESS STORIES OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE STUDIED TRADES.

SO, WHAT DO SKILLSONE TELEVISION AND SKILLSONE.COM.AU LOOK LIKE? WHAT WILL THOSE WANTING TO LEARN MORE ABOUT TRADE SKILLS SEE WHEN THEY WATCH OR VISIT?...

[CUE VIDEO]

THE WEBSITE IS UP AND RUNNING FROM TODAY AND SKILLSONE TELEVISION WILL BEGIN BROADCASTING ON THE AURORA COMMUNITY CHANNEL FROM SATURDAY AT 2 PM. 1.9 MILLION AUSTRALIANS HAVE PAID TELEVISION, FOR THOSE THAT DON'T TAKE A LOOK AT WWW.SKILLSONE.COM.AU AND VIEW THE SKILLSONE FILM SEGMENTS. DETAILS OF BOTH OF THESE INITIATIVES WILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE FORMALITIES IN AN INFORMATION PACK.

BOTH SKILLSONE.COM.AU AND SKILLSONE TELEVISION WILL SUPPORT THE OTHER IMPORTANT INITIATIVES BEING UNDERTAKEN BY THE INSTITUTE.

INCLUDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE STAR RATING SCHEME.

THE INSTITUTE FOR TRADE SKILLS EXCELLENCE IS EVALUATING A PROGRAM TO RECOGNISE EXCELLENCE IN TRADE SKILLS TRAINING AMONG REGISTERED TRAINING ORGANISATIONS THROUGH A ONE STAR, TWO STAR OR THREE STAR

RATING. THIS RATING IS GRANTED TO FACULTIES OR SCHOOLS OF REGISTERED TRAINING ORGANISATIONS WHO HAVE BEEN VOLUNTARILY ASSESSED AND EVALUATED RESPECTIVELY BY THE EIGHT INDUSTRY GROUPS OF FOCUS FOR THE INSTITUTE.

THE STAR RATING SCHEME HELPS PROMOTE AND ADVANCE THE QUALITY AND RELEVANCE OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL TRAINING FOR THE TRADES IN AUSTRALIA BY RECOGNISING HIGH PERFORMING TRAINING ORGANISATIONS. THE INSTITUTE FOR TRADE SKILLS EXCELLENCE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SCHEME AND IS SUPPORTED BY EACH PARTICIPATING INDUSTRY SECTOR TO DEVELOP, IMPLEMENT AND MANAGE THE PROGRAM.

IT WILL ALLOW STUDENTS, PARENTS, CAREER COUNSELORS, EMPLOYERS AND INDUSTRY TO ASCERTAIN WHICH REGISTERED TRAINING ORGANISATIONS HAVE BEEN RECOGNISED BY THE INSTITUTE AND INDUSTRY LEVEL, WITHIN THEIR FIELD OF INTEREST.

ENCOURAGINGLY, THIS INITIATIVE IS BEING WELL RECEIVED BY THOSE ENGAGED IN THE TRIALS WITH A GENEROUS RESPONSE FROM REGISTERED TRAINING ORGANISATIONS BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE WANTING TO PARTICIPATE.

THIS DEMONSTRATES THE CONFIDENCE IN THE TRAINING SECTOR GENERALLY, AND THE ENTHUSIASM OF THE SECTOR TO EMBRACE AND IMPROVE QUALITY OUTCOMES.

THIS TOOL WILL GIVE BOTH THOSE WANTING TO STUDY AND THOSE WANTING TO HIRE AN INDICATION OF THE QUALITY OF TRAINING AVAILABLE FROM A PARTICULAR TRAINING ORGANISATION.

AS I INDICATED EARLIER – TRIALS OF THE STAR RATING SCHEME ARE WELL ADVANCED, ENABLING THE INSTITUTE TO FORMALLY BE IN A POSITION TO LAUNCH THE SCHEME TO THE SECTOR AT THE END OF AUGUST.

FINALLY I WOULD LIKE TO DRAW ATTENTION TO TWO OTHER INITIATIVES.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE HARD WORK OF OUR TEACHERS THE INSTITUTE IS LAUNCHING THE TRADE TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARDS.

THE QUALITY OF THE APPRENTICES ENTERING THE WORKFORCE IS A REFLECTION OF THE TEACHERS WHO ARE EQUIPPING THEM WITH THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS THEY NEED. AS PART OF THE INSTITUTE'S WORK TO FOSTER, ACKNOWLEDGE AND REWARD EXCELLENCE IN TRADE SKILLS TEACHING, THE INAUGURAL AUSTRALIAN TRADE TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARDS WILL BE HELD IN NOVEMBER 2007.

AUSTRALIA TURNS OUT SOME OF THE MOST HIGHLY SKILLED TRADES PEOPLE IN THE WORLD. WE ARE PLACING THE SPOTLIGHT ON THOSE WHO HELP TRADES PEOPLE TURN INTO THE SUCCESS STORIES THAT THEY ARE.

23 AWARDS OF \$10,000 WILL BE PRESENTED TO TRADE TEACHERS WITHIN THE INSTITUTE'S INDUSTRY GROUPS OF FOCUS.

GOING HAND IN HAND WITH THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AT REGISTERED TRAINING ORGANISATIONS IS THE QUALITY OF ON THE JOB TRAINING. ANOTHER KEY PROGRAM IS THE EMPLOYER CAMPAIGN, WHICH IS WORKING WITH KEY EMPLOYER GROUPS TO ENSURE THE TRAINING IS MEANINGFUL AND BENEFICIAL FOR APPRENTICES.

THE EMPLOYER CAMPAIGN'S AIM IS TO IMPROVE THE UPTAKE AND HELP ENSURE COMPLETION OF ON THE JOB TRAINING. EMPLOYERS NEED TO RECOGNISE THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTORING. THE INVESTMENT IN THE APPRENTICE IS AN INVESTMENT IN THEIR BUSINESS... THEIR INDUSTRY. THE INSTITUTE IS IN DIALOGUE WITH KEY INDUSTRY GROUPS ABOUT HOW BEST TO DO THIS. INCLUDED IN THESE DISCUSSIONS ARE WAYS TO OVERCOME THE CHALLENGES OF RETAINING GENERATION Y RECRUITS.

I'M ALSO THRILLED TO HIGHLIGHT TODAY THAT WE WILL BE RUNNING A, MONEY CAN'T BUY, ONCE IN A LIFETIME PROMOTION THAT WILL RUN OVER THE NEXT 4 WEEKS STARTING THIS SATURDAY. THE ULTIMATE APPRENTICESHIP PROMOTION

GIVES LUCKY ENTRANTS THE CHANCE TO BE PART OF TEAM AUSTRALIA AT THE A1 GP WORLD CUP OF MOTORSPORT IN FEBRUARY 2008.

I'D LIKE TO SAY SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR THREE KEY PARTNERS: THE AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, THE NATIONAL FARMERS' FEDERATION AND THE AUSTRALIAN INDUSTRY GROUP AND OUR FIRST COMMERCIAL SPONSORS – LJ HOOKER.

THANK BILLY BLUE FOR SERVING AND PREPARING THE FINE FOOD – ALSO, THE VITICULTURE STUDENTS FROM TAFE, THE HUNTER INSTITUTE FOR THE WINE, AND SYDNEY INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY WHOSE STUDENTS DESIGNED AND SUPPLIED THE FLORAL ARRANGEMENTS.

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE SKILLSONE TEAM WHO HAVE WORKED TIRELESSLY TO MEET THE DEADLINES FOR LAUNCH, AND OF COURSE FOR THE CREATIVE INSPIRATION OF PETER FAIMAN.

THE INSTITUTE FOR TRADE SKILLS EXCELLENCE HAS AN ENDURING PASSION TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO ENSURE SKILLS AND THE TRADES IS IN THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF EVERY AUSTRALIAN.

IT IS A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY AND WE WILL WORK WITH GOVERNMENTS, INDUSTRY AND EDUCATORS. WE WANT TO DO WHAT OTHERS CAN'T DO. SAY YES TO OPPORTUNITY AND CONTRIBUTE IN A SIGNIFICANT AND INSPIRATIONAL WAY TO ADDRESS THE SKILLS SHORTAGES.

IT IS BOTH THE INCENTIVE AND THE REWARD – THANK YOU.