Notes from the Industry Practitioners Meeting  
Tuesday, 14th November 2006 at 12.30 pm

ATTENDEES:
Jim Liaskos - United Bonds, Mariana Hardwick, Jo-anne Kellock - Primary School Wear

WHAT IS THE TEXTILE DESIGN SPECIALIST CENTRE?
A specialist centre run by RMIT's School of Fashion & Textiles providing specialist training to industry in a number of ways Ie. Research, Accredited, Non Accredited, Online and Short Courses and Customised programs.

PURPOSE OF MEETING:
To seek feedback on whether the Textile Design Specialist Centre should continue and if so, what would you like to see the centre do or what direction and role should it take?

BULLET POINTS TAKEN AT MEETING

- Industry finding it difficult to recruit the right person for the job as skills around the country not available.
- Skill base is diminishing. Current experienced people in position unable to train new people due to time constraints and the supply demand that comes in.
- Sending business offshore not an option to due nature of the business ie. made to measure couture
- The need for Industry to change the perception of “Dress Making” being a factory job. We need to market ‘Dress Making’ as a sought after career path and not a machinist position.
- Provide better marketing as career paths in the TCF Industry
- Lack of employer understanding regarding training. It will take more time to train a person in the first year however will save you time in the long run
- TCF Industry is coming back onshore as things aren’t working out. We need to train staff in all areas of production to accommodate needs
- Textile Design Specialist Centre needs to find a correct model to deliver
- Employers are seduced by the government funding involved however it ends up being more draining on employers.
- Traineeships/Apprenticeship doesn’t seem to work due to restrictions with apprentice or trainee must not have a qualification
- Industry programs that are offered end up being top simple and not targeting the gap that company require. Specialist centre to do needs analysis and customise training to suit industry requirement.
- One of the roles of the centre is to promote “specialist skills’ in Industry as courses and then build resources around this.
- PacBrand approach to the ageing workforce, capturing older workforce skills and experiences and turning this into a resources material was a good idea.
- Where does Pre-production lie? Onshore or offshore? Needs to be onshore however there is a training gap as previously this has been sent offshore.
- What areas can the centre provide training in that is outside the TCF industry? Customer Service.
- Agree that a Specialist Centre is needed and has potential
- RMIT seems to be a leading University and therefore the Centre should be run via RMIT and other TAFE to be used as a resource only if need be.
• Real difficulties in finding young people to train
• The centre could capture knowledge and promote education and training resources to industry
• The SME/micro business base is stabilising as the industry restructuring is seeing need for local sourcing of TCF. An example is preproduction for apparel
• Centre could act as a focus to bring groups together such as Fashion technicians and patternmakers. Greater use of RMIT pattern making skills for industry training
• Centre could be a repository of knowledge for Industry
• Is the premise that SME will not come to do campus training correct? Night courses?
• The centre should take on and lead major project initiatives such as digital supply chain project and the sizing/scale project.
• Current training through packages is simplistic and does not stretch people-can the Centre replicate training in the work environment in some way?
• There is areal need to promote the industry and encourage people to consider a TCF career. Drivers here are:
  - people shortage
  - connect with new migrants
  - need for dressmakers, patternmakers and pre production skills