Radical rethink of development vital

THE Business Council of Australia’s education taskforce said graduates still lacked essential attributes, especially in leadership, teamwork and communication, but universities were failing to heed the call ("Business takes dim view of academe", HES, March 30).

What these leaders are implying is that university graduates should be competent and capable professionals and able to take on responsibility and deliver the necessary outcomes with minimal on-the-job training. This is unrealistic and cannot be achieved within the current educational structures.

The answer lies in a radical rethinking of professional development of graduates. We need to create opportunities for graduates to develop their socio-cultural, entrepreneurial and managerial skills in a structured way as part of their professional development programs.

It cannot be done in-house either as the boundaries of business in each organisation constrain the thinking models and zones of influence in terms of cognitive processes.

A new class of institutions is needed to bridge the worlds of education and business. This type of institution - transformative institution - should focus on fast-tracking development of graduates capabilities to transition them into the real world of business.

The programs offered by such institutions should focus on the specific needs of individual graduates and give them business insights, professional perspective and institutional knowledge to succeed in today’s fast-changing environment.

Therefore we need a third type of Institution to bridge the worlds of business and universities and to transition graduates to the world of business and industry.

Unfortunately, Australian business remains neglectful of their responsibility in post-development of graduates and revels in university bashing. I challenge the BCA to rally behind initiatives that can transition graduates to capable professionals and enter into partnership with transformative institutions.

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