

Submission



Boating Industry Association

ISSUE: Marine Mechanical Technician

SUBJECT: Backing a Review of AUR30520 Certificate III in Marine Mechanical Technology

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SUBMISSION:

The Boating Industry Association Ltd (BIA) welcomes the opportunity provided by Mining and Automotive Skills Alliance (AUSMASA) to comment on the opportunity for a review of **AUR30520 Certificate III in Marine Mechanical Technology**. This will be a vital step in ensuring the Australian marine workforce remains competitive, safe and technologically current. From the perspective of industry peak bodies and stakeholders, the qualification must transition from a traditional mechanical focus to one that encompasses the rapid digitisation and innovation of the sector.

1. Future-Proofing the Marine Landscape

To reflect today's and tomorrow's marine environment, the qualification should integrate:

- **Alternative Propulsion Systems:** Beyond internal combustion, there is a growing need for decarbonisation competencies such as electric outboards, hybrid systems, and the handling of high-voltage marine batteries.
- **Advanced Diagnostics:** Moving from "wrench-turning" to "data-analysis." Skills in using proprietary manufacturer software and NMEA 2000 networking are becoming mandatory. The impact of AI.
- **Sustainability & End-of-Life:** Training on the environmental impact of marine waste, including the proper disposal of composite materials and aged chemicals.

2. Units of Competency (UoC): Add, Update, or Remove

- **Add:** A dedicated unit on Marine Digital Integration. This would cover the syncing of engine data with multifunction displays (MFDs) and autonomous piloting sensors.
- **Update:** Current electrical units should be expanded. Modern vessels are increasingly "fly-by-wire"; the distinction between a mechanic and an auto-electrician is blurring in the marine space.
- **Remove/Streamline:** Some older units could be reduced to electives, as EFI (Electronic Fuel Injection) and modular component replacement are now the industry standard.
- **Current UoC need to be more marine focused.** Currently the bulk of the units are Automotive – only contextualised to Marine

Some Elective units should be Core units to suit marine
WHS units of competency in the marine sector

3. The "Perfect" Qualification: Industry Impact

- If this project were perfected, the landscape would shift significantly:
- The Look of the Qualification: A blend of core mechanical mastery with "stackable" micro-credentials in emerging tech (e.g., hydrogen fuel cells or advanced foiling systems).
- Increasing Productivity: A "perfect" qualification reduces comebacks (rework). Technicians who can diagnose a fault correctly the first time using digital tools save dozens of billable hours per month.
- One potential outcome could be the evolution of the current Certificate III into a Certificate IV, providing both graduates and employers with a higher level of technical proficiency. A Certificate IV would produce more skilled tradespeople, better equipped to take on complex tasks earlier in their careers. This uplift in capability would support productivity across the industry by reducing onboarding time, improving job quality, and enabling businesses to deploy staff more efficiently. Plus, this would allow the tradesman to form their own business down the track with confidence.
- The perfect qualification would "attract" young people to a trade skill that is currently one of the top priority in-demand skills on the national Marine Jobs market.

4. Identifying Skills Gaps

- There is a distinct gap between technical "grease-under-the-fingernails" skills and service-to-office transitions:
- Administrative Literacy: As noted, writing accurate Job Cards is crucial. A technician must be able to translate a complex repair into clear, billable language for the customer. Commerce module to help with job cards and written paperwork – how to read the Electronic Parts Catalogue, how to find parts and follow supersessions for example
- Customer Relations: Understanding the "lifestyle" aspect of boating. Technicians often interact directly with owners; soft skills and professional representation of a business are often missing from the current curriculum (eg., the ability to write up a Job Card).
- Regulatory Knowledge: Familiarity with Australian Standards (like AS 1799) ensures that modifications don't accidentally void a vessel's compliance.

5. Support for the Review

- This update is supported because the economic impact of the marine sector depends on consumer confidence. If the industry lacks the skilled labour to maintain modern, high-tech vessels, the "boating experience" suffers, leading to reduced participation. Furthermore, aligning the training with the Coomera Marine Precinct and other national marine hubs ensures that the infrastructure investment is matched by human capital.

- The current course content is open to contextualisation depending on the teacher as the units are automotive based units. The industry has moved with the rest of the world to diagnose and replace. As an example, does a student really need to know how to re-wind an armature in a starter motor now?
- We need to review and update the course's core and electives along with the content of each of these to keep our industry relevant.

6. Additional Feedback

- The industry would benefit from a stronger Apprenticeship Mentoring component within the AUR30520 framework. Ensuring that "Old Guard" knowledge is passed down effectively, while younger apprentices bring "Digital Native" skills upward, creates a balanced workshop environment. We should also consider the portability of the qualification across State lines (NSW, QLD, TAS) to ensure a fluid national workforce.
- The Boating Industry Assoc. has been in talks with industry and educators for some time around course content and some of its relevance. A review of the course content needs review and updating. The BIA has assisted bodies like TAFE to access OEMs diagnostics tools and access 'newer' training equipment along with the currency of teachers through the OEMs which can be developed further.

Please do not hesitate to contact Mr Neil Patchett, General Manager Government & Public Relations, e. neil@bia.org.au or m. 0418 279 465 on this matter.

BACKGROUND:

The Boating Industry Association Ltd (BIA) is the peak industry body in Australia that represents the interests of boating which includes designers, manufacturers, importers, brokers, insurers, retailers, charters, yacht and boat clubs, marinas, events, surveyors and trades from boat builders to riggers, and more. BIA is an advocate for boaters and the boating lifestyle and supports safe, responsible, and enjoyable boating. BIA has members in all States and Territories.

The boating economy generates significant benefits. The BIA last year reported industry national turnover of \$10.12 billion, directly employed more than 35,000 people. Seventy-five per cent are in small family businesses, employing local workers and supporting local communities.

In Australia, more than 85 per cent of the population live within 50km of the coast, so it is little wonder that almost 1 in 5 households can have a boat or watercraft and that approximately 5 million go boating each year. People of all ages, gender and ability participate in boating across paddle, sail and power for leisure and sport.

- The Outboard Engine Distributors Association of Australia OEDA:
 - is pleased to fully support Neil Patchett's BIA submission for the review of AUR30520 Certificate III in Marine Mechanical Technology. OEDA represents all outboard engines imported for sale into Australia comprising:- Mercury, Suzuki, Honda, Yamaha, and Tohatsu.
 - OEDA has recently approved a technical working group to design a Job Ready Training Programme for new starters to the outboard industry (aimed at school leavers). Through communicating with the many hundreds of their dealers throughout Australia, OEDA has learned there is a drastic shortage of marine qualified technicians willing to join the industry or learn the trade, and many of the units in the current Cert, III in Marine Mechanical Technology are outdated and not fit for purpose because of the developments in electronic engines and electronic fuel systems.
 - The perfect qualification would "attract" young people to a trade skill that is currently one of the top priorities in-demand skills on the national Marine Jobs market.
 - OEDA strongly agrees with items 1-6, at a high level, in Neil's submission and looks forward to working with the BIA and participating in any review of AUR30520 Certificate III in Marine Mechanical Technology.

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