

# Strategic Review of the AUSTRALIAN APPRENTICESHIP INCENTIVE SYSTEM

2024



## Final report – Fact sheet for First Nations Apprentices

*Many First Nations people take up apprenticeships to develop skills to support themselves and their communities. However, they experience challenges with managing apprenticeships with cultural obligations, racism and finding culturally safe workplaces. They need employers who are provided with cultural competency training and better access to training on country.*

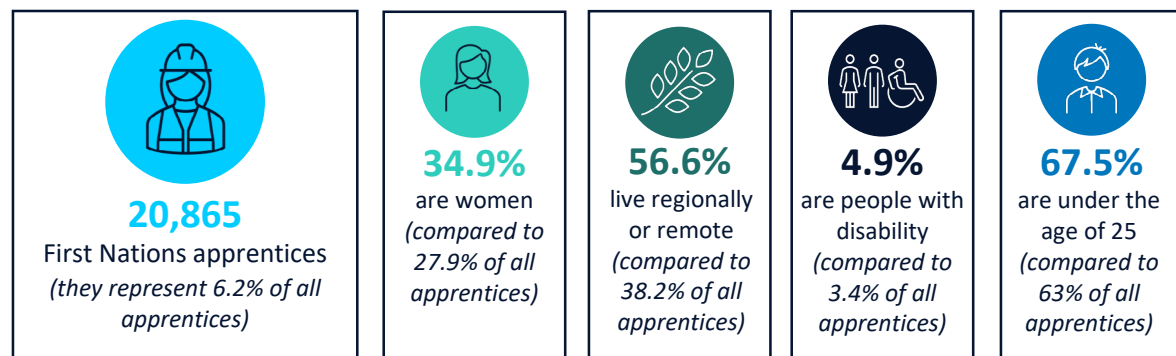
### Background

The Strategic Review of the Australian Apprenticeship Incentive System, led by Dr Iain Ross AO and Ms Lisa Paul AO PSM, considered the effectiveness and efficiency of the current incentive system in supporting the uptake and completion of Australian apprenticeships. In particular, it considered the incentive system with regard to addressing Australia's skills needs and its ability to deliver on economic priorities and social equity objectives.

*For more details on the review as a whole, please refer to the Overview fact sheet.*

In 2023, First Nations people make up 8.2% of people starting an apprenticeship (review analysis based on NCVET 2024a). This is higher than the proportion of First Nations people in the general population, which is around 3.2% (ABS 2022), and higher than First Nations participation in the total VET population, which is 3.5% (NCVER 2024b).

### First Nations apprentices



Source: Review analysis based NCVET (2024a) apprentices and trainees data.

## Key Issues

**The review identified the following issues that affect First Nations apprentices:**

- Many First Nations people must travel away from their community to undertake an apprenticeship. This can make it hard for them to manage training and their cultural obligations.
- While training on country is an option for some apprentices, this is often only in specific occupations such as those related to healthcare.
- Many First Nations people experience racism in the workplace and employers often lack cultural competency around the lived experience and culture of First Nations people.

## Recommendations

**The final report made 34 recommendations that aim to address the key issues identified through the review. The following is a summary of recommendations relevant to First Nations Apprentices:**

- Address the behaviour of employers who are not providing an appropriate working environment for their apprentices.
- Provide more financial support to apprentices through subsidies for their travel expenses, purchasing tools, and reforms to apprentice support payments to increase the amount and frequency of payment.
- Use existing apprentice data systems to better connect apprentices with support services.
- Work with industry stakeholders to address workplace culture issues and improve the working environment for apprentices.
- Improve the cultural competency of training providers to better support First Nations Apprentices.

*For details on recommendations that are beneficial to all apprentices, please refer to the Apprentice fact sheet.*

## References

ABS (2022) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: Census, 2021*, ABS.

NCVER (National Centre for Vocational Education Research) (2024a) *Apprentices and trainees 2023: December quarter*, NCVER.

NCVER (2024b) *Total VET students and courses 2023*, NCVER.