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Submission to the Productivity
Commission on the Interim Report:

Building a Skilled and Adaptable Workforce



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Summary of Key Points

The Australian Institute of Project Management (AIPM™) welcomes the Productivity Commission's interim report and supports its emphasis on adaptability, lifelong learning, and effective occupational entry regulations.

Key points from AIPM's submission are:

1. **Adaptability as a Core Workforce Capability:**

The report rightly highlights adaptability as distinct from skills quantity and quality. Project management exemplifies adaptability and should be embedded as a transferable capability across sectors.

2. **Support for National Teaching and EdTech Initiatives:**

AIPM supports investment in a national platform for teaching resources and a coordinated national approach to education technology, recommending the inclusion of project-based learning as a tool to build foundational and transferable skills.

3. **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit Transfer:**

AIPM strongly endorses a national system for RPL and credit transfer. This is essential for professionals who build capability through practice before seeking formal qualifications.

4. **Incentivising SME Training:**

AIPM supports targeted financial and advisory support to SMEs, noting the positive productivity impact of project management training in small businesses.

5. **Occupational Entry Regulations (OERs):**

While unnecessary restrictions should be removed, AIPM urges caution in professions where competency is critical to public trust and outcomes. For project management, maintaining standards through recognised competency frameworks (such as AIPM's RegPM certification¹) is essential.

6. **Additional AIPM Recommendations:**

- Explicitly recognise project management as a **core transferable skill** in national workforce policy.
- Strengthen alignment between education, training, and professional standards through structured collaboration with peak bodies.
- Expand recognition of **microcredentials and modular learning** within national frameworks, including in project management.

¹ <https://aipm.com.au/certifications>





AIPM Response to Draft Recommendations

1. The Best Resources to Improve School Student Outcomes

AIPM supports the draft recommendations to create a **national platform for curriculum-aligned teaching resources** and to provide **equitable access to advanced educational technologies**.

- Project management skills begin with strong foundational capabilities, particularly in **problem solving, teamwork, digital literacy, and communication**. Investment in evidence-based teaching resources and responsible use of AI in schools will underpin these foundations.
- AIPM encourages that **project-based learning approaches** be included in national platforms and edtech tools, as these methods equip students with transferable skills directly aligned with workforce adaptability.

2. Building Skills and Qualifications for a More Productive Workforce

- **Draft Recommendation 2.1 (Credit Transfer and RPL):**
AIPM strongly endorses a national database of credit decisions and consistent RPL frameworks. This would address long-standing barriers for professionals seeking to formalise project management expertise gained through practice. For example, many project professionals acquire substantial capability through work experience before seeking formal qualifications. Efficient RPL processes would accelerate their progression and ensure the workforce remains agile.
- **Draft Recommendation 2.2 (Training in SMEs):**
AIPM supports targeted incentives for SMEs to invest in workforce development. SMEs deliver a significant proportion of projects across Australia, yet often lack the resources to systematically invest in structured training. Project management training, in particular, has been shown to increase business efficiency, risk management capability, and workforce retention. Incentives should prioritise **competency-based certifications** that ensure real-world application of skills.

3. Fit-for-Purpose Occupational Entry Regulations (OERs)

- **Draft Recommendations 3.1–3.4 (OER Reform):**
AIPM supports the principle of removing unduly restrictive entry requirements where they do not improve outcomes. However, caution must be applied in professional domains where competency directly impacts public value, safety, and trust.
 - For project management, **clear and consistent professional standards** are essential to safeguarding the delivery of large-scale government and private sector projects. While not every project management role requires formal certification, senior and complex project leadership positions should be subject to rigorous competency frameworks.





- AIPM recommends that reforms to OERs distinguish between **low-risk occupations**, where deregulation may be appropriate, and **system-critical professions**, where maintaining standards through recognised frameworks (such as AIPM's RegPM certification) is essential.
- AIPM also supports regular reviews of OERs to ensure they remain proportionate, evidence-based, and responsive to workforce needs. Importantly, such reviews should consult peak professional bodies to ensure reforms do not compromise standards or inadvertently weaken Australia's project delivery capability.

AIPM Recommendations

In addition to supporting the Commission's draft reforms, AIPM recommends the following priorities:

1. **Recognise Project Management as a Core Workforce Capability:** Project management is a universal discipline that enhances adaptability, productivity, and innovation across industries. It should be explicitly recognised within national workforce planning and education policy as a transferable capability critical to Australia's economic and social priorities.
2. **Strengthen Collaboration Between Education, Industry, and Professional Bodies:** Education and training pathways must be closely aligned with real-world workforce demand. AIPM recommends structured partnerships between education providers, industry, and peak professional bodies to co-design curricula, microcredentials, and upskilling programs that reflect industry standards and emerging needs.
3. **Integrate Microcredentials and Modular Learning into National Systems:** Microcredentials provide flexible pathways to adapt and build skills over time. AIPM recommends that project management microcredentials and modular programs be recognised within the national credit and RPL system, enabling professionals to "stack" learning into formal qualifications and supporting lifelong adaptability.
4. **Target SME Training Incentives Toward Competency-Based Outcomes:** Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) deliver a large share of Australia's projects yet often lack the resources to invest in structured training. Financial and advisory incentives should prioritise competency-based certifications, such as AIPM's RegPM program, that ensure practical, workplace-ready outcomes and measurable productivity benefits.

AIPM welcomes the Productivity Commission's interim report and its draft recommendations to strengthen the adaptability and productivity of the Australian workforce.

We encourage the Commission to ensure reforms balance flexibility with quality, and that national workforce policy recognises project management as a core, transferable discipline critical to Australia's economic and social future.

AIPM stands ready to work with the Commission, government, education providers and industry to implement reforms that build a skilled, adaptable, and future-ready workforce.



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