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Mr Doug Macquet
President, Victorian Branch
Watch & Clockmakers Australia
12 Canning Street
North Melbourne VIC 3051

Dear Mr Macquet

Re Consolidation of Apprentice Training in Clock and Watchmaking at Sydney Institute

In December 2004, RMIT conducted a review of the provision of specialist clock and watchmaking training of Victorian apprentices at Sydney Institute of Technology. Dwindling apprentice numbers (averaging two per year) and lack of a qualified teacher had made it impossible for us to deliver training in our own right, hence our reason for entering into a transition partnership with SIT during 2003 and 2004. This situation was not confined to Victoria as Tasmania, South Australia and ACT had been forced to give up delivery a decade earlier and all other states, except NSW, have been struggling to sustain viable classes.

The Training Review concluded that not only was the transition to SIT highly successful from the view point of apprentices from Victoria, but that it had the potential to contribute significantly to establishing a national centre of excellence in training.

Progress in 2005 has again confirmed the value of the joint venture, particularly in terms of:

- benchmarking apprentice skill development and assessment to national standards;
- facilitating involvement of industry in planning to meet future training needs (particularly in terms of advances in new technologies), changes in manufacturer standards and requirements for servicing /repairs, new business system applications / customer service and post-trade specialist training; and,
- providing an effective forum for more vigorous promotion of the national funded apprenticeship system as an essential vehicle for developing base trade skills in the industry.

The Coordinator at SIT, Trent Firth, reports that the Victorian apprentices have had another very successful academic year in 2005, with three first-years achieving very commendable results. Two final-year apprentices are eligible to graduate under the auspices of Sydney Institute, and a further two graduated

earlier in 2005. Enthusiasm for post-trade training is high - a 2004 graduate has now completed specialist studies in Switzerland, while others are looking for specialist short courses locally.

The opportunity for Victorian apprentices to train at SIT is the culmination of a team effort between our two institutions, key industry partners and government. The support of the Victorian Government in particular has been vital, through its reciprocal arrangements with the NSW government, and timely travel reimbursements / accommodation subsidies via the Victorian Apprenticeship Branch.

Finally, a key component of the decision to consolidate all training of Victorian apprentices exclusively at Sydney Institute was our proposal to offer, by way of loan, all the specialist benches and equipment held at RMIT. I am pleased to advise that the Sydney Institute has accepted our offer and is committed in return to guaranteeing training places for Victorian clock and watchmaking apprentices into the future. That the equipment loan has the support of industry, government and the two TAFE entities says a great deal about the level of good will and collaboration for a common benefit. In negotiating the loan, we acknowledged the generosity of the industry, especially the SWATCH group and the Horological Guild, to RMIT in earlier years. Those donations and discounts, along with our own equipment, made it possible to put together quite impressive resources. These will continue to benefit Victorian apprentices as well as the industry as a whole. The Sydney Centre is currently being refurbished, so the combined resources and enhanced facilities are a wonderful start to 2006 and beyond.

I would like to thank the Victorian Branch of the Watch and Clockmakers Association for its generous contributions and assistance to RMIT Watchmaking Centre over the years, in particular through assistance with equipment grants as well as voluntary professional contributions from individual members on training / education issues and exam assessment – in particular Peter U'ren, Michael Coleman, Bill Brindle, Roy Carney and many other members over the years through the Horological Society. Although it would seem to be the end of an era for RMIT, the consolidation of training at Sydney Institute offers the best long term option for a viable and national centre of excellence in Watch and Clockmaking. For an industry which has seen rapid change and fewer apprentices, that will be important. We are pleased that the hobby Clock Group will continue an association with RMIT.

Yours sincerely



Professor Daine Alcorn

Pro Vice Chancellor - Science Engineering & Technology Portfolio

Cc Alan Ballagh, Director of TAFE Division, RMIT University

Attachment

Watch and Clockmaking Apprentices

Training Arrangements & Information 2005 & Onwards

Victorian employers interested in taking on apprentices in this field should contact the **Apprenticeship Administration Branch**, Melbourne (**telephone 9637 3557**), the Office of Training and Tertiary Education for assistance from an apprentice advisor.

The following information may be useful to prospective/indentured apprentices.

1. Changing nature of the industry and impact on training

This industry has witnessed significant change. The source of apprentices has typically been small family businesses but the number of such businesses has declined over the years while there has been an expansion of service centres for imported brands / overseas manufacturers.

The consumer shift in recent years to cheap, mass produced battery operated watches has somewhat reversed with a paradoxically, but small resurgence in the sale of imported luxury mechanical watches. These changes have led to a radical restructure of the industry. As the current qualified repairers retire there is a need to replace them, hence new opportunities are arising. Manufacturers are also looking for specialist qualified tradespersons to provide the critical after sales service back up and repair. In addition to the service needs of luxury mechanical watches, there is also a growing demand for restoration of antique watches. Equally there is significant demand for specialist restoration of vintage and antique clocks, of sentimental, historic and considerable commercial value.

Service centres for overseas watch manufacturers (mainly Swiss), dealing with luxury, mechanical watches have the franchise for retail sales, spare parts, and specialist repairs. The Swiss manufacturers are strongly focused on specialist and in-house training to address after-sales service/and repair and have generously supported both specialist and apprentice training initiatives.

It is likely that training needs within the industry will continue to be two tiered –

- apprenticeships providing the opportunity for new entrants to enter the trade; and
- post-trade / specialist / brand-specific training within major manufacturers' service centres or through fee-for-service in conjunction with institutions such as SIT.

Overall the changes occurring in the watch and clock industry mirror a pattern of similar changes in other thin-market industries experiencing the impact of technological change and globalisation. Both State and Commonwealth governments are strongly committed to providing incentives to encourage businesses to employ apprentices as the foundation for entry into the trade.

Professional organisations, including the state and federal branches of the *Watch and Clockmakers Australia Pty Ltd*, take a special interest in supporting and promoting apprentice and specialist training. Their website provides valuable links for apprentices wishing to explore the world of watch and clock repair/research.

2. Consolidation of Training at Sydney Institute of Technology

Following the consolidation of training provision by Sydney Institute of Technology (SIT) and RMIT University, all apprentice training in Watch and Clockmaking will be conducted at the central Sydney campus of SIT.

Apprentices will be accepted from South Australia, Victoria, ACT, Tasmania and NSW, providing a unique opportunity to train with interstate counterparts.

The Clock and Watchmaking Centre is located in *Building P – enter off Thomas Street*, Ultimo Campus.

The College is within walking distance of Central Rail Station and bus / ferry services. *Attachment 1 and 2* show the location map and the college details.

3. Teacher in Charge of Training

Mr Trenton Firth, is the teacher in charge of Clock and Watchmaking apprenticeship training. He is a very experienced and well-qualified teacher with an excellent understanding of industry standards and trends. He will coordinate all training at SIT and deal with all matters relating to attendance records, assessment and progress/employer reports and advise state authorities of any problems.

SIT Contact Details Phone 02 9217 3177 email trent.firth@tafensw.edu.au

4. Qualification

The current qualification structure is the same in both Victoria and NSW, ie equivalent of 24 full curriculum based modules from the national metals and engineering module bank.

All continuing and new apprentices (ie. those commencing after January 2005) will be indentured in Victoria and enrolled directly at SIT in the NSW qualification, which is entitled

6888 Certificate III in Mechanical Engineering (Watch and Clockmaking)

The course includes compulsory core/generic modules and 20 specialist watch and clockmaking modules and is conducted in three stages over three years.

Where an apprentice has relevant prior experience/skill, they will be able to apply for recognition of that prior learning and /or request an opportunity to perform a challenge test to verify the necessary skills and knowledge.

The training program will eventually be converted to National Competency Standards however at the moment there are insufficient specialist standards available to adequately apply to the Watch and Clockmaking trade.

5. Apprentice tuition fees at SIT

Apprentices will be required to pay the tuition fees and charges applicable in NSW TAFE. In 2005, the maximum annual tuition fee applicable to apprentice enrolments in NSW is \$358. Other charges may include class materials, tool kit and college amenity fees – check at the time of application.

6. Employer Incentives

The incentives available to employers of apprentices from Victorian and Commonwealth governments will be unaffected by the transfer to SIT. Information

about these incentives can be obtained from the Office of Training and Tertiary Education website on:

<http://www.ette.vic.gov.au/apprenticeships/newapps/incent1.htm>

7. RTO Funding for Training Delivery

The Office of Training and Tertiary Education will make arrangements directly with SIT to pay for the cost of training Victorian watchmaking apprentices. This is separate from the fees apprentices are responsible for.

8. SIT Training Program

- Training is based on block release. An annual timetable is provided at the commencement of the year.
- Assessment will include both theory and practical requirements which meet the module outcomes to current industry standard and practice.
- The training plan lists the modules to be completed or for which Recognition of Current skill /competence is granted against module requirements (theory and practical)
- Strict monitoring of attendance is a requirement for all apprentices to ensure that employers release them from work as per the Training Agreement to attend scheduled off-the-job formal instruction and assessment.
- Attendance is critical to ensuring the apprentice has every opportunity to meet the assessment requirements. A record of attendance with assessment results for each module is kept for audit and monitoring of progress.

9. Student Support Services at SIT

Enrolled apprentices are able to access the full range of services ie library and IT, study support, counselling, recreational and social facilities, student advocates at SIT.

If you experience difficulty with some aspect of training, study / assessment or other issue interfering with progress, individual study support may be able to be negotiated. The problem can be discussed in confidence with one of the student counsellors by person or phone if it is a personal matter or with Trent Firth if it relates to training. The student advocate – student union is also available to assist apprentices.

Student Counsellors provide crisis support on campus on an “as-needs” basis (02 9217 3917) (02 9217 3185) **SIT Building D, Level 4.**

10. Apprentice travel and accommodation

Upon application by the apprentice to the **Apprenticeship Administration Branch (telephone 9637 3557)**, the Office of Training and Tertiary Education will reimburse reasonable travel expenses incurred by apprentices and provide an accommodation subsidy in accordance with current guidelines.

To obtain the travel re-imburement and accommodation subsidy , you will need to

Ask Trent will sign the attendance section on the claim form

Attach Photocopies of travel receipts/ documents

Keep all receipts of actual travel and a photocopy copy of your claim form:

Send the claim form to:

**Fran King
Apprenticeship Admin Branch
GPO Box 2960DD
Melbourne**

If you fail to travel, you cannot claim the subsidy. Note: taxi travel is not included.

When making bookings, you will need to allow time for connections between the different forms of transport.

Qantas Bookings	131313
Virgin Blue	136789

As Block Classes start on Mondays at 8.30am, you may need to travel to Sydney on the Sunday and allow yourself time to settle in. You will find more flexibility with off-peak plane travel. Note that classes do not finish till **5pm on Wednesdays**, so for those who live a distance from an airport, might need to do the return in two stages or alternately fly back early on Thursday morning if that enables you to link with other forms of transport.

- **Airport Buses** travel -

- Cost ranges from approx \$22.50 return from Spencer St to Melbourne Airport.
- Sydney Airport (shuttle service) to Central Sydney with a drop-off at the both *“WAKE-UP HOSTEL”* near the *Sydney Institute* approx \$10 each way

- **FAST Airport Rail Link**

- Sydney also runs a fast rail from the airport to **Central Station**, which is close to both *“WAKE-UP HOSTEL”* and the *Sydney Institute*. (takes 10 mins and costs approx \$14 one way)

Experience indicates that this FAST RAIL is the best and most effective means of travelling to and from Sydney Airport

- **Air Travel** (economy)

- Reasonably complete prices are available on Virgin and Qantas between regional cities and Sydney – you are best to speak to the airline directly or to a local travel agent who will be able to advise and assist. Unless you are very patient the internet booking is rather time consuming and not always best option. Some flights come back through Canberra, so it might take a little longer but give flexibility.

Please note that -

- *airports have increased security and you need to allow for more lengthy processing time;*
- *there are increased restrictions on what you can carry in hand luggage. Even small watchmaking tools may have to be in the baggage hold. Check these requirements with a local travel agent or the airline prior to setting out;*
- *luggage should be securely locked.*

11. Accommodation Bookings

Apprentices are encouraged to check accommodation details over the phone carefully before booking. There are many hostels in the area of variable quality and security.

Student Services at SIT indicate that many of their country apprentices stay at the nearby **“WAKE-UP HOSTEL” at 509 Pitt St , Sydney**. This has been recently refurbished and may be viewed on their Website. <http://www.wakeup.com.au> Talk to their staff and book over the phone **02 9288 7888** or via internet. The following general information is illustrative only of the above hostel. *See Attachment 3*

- **Example of Facilities**

The room rates range from \$25, \$26, \$28, \$30, \$31, \$40 (varies according to shared basis). There are cooking/meal preparation facilities, you should check what items you might need. Sheets are provided but take your own towel. etc. Security lockers are available (take your own padlock or buy one) and staff in attendance 24 hrs. There is a café and laundry facilities. If you are bring food from home check with the airlines / travel agent as to what processed foodstuffs you can bring with you on the plane. Remember you cannot take fresh fruit interstate.

12. General and Emergency Contact Details

Please ensure your family has contact details

- your travel itinerary and mobile number (if you have one)
- accommodation contact
- college contact in Sydney

Should you have any queries or concerns regarding travel claims or changes in employment etc contact your apprentice advisor at **Apprenticeship Administration Branch (telephone 9637 3557)**.