

## RETAIL MOTOR INDUSTRY REPORT

**Industry profile** – the majority of employers operate within the small business sector – almost 90% of businesses have fewer than 10 employees. This has particular implications for the industry in relation to many of the issues, such as the capacity of the industry to attract and retain employees, and the ability of the industry to keep up to date with developments in the training system.

**Findings** - As the first stage of a comprehensive study of issues confronting the retail motor industry, employer views were sought on the key issues which contribute to the skills shortage currently faced by the industry. Employers' responses include:

- There is a poor industry 'image' which makes it difficult to attract sufficient interest from school leavers. This poor image includes, lack of career opportunities, that it is dirty work, and that there is uncertainty about the future of the industry;
- There is a need for improved information and promotion of the industry and the need for career guidance staff in particular, and teaching staff in general, to have more direct links with the industry;
- The important role played by school/industry relationships in encouraging young people into the industry needs to be strengthened;
- The increasing divide between major vehicle and component manufacturers and small retail and repair firms and its implications for the skills needs of employees is a major concern and will continue to be;
- The rate of technological innovation and change in recent years has introduced levels of skill complexity requiring educationally advanced training programs and diagnostic aids. Therefore, young people entering the industry need a higher level of basis skill than they have in the past. Employers were concerned that teachers and parents still viewed the industry as a career option for young people who were not high academic achievers; and
- There are still a number of challenges associated with ensuring that training is of a high quality and is consistent with the needs of the industry. Employers believe that this is a priority for industry, governments and education institutions.

### **Recommendations** -

- The critical feature of the recommendations is that it is the industry that must assume responsibility for addressing the issues.
- With the support of government, industry must undertake a range of initiatives in seeking answers to the many complex and difficult issues concerning skill shortages in the industry.
- The central recommendation is to establish a National Retail Motor Industry Taskforce with responsibility for co-ordinating and managing a range of initiatives arising from the report. The Taskforce will provide a mechanism by which the industry and government will undertake a more detailed examination of key issues within the industry and identify appropriate responses.
- It is essential that the initiatives arising from this report are undertaken on a national basis.

The Working Group believes that the initiatives recommended will provide a basis for further investigating and addressing a number of key issues concerning skill shortages in the industry.

This Report is just the start of an ongoing, industry driven, process. It will provide greater understanding of the issues and look at solutions which can be developed in partnership with employers, governments and education providers.