

**John Ridge, ACS Foundation's personal submission via teleconference.**

- A lot of emphasis of the conversation that is out there at the moment, and is replicated in the DES discussion paper, is about creating jobs. Common theme with a number of governments.
  - In discussion paper, Minister Sinodinos talks about growing industry and jobs, but doesn't mention anything about the people who will fill those jobs
- There needs to be a conversation around the focus on job creation:
  - The emphasis should be on creating the right people, with the right aptitude, education, experience and skills, and the jobs will be born from that.
  - A Report came out today from the Brotherhood of St Lawrence, which supports that view/position. There are many young people who are unemployed who are struggling to get jobs. analysis points to the problem not being that they aren't trying to get jobs, applying for them, or doing all the things they should be doing. The biggest problem is getting the right people for the jobs. Need to make sure the product (people) have the right attributes for the market. One of the biggest issues for getting a job is having prior industry experience. This is a large inhibitor to people getting a job.
- ACS Foundation was started in 2001, and has since helped 100% of people in the program to find jobs, this is over 6500 people.
  - This wasn't 6.5k jobs that had been created. But people who were created and then the jobs followed. The jobs were created to accommodate the people.
  - John has a successful colleague, Richard White, from Wisetech Global who does this. He finds people, sees if he has a need for that person, and structures a job to accommodate the person.
- John doesn't believe companies and organisations are going to create jobs unless they are confident that they can find the people to fill them, especially not in digital economy.
  - If they can't find those people, they are not going to keep advertising or creating those kind of jobs. Will look at different options – such as offshoring, outsourcing, or physically moving office etc.
  - Need a pool of people with ability / aptitude in technology, and industry experience.
  - There has been a historic trend of offshoring jobs, and outsourcing. The layer of jobs that are being offshored – that's the nursery layer – they are the entry level jobs. When people graduate, they need those entry level jobs to give them the experience, to then train them for industry. (ICT technology and digital economy sector focussed)
- Huge potential for Australia, to really have a competitive advantage, we need to get smart about how we do this.
  - Countries like India and China are big offshoring target countries. They aren't creating jobs, they are creating people. Pushing huge numbers of people through system even if they don't have the jobs there for those people. They are confident that if they have the people, the jobs will follow. People are the basic raw material.
  - Offshoring is not a proper long term solution. Australia need to be smarter. Needs a more domestic focus, on domestic population and domestically domiciled resources.

International Education is an untapped resource in Australia. Bringing in a lot of talented people to study, who want to stay in Australia. If we choose the right people, the most talented, there is a huge untapped resource that we could make use of.

- Our responsibility, if we bring those International Students here for their education, is to give them (or at least some of them) the opportunity to get some work experience while they are here to complement their studies. If they go back home, they will have the skills and experience to get a job at home.
- People graduating university don't have appropriate work skills and experience.
  - University is about education. It is not about getting people to graduate with 3-5 years' experience. It is about giving them a culture of lifelong learning, and the tools and inclination to continue that learning culture after they graduate.
  - University graduates are like "blank sheets of paper". They've done a number of subjects and learnt some things at a fairly superficial level. When people advertise for entry level jobs, wanting 1-3 years' experience, graduates don't have this experience. To take them through to becoming a productive member of staff sooner, requires industry experience.
  - Industry should be less worried about people coming out with specific language / technology skills (IT), they need to understand the broader issues/skills. Then within 3-6 weeks they can teach them any technology, as long as they have the right fundamentals and aptitude. They can always be trained up to the latest technology, which is changing so rapidly.
  - Universities are almost unable to deliver constant new technology training. Course changes can take 3-5 years. By the time they can train in new tech, the world has moved on.
- If industry would give those internships, cadetships, that gives training and exposure to the latest technology and trends, then the person graduates a more valuable and employable resource. Such graduates finish with education, training and industry skills. We need to understand the difference between employment and university experience. What is expected of you, also in terms of behaviour? The onus should be on industry to play their part.
  - That responsibility is equally applicable to government. All levels of government consume 25-40% of computer and IT services. Therefore they should be contributing an equal proportion in terms of internships etc, to give more students the experience and the ability to make them more employable.
- The ACS Foundation is an exemplary model and has been extremely successful. It now has 3 FT, a few PT employees and interns. There are different models, but he doesn't believe any have been as successful as ACSF.
- The money going into TAFE training is often being misdirected. A student receives 6-12 months training but if they finish with anything less than Cert 4, they are not employable.
  - Not just about giving them a TAFE course, if government is going to put them through TAFE, there is a need to provide internships within government, to complement TAFE studies. So students have a decent chance of getting a job at the end.

- Businesses are looking for the right person, right attitude and right aptitude. It only takes 3-6 weeks to train someone in any technology. It is much harder to change someone's character or attitude, need right cultural fit and attitude to work.
  - Sat in on many interviews for IBM. Would go for an hour, pages of questions. None of them were about technology. They were all about soft skills, attitude, working in a team, etc. all the things that IBM thought was more important than the technology.
  - Smaller companies often still put more emphasis on the tech skills.
- "Jobs of the future" and having people skilled for jobs of the future—language and perspective is all wrong.
  - It's hard to pick what will be the jobs of the future, or where a particular person may end up.
  - We need to be mindful that we should train people for jobs of today, but give them the heads up about jobs of tomorrow, and what skills they may need in the future.
  - If you train for jobs of tomorrow, but go on the market today when those jobs are not yet here, then what do you do?
- If we train people for jobs of today, with the skills and aptitude and ability to adapt, then they will be ready to adapt to the jobs of the future.
  - For example, John was trained on three coding languages at one time. Evidence now shows that if you learn three at a time, you can then pick up a new language very easily later on. However, if trained on only one language, it is much harder to pick up another later.
    - We will always need developers/programmers. For example – Cobol computing language. Still around, and still a huge need for people who can do it
- If we want to train people for the jobs of the future, train them to be flexible, not niche focussed. Niche focused people are becoming redundant as soon as tech changes.
  - Penetration of technology into white collar roles now need ICT skills.
    - CBA example – They are trying to hire IT professionals, to work in their money markets, and other areas that aren't IT but involve a lot of IT.
  - People who are becoming redundant, from IT and Tech, could look at training or retraining or upskilling, to enable them to take on some of these new jobs.
  - Example – more mature aged, had been in business for 5-10 years, went back to university, did an IT course, did a placement with ACSF, he got a job. And has now had a successful career, worked for few major banks. Now located in Hong Kong. Prepared and able to put time and effort to undertake further education and it paid off for him.
- Bipartisanship –This is such an important issue and there should be an attempt to get bipartisan support for this Strategy to continue it going forward.
  - If there is no bipartisan support, the money can be wasted.