TRADE UNION TRAINING AUTHORITY AMENDMENT BILL 1978

Date Introduced: 25 May 1978
House: House of Representatives
Presented by: Hon. A.A. Street, M.P.,
Minister for Employment and
Industrial Relations

Short Digest of Bill

Purpose
To amend the Trade Union Training Authority Act 1975 to
implement certain changes in the organisational structure of the Trade
Union Training Authority.

Background
The Australian Trade Union Training Authority (TUTA) was
established by the Labor Government in 1975. The legislation establish-
ing TUTA was supported by all Parties.

As presently structured, TUTA consists of an Australian
Council for Union Training – which is the overall policy-making body
responsible for the allocation of resources and formulation of
principles of union training programs held at the National Trade Union
Training College, (the Clyde Cameron College) and Trade Union Training
Centres in the States; and six state councils for Union Training
responsible for conducting course programs at the State Centres.

Early in 1977 the Government established a tri-partite
Committee of Inquiry into trade union training. As explained in the
Minister's Second Reading Speech the Committee investigated the question
of integrating trade union training with a general system of industrial
relations training; the organisational structure of the Authority;
trade union training needs generally and the methods of financing trade
union training.

The Report of the Committee was completed in August 1977 and
was tabled in Parliament. In general, the Committee came out in
favour of retaining the present arrangements for union training in
Australia, making only a few recommendations for change, most of which
involved minor changes to the organisational structure of the Authority.

The provisions of this Bill propose more extensive changes to
the structure of TUTA than those envisaged by the Committee. Several
press reports earlier this year interpreted these changes as meaning tighter Federal Government control over trade union training to remove scope for domination by left wing unions (e.g. Sydney Morning Herald, 16 February 1978, The Australian, 27 March 1978). According to these reports a "cross-section of the union movement" have formed a body, Friends of TUTA, to oppose the changes. The main changes are summarised briefly below.

TUTA is, and will continue to be, funded entirely by the Commonwealth. Funds expended on trade union training totalled $3.0 million in 1975-76, $6.3 million in 1976-77 (including construction of college) and are estimated to be $2.9 million in 1977-78.

Main Provisions

An Executive Board of 8 part-time members will be established to take over, from the Australian Council, responsibility for overall policy-making and allocation of funds. A new part, IIB, will be inserted into the Principal Act to provide for the establishment of the Board (clause 7). The Executive Board, rather than the Council as at present, will be subject to the authority of the Minister and membership of the Board will comprise:

- a Chairman, who will also be Chairman of the Australian Council and will be a person appointed by the Minister. To avoid a possible conflict of interest the Committee recommended that the Secretary of the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations relinquish his position as Chairman of the Council and the Bill reflects this consideration;

- a National Director of the Authority. This is a new position, the conditions of which are set out in a new part, IIA (clause 7). The new Director will both participate in policy-making as a member of the Board, and also be responsible for conducting the affairs of the authority in accordance with policy formulated by the Board;

- the Secretary of the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations;

- 4 persons appointed by the Minister, from the members of the Australian Council representing the Australian Council of Trade Unions, (ACTU), the Australian Council of Salaried and Professional Associations (ACSPA) and the Council of Australian Government Employee Organisations (CAGEO); and

- the member of the Australian Council representing the Confederation of Australian Industry (CAI).

The Australian and State Councils will be retained but with
redefined functions and changed membership. The membership of the Australian Council is set out in clause 8 of the Bill. The main changes are

- the inclusion of the newly created National Director;
- an increase from 3 to 5 in the persons representing the ACTU;
- the inclusion of the Commissioner for Tertiary Education, or a member of his staff (the appropriate TAFE bodies will be represented on State Councils). This was recommended by the Committee and is one of several measures in the Bill which will allow for closer involvement with TAFE;
- the inclusion of a person representing CAI (State Branches will be represented on State Councils). The structure of the Council as recommended by the Committee did not include an employer representative. Employer representation at the policy and advisory levels reflects the Government's aim of strengthening employer involvement in training activity;
- the exclusion of the 6 members from the various Trades and Labour Councils in the States. This step contrasts with the recommendations of the Committee. The Committee took the view that the links between the operations of the Australian and State Councils for Union Training should be strengthened and recommended accordingly.

The present position of Director of Clyde Cameron College will be expanded and retitled Director of Studies (clause 16). The Director of Studies will, under the National Director, be responsible for the management and provision of all training by the Authority at the National College and State Centres.

Finance, Industries, Trade and Development Group

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