

Australia's Productivity Performance
From Learning to Growth
Interim Report 5
Call for Comments

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1 INTRODUCTION

Interim Report 5 – From Learning to Growth, articulates the criticality of a highly educated workforce that can drive and sustain productivity in the economy. In doing so the Report touches on related aspects that Business Excellence Australia (BEA) believes in, supports, and wishes to comment on.

2 LIFELONG LEARNING

To keep relevant, motivated and grasp everchanging challenges and opportunities, workers of all types not only need a strong educational foundation but also must keep education and learning constantly updated – becoming a lifelong commitment. The ability to improve one’s business and operational knowledge allow organisations to improve their performance and so enhance innovation, productivity, and sustainability. The Report makes this clear. This requires a rigorous methodology and framework. BEA has such a framework that it knows can be part of this lifelong learning objective having as its purpose to encourage Australian organisations to embrace and continue using the Australian Business Excellence Framework (ABEF) as the key enabler of competitiveness and sustainability. To help organisations in this we would welcome consideration given to financially supporting organisations that wish to further their management and workers to improve their business skills and operations – to this objective we refer to our original submission (no. 32) to the Interim Report 1 – The Key to Prosperity and our Recommendations 1 and 3 which propose support options.

3 CRITICALITY OF SKILLS

The Report highlights skills formation as foundational to productivity and expands on the topic covered in the Interim Report 3 – Innovation of the 98%. To support this objective, BEA strongly encourages this and refers the Commission to BEA’s related comments to that Report. In addition, we believe that more can and should be done to promote studies and learning at tertiary level about the principles and application of organisational excellence to provide that foundational beginning for new and retraining workers. We refer the Commission to our original submission (no. 32) to the Interim Report 1 – The Key to Prosperity and our Recommendations 4 which highlights this point.

4 THE PERFORMANCE OF TERTIARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

The Report notes the obstacles and challenges to the tertiary education sector and highlights issues relating to teacher quality, incentives, research versus non-reach functions and other structural issues. These make the case for a level of review including using a methodology to promote excellence. For that we would suggest and emphasise that the ABEF would be an appropriate and valuable aid to add to the mix of tools to assist

institutions to become better at what they do. The ABEF provides leadership and organisational methodologies that will assist organisations to deliver improved outcomes for their students and for Australia's economic and social benefit. The ABEF has been applied to numerous and widely varied organisations both large and small enterprises and could also be used to develop a leadership capability model that would benefit these educational institutions. This would be facilitated by the formal backing of appropriate Governments in supporting such an initiative.

We strongly support the report's findings but particularly in the three areas mentioned above.