

Women in Apprenticeships

Key policies and announcements to support women in trades

Initiative	Description
New	
Targets set under the Australian Skills Guarantee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Australian Skills Guarantee will introduce national targets for apprentices, trainees and paid cadets working on Australian Government funded major projects, with a total contract value of \$10 million or more. Beginning on 1 July 2024, the initial targets for women in major construction projects will be 6% for women in apprenticeships and traineeships and 4% for women in trade apprenticeships and traineeships. The targets for women in the construction sector will increase each year to drive sustainable, achievable change. The targets will reach 12% for women in apprenticeships and traineeships, and 10% for women in trade apprenticeships and traineeships in construction by 2030. There will also be more ambitious targets for women in flagship construction projects with a contract value at \$100 million or more.
Introduction of the new Apprenticeship service delivery model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new model will be rolled out from 1 July 2024, delivering strengthened support for apprentices who are at the highest risk of non-completion, this includes women in male dominated occupations. The Government will commit a total of \$1.0 billion over 5 years for organisations to deliver services. As announced at Budget this includes an additional \$54.3 million over 5 years from 2022-23 to introduce the new model.
Greater support for women in male-dominated trades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of this package of support \$5.0 million over 3 years from 2024-25 will be provided to organisations with appropriate expertise in supporting women in the workplace to assist women in male-dominated trade apprenticeships. This program will complement the New Energy Apprenticeship service delivery model. This responds to key stakeholder feedback and will provide additional support under the Australian Skills Guarantee by leveraging industry specialist expertise to support women.
CURRENT ceasing on 1 July 2024	
Women in Non-Traditional Trades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The \$38.6 million women in non-traditional trades measure delivered by the Australian Apprenticeship Support Network (AASN) will continue until the new service arrangements come into effect from 1 July 2024. This service provides access to personal mentoring and networking o support women in training.

Key Consultation Feedback

Consultations	Key points
Future Directions for Apprenticeship Support Services Discussion Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is strong support for the reforms proposed, particularly the proactive mentoring and support to improve workplace practices through education and cultural change. Peer networks were highlighted as particularly important as was career advice, mentoring and pastoral care. Stakeholders noted there is a need for cultural and systemic change within industry to increase flexibility and safer work environments. Stakeholders also re-iterated the need for information to be presented to girls and young women earlier to provide them with the knowledge to explore different options for their future careers.
Australian Skills Guarantee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target levels should consider the capacity of the current labour market as well as the training system to deliver enough apprentices and trainees. Stakeholders highlighted the need for additional supports to ensure women are supported and remain in the construction and ICT sectors. Stakeholders noted the importance of having a streamlined and easy-to-use reporting system.
Women in VET Discussion Paper (supporting women in VET based careers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tailored wrap-around services supporting women to participate in VET and work Workplace culture and conditions directly impacting VET participation and retention in VET careers. Stakeholders also raised the importance flexible VET learning options; a lack of confidence being a barrier to participation and success; the need to improve perceptions of VET and VET-based career pathways; and that recognition of existing skills and experience is essential.

NCVER Apprenticeships Data as at 30 June 2023

Top 5 industries and occupations for women apprentices in-training, as at 30 June 2023					
Top 5 industries		Top 5 trade occupations		Top 5 non-trade occupations	
Social Assistance Services	19,280	Hairdressers	8,180	Child Carers	20,080
Food and Beverage Services	13,965	Food Trades Workers	4,555	General Clerks	8,440
Personal and Other Services	10,105	Electricians	2,420	Sales Assistants and Salespersons	8,355
Administrative Services	9,185	Automotive Electricians and Mechanics	2,105	Personal Carers and Assistants	6,865
Medical and Other Health Care Services	6,240	Miscellaneous Technicians and Trades Workers	1,495	Hospitality Workers	6,780

109,935 Australian Apprentices are women (trade and non-trade)

Women represent 29.1% of all apprentices in-training (377,715 total apprentices in-training)

25.8% of women apprentices in-training are in trades, with 5,855 trade women apprentices completing in the 12 months to 30 June 2023

74.2% of women apprentices in-training are in non-trades, with 31,535 non-trade women apprentices completing in the 12 months to 30 June 2023

Women's workforce participation continues to increase at 62.8% (ABS Labour Force Nov 2023)

The construction industry gender pay gap has decreased but women are still earning on average 28.3% less than men (WEGA data as at Nov 2023)

Only 4.9% of Australian Apprentices in-training in construction are women

There are 19,195 women apprentices in male-dominated trades

The number of women apprentices in trades has grown steadily over the last 10 years, from 11.4% in June 2014 to 11.8% in June 2023

Women apprentices in male-dominated trades make up 8% of all trade apprentices

Future policy direction will:

- address long-term structural problems of gender segregation in the apprenticeships system by setting targets for women apprentices and trainees working on public infrastructure projects.
- set national targets for women under the Australian Skills Guarantee so that by 2030, 12% of apprenticeships and traineeships, and 10% of trade apprenticeships and traineeships on eligible major construction projects are undertaken by women
- increase the diversity of the apprentice workforce by providing additional funding of \$54.3 million over 5 years from 2022-23 to reform apprenticeship support services to supporting more apprentices, particularly women, to complete their qualification and ensure that no woman is left behind during the transitioning of service delivery models
- support women in the workplace to reduce the cultural barriers to women's participation, address workplace challenges and support businesses to attract and retain women
- support women apprentices in male-dominated trades providing guaranteed access to the support they need through specialised mentoring, peer networking and pastoral care services.

The Government is focused on improving women's experiences of the labour market and ensuring equal opportunity and pay. This includes a commitment to lifting the participation of women in apprenticeships and across the Vet System, focused on helping the economic security of women through access to jobs in higher-paying and traditional male-dominated industries.

Trades = all of ANZSCO Major Group 3: Technicians and Trades Workers **Male-dominated trades** = Major Group 3, excluding hairdressers and animal attendants and trainers
Non-trades = All ANZSCO Major Groups, excluding Major Group 3 which is Technician and Trades Workers (e.g. Includes Managers, Community and Personal Service workers & Sales)

Fee-Free TAFE Delivery (12 Months Skills Agreement)

Purpose of the program

The purpose of Fee-Free TAFE is to support training places in areas of high demand and skills need, provide access to priority cohorts, including the most vulnerable, and support students by removing financial barriers to study. Fee-Free TAFE is part of the 12-Month Skills Agreement and a Deed of Variation, to deliver over \$1.4 billion funding for 480,000 Fee-Free TAFE and vocational education places across Australia over 2023 to 2026.

What has been announced

Ahead of the National Skills Summit in August 2022, the Prime Minister and the Minister for Skills and Training announced Fee-Free TAFE as part of the \$1.2 billion Future Made in Australia Skills Plan, and subsequently on 1 September 2022, the Prime Minister announced 180,000 Fee-Free TAFE positions in his opening address to the Jobs and Skills Summit.

The Commonwealth Government has agreed with states and territories a \$414.1 million extension to Fee-Free TAFE from 2024 to provide another 300,000 Fee-Free TAFE and vocational education places nationally. This commenced on 1 January 2024.

Committed Funding and Places – Fee-Free TAFE Tranche 1

Jurisdiction	Commonwealth Investment (\$m)	Indicative Target Places (2023)
New South Wales	\$155.19	56,700
Victoria	\$127.84	46,800
Queensland	\$101.16	37,000
Western Australia	\$51.77	18,800
South Australia	\$33.96	12,500
Tasmania	\$10.39	3,800
Australian Capital Territory	\$8.28	3,000
Northern Territory	\$4.74	1,800
Total	\$493.330	180,400

Committed Funding and Places – Fee-Free TAFE Tranche 2

Jurisdiction	Date Announced	Commonwealth Investment (\$m)	Places (2024-26)
Western Australia	20 September 2023	\$44.505	22,200
South Australia	26 September 2023	\$28.527	15,000
Victoria	16 October 2023	\$106.963	62,800
Australian Capital Territory	17 October 2023	\$7.360	3,600
Tasmania	17 November 2023	\$8.949	4,600
New South Wales	23 November 2023	\$128.864	147,400
Queensland	14 December 2023	\$84.970	43,400
Northern Territory	17 December 2023	\$3.966	2,200
Total		\$414.100	301,200

Budget

Item	2022-23 (\$m)	2023-24 (\$m)	2024-25 (\$m)	2025-26 (\$m)	2026-27 (\$m)
Budget (Oct)	352.410	140.910			
2023-24 Budget	352.410	140.910			
2023-24 MYEFO	345.736	316.172	0	124.231	124.231

**Total Budget
\$910.370 million**

Priority Groups

Priority Group	Enrolments as at 30 September 2023	Percentage of Total Enrolments
Women facing economic insecurity	32	0.01%
Aged Care	14,471	4.9%
First Nation Australians	14,391	4.9%
Job Seeker	65,701	22.2%
People with disability	22,687	7.7%
Unpaid carers	6	0.00%
Visa holder	4,791	1.6%
Women undertaking study in non-traditional fields	29	0.01%
Young person (24 and under)	99,879	33.7%

Priority Sectors

Priority Sector	Total Enrolments as at 30 September 2023	Percentage of Total Enrolments
Agriculture	11,951	4.0%
Care	65,584	22.1%
Construction	21,174	7.2%
Defence	689	0.2%
Early Childhood Education and Care	14,304	4.8%
Hospitality and Tourism	11,343	3.8%
Manufacturing	4,273	1.4%
Sovereign Capability	1,388	0.5%
State priority	138,729	46.9%
Technology and Digital	26,672	9.0%
Total	296,107	100.0%

Top Courses by Enrolments

Course	Enrolments as at 30 September 2023	Percentage of Total Enrolments
Certificate IV in Accounting and Bookkeeping	12,621	4.3%
Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care	11,411	3.9%
Diploma of Nursing	10,651	3.7%
Certificate III in Individual Support	10,328	3.5%
Certificate IV in Training and Assessment	8,701	2.9%

Payments made to States as at 31 December 2023

Jurisdiction	Payments Made to States for Tranche 1 (\$m)
New South Wales	\$155.19
Victoria	\$91.32
Queensland	\$101.16
Western Australia	\$51.77
South Australia	\$33.96
Tasmania	\$4.46
Australian Capital Territory	\$3.55
Northern Territory	\$3.39
Total	\$444.80

Standing Committees on Education and Employment

QUESTION ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2023 - 2024

Outcome: Skills and Training

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations Question No. SQ23-000709

Senator Matt O'Sullivan on 31 May 2023, Proof Hansard page 85-86

Breakdown of Course Types – Fee-Free TAFE

Question

Senator O'SULLIVAN: Can I get a breakdown on the course types that have been undertaken—that is, cert I, II, III, diplomas?

Dr Booth: Yes, I can do that.

Senator O'SULLIVAN: Thank you for being prepared for these detailed questions; I appreciate it.

Dr Booth: I can give you full qualification, so 95.2 per cent are in the full qualification and then 4.8 per cent are in a short course or a skill set, but I can do a breakdown by course level on notice.

...

Senator O'SULLIVAN: How many new students are there then, given what you were discussing before?

Dr Booth: In terms of total commencements, the figure is 109,131.

Senator O'SULLIVAN: Can I get a breakdown—and please take this on notice—of the course types those enrolments are across?

...

Senator O'SULLIVAN: I also noticed in the media releases that have been put out that there was a breakdown of the particular course subjects, if you like, or sectors.

Dr Booth: I can give you a summary of activity by sector if that's helpful.

Senator O'SULLIVAN: Could you take it on notice to provide the state breakdown. I don't want to detain the committee on this; it's too long.

Answer

The following data has been reported by states and territories as at 31 March 2023.

Enrolments by Course Type – Quarter 1, 2023

Course type	Enrolments	Percentage of Total Enrolments
Short Course	6,887	4.72%
Certificate I	83	0.06%
Certificate II	7,906	5.4%
Certificate III	57,589	39.4%
Certificate IV	48,806	33.4%
Diploma	24,010	16.4%
Advanced Diploma	697	0.48%
Graduate Certificate	34	0.02%
Total	146,012	100.0%

Enrolments by Industry Sector – Quarter 1, 2023

Sector	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	WA	VIC	Total	Percentage
Agriculture	0	3,106	54	558	331	237	270	1,236	5,792	4.0%
Care	234	15,576	72	3,746	1,778	606	6,820	13,733	42,565	29.2%
Construction	6	3,229	31	3,528	793	90	600	2,496	10,773	7.4%
Defence	0	112	0	1	0	0	156	217	486	0.3%
Early Childhood Education and Care	95	2,543	4	1,269	423	150	2,662	1,426	8,572	5.9%
Hospitality and Tourism	49	2,552	18	619	696	217	1,129	813	6,093	4.2%
Manufacturing	0	100	0	2,351	0	0	0	0	2,451	1.7%
Sovereign Capability	11	680	0	13	208	0	189	0	1,101	0.8%
State priority	110	31,702	236	12,262	1,828	251	1,893	4,283	52,565	36.0%
Technology and Digital	92	4,750	22	1,913	2,700	192	1,998	3,070	14,737	10.1%
Other	72	758	26	0	0	0	21	0	877	0.6%
Total	669	65,108	463	26,260	8,757	1,743	15,738	27,274	146,012	100%

- Courses in state priority areas provide jurisdictions with flexibility to offer Fee-Free TAFE courses that meet local jobs and skills needs, in addition to areas of national priority.
- Note percentage figures may not add to 100 per cent due to rounding.

Standing Committees on Education and Employment

QUESTION ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2023 - 2024

Outcome: Skills and Training

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations Question No. SQ23-000708

Senator Matt O'Sullivan on 31 May 2023, Proof Hansard page 84

TAFE places versus other providers per state

Question

Senator O'SULLIVAN: You gave me the national figure there. Do you have a New South Wales figure and a breakdown of TAFE versus others? I'm going to ask you that for each state.

Dr Booth: I've got absolute numbers, rather than percentages, sorry.

Senator O'SULLIVAN: I might just get you to table that.

Dr Booth: Why don't I take the percentages on notice, and I'll provide that to you.

Senator O'SULLIVAN: Yes, the raw numbers—

Dr Booth: I'll provide them both. We'll do them together on notice.

Answer

The following data has been reported by states and territories as at 31 March 2023.

Total enrolment numbers by provider type and jurisdiction – Quarter 1, 2023

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA
Community-based	-	1,415	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dual Sector	-	-	463	1,893	-	-	7,676	-
Private	-	6,323	-	-	45	-	-	4,041
TAFE	669	57,370	-	24,367	8,712	1,743	19,598	11,697
Total	669	65,108	463	26,260	8,757	1,743	27,274	15,738

Percentage of total enrolments by provider type and jurisdiction – Quarter, 1 2023

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA
Community-based	-	2.2%	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
Dual Sector	-	0.0%	100%	7.2%	-	-	28.1%	0.0%
Private	-	9.7%	-	0.0%	0.5%	-	-	25.7%
TAFE	100%	88.1%	-	92.8%	99.5%	100%	71.9%	74.3%

Standing Committees on Education and Employment

QUESTION ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2023 - 2024

Outcome: Skills and Training

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations Question No. SQ23-000710

Senator Matt O'Sullivan on 31 May 2023, Proof Hansard page 87

Payment Arrangement by State-by-State

Question

Senator O'SULLIVAN: Who takes on the risk of that attrition? Is it the state or the provider, if someone withdraws?

Dr Booth: If someone withdraws, there are a range of different arrangements. The provider will be funded for the part of the qualification that the student has completed. If the student exits then they are no longer funded for that student's education, noting that there is variability between the states. I come out of the Victorian system, so I am most familiar with that. Other states break up the qualifications in different ways, but that principle, in general, holds.

Ms Faithfull: What we can maybe do is take on notice to give you a state-by-state description of how each state manages the issue that you are getting at, which is the question of completion and who is on the hook. You asked are the training providers on the hook for completion. We can give you a bit of a breakdown of how that works for each state and territory.

Answer

All states and territories are required to reinvest unused funds from students who withdraw from Fee-Free TAFE courses into additional Fee-Free TAFE places.

Standing Committees on Education and Employment

QUESTION ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2023 - 2024

Outcome: Skills and Training

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations Question No. SQ23-001168

Senator Matt O'Sullivan provided in writing.

Fee-Free TAFE Skills Agreements

Question

1. On what date was the skills agreement with the South Australian Government for 12,500 fee free TAFE and vocational education and training places formally agreed to by the Minister and his state counterpart?
2. On what date was the skills agreement with the Western Australian Government for 18,800 fee free TAFE and vocational education and training places formally agreed to by the Minister and his state counterpart?
3. On what date was the skills agreement with the ACT Government for 2,500 fee free TAFE and vocational education and training places formally agreed to by the Minister and his territory counterpart?
4. On what date was the skills agreement with the NSW Government for 120,000 fee free TAFE and vocational education and training places formally agreed to by the Minister and his state counterpart?
5. On what date was the skills agreement with the Tasmanian Government for 3,800 fee free TAFE and vocational education and training places formally agreed to by the Minister and his state counterpart?
6. On what date was the skills agreement with the Queensland Government for 37,000 fee free TAFE and vocational education and training places formally agreed to by the Minister and his state counterpart?
7. On what date was the skills agreement with the Victorian Government for 55,000 fee free TAFE and vocational education and training places formally agreed to by the Minister and his state counterpart?
8. On what date was the skills agreement with the Northern Territory Government for 1,500 fee free TAFE and vocational education and training places formally agreed to by the Minister and his territory counterpart?
9. Can you please provide the details of each agreement signed by the Commonwealth and each of the following States and Territories:
 - a. ACT
 - b. NSW
 - c. QLD
 - d. VIC
 - e. WA
 - f. TAS
 - g. NT
 - h. SA
10. In each respective agreement with the state and territory governments, what is the financial contribution of the Commonwealth by percentage and by dollar amount?
 - a. ACT
 - b. NSW
 - c. QLD
 - d. VIC
 - e. WA
 - f. TAS

- g. NT
 - h. SA
11. In each respective agreement with the state and territory governments, what is the financial contribution of the relevant State/Territory government by percentage and by dollar amount?
 - a. ACT
 - b. NSW
 - c. QLD
 - d. VIC
 - e. WA
 - f. TAS
 - g. NT
 - h. SA
 12. Are there specific outcomes and/or targets as part of each agreement?
 - a. Could you please provide the details of each:
 - i. ACT
 - ii. NSW
 - iii. QLD
 - iv. VIC
 - v. WA
 - vi. TAS
 - vii. NT
 - viii. SA
 13. How will the funding for the fee-free TAFE places be administered to the TAFEs?
 14. Could you please provide the list of all fee-free TAFE courses, broken down by each state and territory?
 15. Could you please provide the list of all TAFE centres offering fee-free courses, broken down by each state and territory.
 16. Could you please provide the data on the take up date (commencement date) of the fee-free courses in each state and territory (ACT, WA, NSW, VIC, NT, SA, TAS, QLD), broken down by:
 - a. Each individual course;
 - b. TAFE centre location;
 - c. Postcode at time of enrolment; and
 - d. Electorate.

Answer

1. The South Australian Government signed the Schedule to the 12-month Skills Agreement on 18 November 2022.
2. The Western Australian Government signed the Schedule to the 12-month Skills Agreement on 15 November 2022.
3. The Australian Capital Territory Government signed the Schedule to the 12-month Skills Agreement on 12 December 2022.
4. The New South Wales Government signed the Schedule to the 12-month Skills Agreement on 1 December 2022.
5. The Tasmanian Government signed the Schedule to the 12-month Skills Agreement on 1 December 2022.
6. The Queensland Government signed the Schedule to the 12-month Skills Agreement on 9 December 2022.

7. The Victorian Government signed the Schedule to the 12-month Skills Agreement on 31 October 2022.
8. The Northern Territory Government signed the Schedule to the 12-month Skills Agreement on 14 December 2022.
9. The 12-month Skills Agreement signed by the Commonwealth Government and each state and territory can be found in the Schedule published on the Federal Financial Relations website: <https://federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/agreements/12-month-skills-agreement>.
10. Under the 12-month Skills Agreement the Commonwealth Government has committed to fund 100 percent of the Tafe Technology Fund (\$50 million) and VET Data Infrastructure Reforms (\$6.8 million) and 50 percent of Fee-Free TAFE (\$493.3 million).

In addition the Commonwealth Government has committed to fund 50 per cent of the total costs of Debt Not Expected to be Repaid and Deferral Adjustment Costs for the VET Student Loans program from enrolments between 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023.

This funding is detailed in **Tables 1-5** and **Appendix D** of the 12-month Skills Agreement (refer response to Question 9 for link).

11. See question 10.
12. All states and territories signed up to the 12-month Skills Agreement, which includes the national target of 180,000 Fee-Free TAFE places. All Fee-Free TAFE places go to agreed areas of national and state skills shortages. States and territories are responsible for delivering against the agreed skills priority areas.
13. The Commonwealth makes payments in accordance with Part 2 of the 12-month Skills Agreement - "Commonwealth Government payments under this schedule (the 12-month Skills Agreement) will be directed to State Governments, which will manage the distribution of funds in line with this Schedule and according to their policies and procedures".
14. A list of Fee-Free TAFE courses with current enrolments as at 31 March 2023 is at Appendix A.
15. The Commonwealth does not collect this information. This question would need to be directed to each state and territory.
16. See Appendix A for Fee-Free TAFE course enrolments as at 31 March 2023.

Under the 12-month Skills Agreement the Commonwealth does not collect data relating to Fee-Free TAFE courses by TAFE centre, electorate, or postcode at the time of enrolment. This question would need to be directed to each state and territory.

Standing Committees on Education and Employment

**QUESTION ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2023 - 2024**

Outcome: Skills and Training

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations Question No. SQ24-000002

Senator Matt O'Sullivan provided in writing.

Fee-free TAFE courses

Question

With reference to SQ23-001557, please provide the:

- a) Total enrolments in Fee-free TAFE courses by electorate;
- b) Total number of completions to date of Fee-free TAFE courses by electorate.

Answer

SQ23-001168 refers (see answer 16)

Apprenticeships and Skills Shortages

Purpose of the program and key statistics

Apprentices and trainees represent 2.7% of the Australian workforce, with some key sectors, such as the construction industry which remains in a persistent skills shortage, relying heavily on apprenticeships to build a skilled workforce.

- 10.8% of construction workers are apprentices in June Quarter 2023.

As at 30 June 2023, there were 377,715 Australian Apprentices in-training.

- In the 12 months to June 2023, we can see 166,375 commencements which is more than the average annual commencements pre-COVID (160,000 commencements per year based on average of 5 years 2015 to 2019).

Providing targeted, wholistic support to increase the uptake and completion of apprenticeships in critical sectors is essential to filling the skills gaps Australia faces. This includes investing in the Australian Apprenticeships Incentives System, non-financial support services, the New Energy Apprenticeships Program, and the Australian Skills Guarantee.

- The first 4 quarters following the introduction of the new Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Systems shows an upwards trend and reflect the system recalibrating and returning to pre-pandemic (2019) commencement levels (noting that commencements for these months are continuing to settle).

Commencements by quarter	Commencements 2019			Commencements 2022/2023		
	Trade	Non-trade	Total	Trade	Non-trade	Total
September (2019 & 2022)	16,325	18,190	34,515	14,655	16,165	30,820
December (2019 & 2022)	12,385	16,320	28,710	16,885	17,605	34,485
March (2019 & 2023)	29,045	26,065	55,110	34,835	27,265	62,120
June (2019 & 2023)	11,960	20,920	32,880	17,755	21,170	38,945

- Top 5 Trade Occupations by commencements in the June 2023 quarter demonstrate the demand for Priority Occupations in shortage with all 5 on the Priority List.

Top 5 Trade Occupations - Commenced in June quarter	2019	2023	Increase
* 341111 Electrician (General)	1,645	2,435	48.0%
* 331212 Carpenter	1,200	2,390	99.4%
* 321211 Motor Mechanic (General)	1,310	2,090	59.8%
* 334116 Plumber (General)	770	1,535	100.0%
* 322211 Sheetmetal Worker	555	825	48.6%

Priority Occupations marked with *

Budget (\$'000s)

Item	2023-24 Estimate	2024-25 Estimate	2025-26 Estimate	2026-27 Estimate
Australian Apprenticeships Incentives System	633,704	922,516	789,230	570,126
Australian Apprenticeships Support Network	246,392	229,991	205,128	198,307
New Energy Skills Program*	4,862	3,603	3,603	3,603
Australian Skills Guarantee*	2,828	2,101	2,088	1,535
Higher Apprenticeships				

* Includes departmental Funding

Announcement

\$2.9 billion over 4 years from 2023-24 for the Australian Apprenticeships Incentives System.

- Investment is focused on priority occupations, based on the Australian Apprenticeship Priority List, which is updated annually, reflecting the latest National Skills Priority List.
- Australian Apprentice Training Support Payment provides up to 2 years of direct financial assistance for apprentices undertaking Certificate III level and above qualification in an occupation listed on the Australian Apprenticeship Priority List.
- The Priority Wage Subsidy provides up to 3 years of assistance to employers. Eligible employers are able to be reimbursed a percentage of wages paid on a quarterly basis.

The Government will provide \$5.4 million over two years from 2023-23 to undertake a strategic review of Australian Apprenticeships including the Australian Apprenticeships Incentives System. The review will be led by an experienced, eminent expert and will:

- include an early focus on financial supports for apprentices
- consider opportunities to update program settings to better support apprentices
- be informed by targeted research and broad consultation designed to deepen the Government's understanding of the apprenticeships system.

An additional \$54.3 million over 5 years from 2022-23 to introduce a new model for apprenticeship services and non-financial supports from 1 July 2024. As part of this measure, Government will commit to a total of \$1.0 billion over a 5-year contract for organisations to deliver the new Australian Apprenticeship Support Services model.

- Includes \$5 million over 3 years from 2024-25 for organisations with appropriate expertise in supporting women in the workplace to provide education, advice, and support for women in trades dominated by men.

\$99.9 million over 9 years for the New Energy Apprenticeships and New Energy Skills Programs, as key components of the Powering Australia Plan.

- Apprentices who choose to train in new energy industries will receive up to \$10,000 over the duration of the apprenticeship, paid in 5 milestone payments of \$2,000 (at 6, 12, 24, and 36 months and on successful completion).

\$8.6 million over 4 years to design and implement the Australian Skills Guarantee.

- Applying to procurements from 1 July 2024, for construction and information and communication technology projects, the Skills Guarantee will introduce national targets for apprentices, trainees and paid cadets working on Australian Government-funded major projects with a total contract value of \$10 million or more.
- It will also introduce targets for women apprentices, trainees, and paid cadets on eligible construction projects. These targets will increase each year to drive sustainable, achievable change. There will also be more ambitious targets for women in flagship construction projects with a total contract value of \$100 million or more.

Approximately \$10 million to develop higher and degree apprenticeships, as part of a broader measure to turbocharge TAFE Centres of Excellence (\$41 million, total). This will accelerate the take up of higher and degree apprenticeships in the priority areas of net zero, care and digitalisation.

Key financial incentives for Australian Apprenticeships Priority List occupations

Apprentices in Priority Occupations	Employers of Apprentices in Priority Occupations
Australian Apprentice Training Support Payment \$5,000 payment direct to apprentices and trainees paid in milestones	Priority Wage Subsidy 10% of the apprentice's wage in the first year, 10% in the second year and 5% in the third year add max – up to \$15,000.

Key apprenticeship reforms

Investment	Description	Implementation
<p>\$2.9 billion over 4 years from 2023-24 into the Australian Apprenticeships Incentives System (Incentive System)</p> <p>Combined with grandfathered payments and funding for non-financial supports, investment over the 4 years from 2023-24 is \$5.5 billion.</p>	<p>Investment under the Incentives System is focused on priority occupations, based on the Australian Apprenticeship Priority List. An additional 39 Priority Occupations were added to the Priority List in January 2023, expanding the list of occupations to 111 and increasing investment in incentives. The expansion of the Priority List has provided greater financial assistance for apprentices in priority occupations to increase the attractiveness of apprenticeships in areas of skills shortage (see EC24-000160 for further details)</p> <p>Financial support of up to \$20,000 is available for apprentices in a priority occupation, with a wage subsidy of up to \$15,000 for employers and a \$5,000 direct payment to apprentices. For apprentices not on the priority list a \$3,500 hiring incentive is available.</p>	<p>Commenced 1 July 2022</p> <p>Incentives System: Target skills shortages, improve completions and ensure supports are accessible.</p>
<p>\$54.3 million over 5 years from 2022-23 to introduce a new model for apprenticeship services and non-financial supports (see SB23-000106 for further details). As part of this measure, the Government will commit a total of \$1.0 billion over a 5-year contract for organisations to deliver the new Australian Apprenticeships Support Services model.</p> <p>This will include grant funding of \$5 million over 3 years from 2024-25 for organisations with appropriate expertise in supporting women in the workplace, to further support women in male-dominated trade apprenticeships. This will include providing education, advice, or support to increase culturally safe and inclusive workplaces, reduce the cultural barriers to women's participation, address workplace challenges and support</p>	<p>Informed by 2 rounds of consultations, the new model will place apprentices at the centre of service provision and ensure apprentices and employers are provided with better support throughout the apprenticeship journey.</p> <p>The new service model will:</p> <p>Provide improved wraparound support and mentoring for Key Client Groups including First Nations apprentices, apprentices with disability, those who live remotely, women in male-dominated trades while continuing to support all apprentices and employers who experience additional barriers to completing their apprenticeship.</p> <p>Provide better support and mentoring to employers to help them to better understand their role in supporting their Australian Apprentice, including ensuring a safe and respectful workplace, free from harassment, and connecting employers to support services and training to improve their capacity to effectively supervise and support their apprentices in the workplace.</p> <p>Introduce specialist services to provide expert support to certain cohorts of Australian Apprentices including Women in male -dominated trades, First Nations Australian Apprentices and Australian Apprenticeships working towards clean energy occupations.</p> <p>Leverage improved technology to increase and better target communications and streamline program administration to free up service</p>	<p>From 1 July 2024</p> <p>New model for apprenticeship services and non-financial supports: Strengthened support for apprentices who are at the highest risk of non-completion.</p> <p>This includes delivery of assessment services, mentoring support, and specialist services to provide expert support to certain cohorts of Australian Apprentices including Women in male-dominated trades, First Nations Australian Apprentices and Australian Apprenticeships working towards clean energy occupation.</p>

Investment	Description	Implementation
<p>businesses to attract and retain women.</p> <p>This will be offset by \$55.6 million in savings achieved from streamlining Australian Apprenticeships Incentives System service arrangements and from transferring the processing of wage subsidy claims from Services Australia to processing in house within the department.</p>	<p>providers to spend more time supporting apprentices.</p> <p>Include a readiness check for apprentice language, literacy, numeracy, and digital skills to identify what support might be needed to help the apprentice complete their training, both on and off the job and go on to have successful careers.</p>	
<p>\$99.9 million over 9 years for the New Energy Apprenticeships and New Energy Skills Programs, as key components of the Powering Australia Plan.</p> <p>Funding was re-allocated between these measures through the 2023-24 Budget and funding for the New Energy Apprenticeships Program was adjusted through an estimates variation in the 2023-24 MYEFO to reflect actual take-up with \$82.1 million to be provided over 9 years to support 10,000 New Energy Apprentices to complete their apprenticeship, and secure the workforce needed to transition Australia's economy to net zero.</p>	<p>A subset of 40 of the 111 occupations on the Australia Apprenticeship Priority List are occupations in shortage in Australia that can directly support opportunities in the clean energy sector for the pipeline of skilled workers needed now and into the future.</p> <p>Supported sectors in the first phase of the program include solar installation, large-scale renewables, electric vehicles, green hydrogen, and renewable manufacturing.</p> <p>New Energy Apprentices will also have access to an Industry Mentor to guide their clean energy career through the \$14.4 million New Energy Apprenticeship Mentoring Program, a component of the \$17.8 million New Energy Skills Program.</p>	<p>Commenced 1 July 2022</p> <p>Incentives System: Target skills shortages in clean energy sectors, improve completions by providing additional financial support for apprentices.</p>
<p>\$8.6 million over 4 years to design and implement the Australian Skills Guarantee.</p>	<p>This investment delivers on an election commitment to deliver and implement the Australian Skills Guarantee, which will leverage the significant purchasing power of the Government to drive the demand for apprentices, trainees, and paid cadets across the country and to increase opportunities for women in these sectors.</p>	<p>From 1 July 2024</p> <p>Drive the demand for apprentices, trainees and paid cadets and increase the diversity of the workforce for major projects</p>
<p>Approximately \$10 million to develop higher and degree apprenticeships, as part of a broader measure to turbocharge TAFE</p>	<p>This will accelerate the take up of higher and degree apprenticeships in the priority areas of net zero, care and digitalisation (see EC23-004716 for further detail).</p>	<p>Rapidly build partnerships with employers, unions, universities, and others that will be required to lay the groundwork for increased</p>

Investment	Description	Implementation
Centres of Excellence (\$41 million, total).		take-up of higher apprenticeships.

Australian Apprenticeship Support Network/Procurement

What has been announced

- On Tuesday 8 August 2023, the Request for Tender (RFT) for the National Australian Apprenticeship Support Services (Support Services) (excluding Northern Territory) was released into the market for 35 calendar days. The tender closed at 3:00pm (AEST), Tuesday 12 September 2023.

What is the proposed model?

- The RFT for support services will introduce a new non-financial model from 1 July 2024 that has been designed to lift completions, provide better quality support, and target skills shortages.
- The proposed service delivery model seeks to rebalance and strengthen non-financial support delivered by the Australian Government to improve the quality of the apprenticeships system.
- A key focus of the model is to increase the diversity of the apprentice workforce and the type of services delivered, to ensure tailored support to specific cohorts is delivered by Specialist Providers.

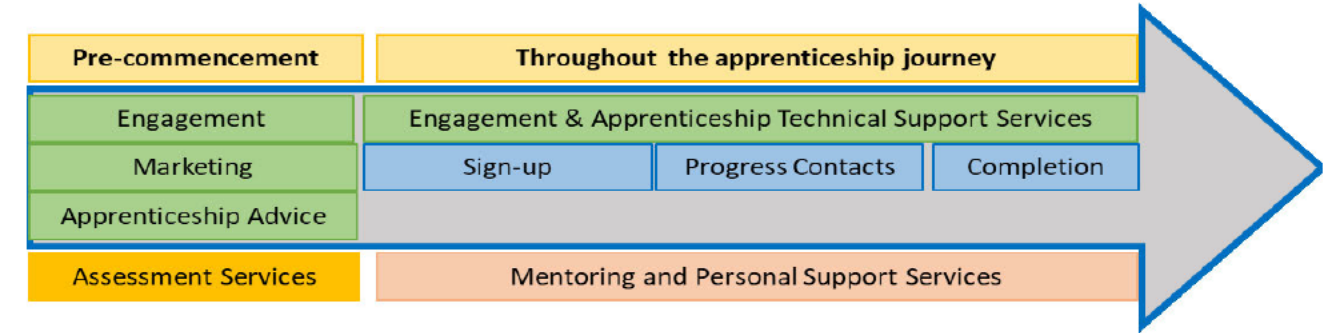
Current Status

- The procurement process is still underway. As a result, departmental staff remain unable to discuss any issues relating to purchasing activities to maintain the integrity and preserve the probity of the department's purchasing processes.
- A separate procurement process will be undertaken for the Northern Territory (NT).

If asked about the procurement process

- You will understand that to maintain the integrity and to preserve the probity of the department's purchasing processes, I am unable to discuss any issues relating to current, past or future purchasing activities.
- The department manages questions about procurement processes through their Employment Services Purchasing Hotline on 1300 733 514 or espurchasing@dewr.gov.au.

Stages of the Apprenticeship and Corresponding Service Elements



4 Key Client Groups

To increase the diversity of the apprentice workforce and service offer to increase participation rates and provide tailored wraparound support

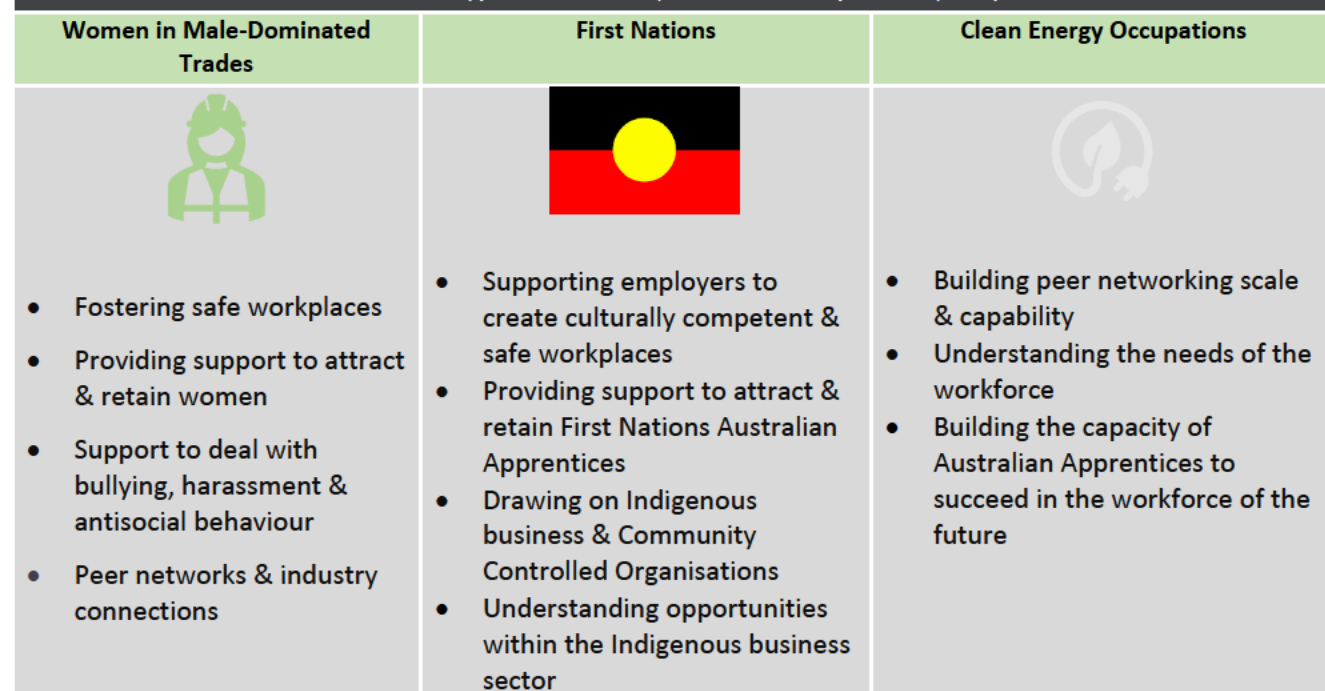


Key changes to the New Model

- Pre-commencement assessment to help set-up Apprentices for success.
- Higher quality, strengthened mentoring services to support Key Client Groups (women in male-dominated trades, First Nations apprentices, apprentices with disability, apprentices located in remote Australia).
- Revised structure for Provider services and payments with increased emphasis on successful completion.
- Improved technology to streamline payments and better target communication with apprentices and employers.
- Introduction of Specialist Providers to diversify the range of organisations to deliver apprenticeship support services.

Introduction of Specialist Providers across 3 Service Specialisation

To deliver expertise to specific cohorts to improve completion rates. Employers and Apprentices may have a choice in the type of Provider (Generalist or Specialist) they use



Australian Apprenticeship Support Network Program Budget

\$'000			
2023-24 Budget	2024-25 Forward Estimates	2025-26 Forward Estimates	2026-27 Forward Estimates
246,392	229,991	205,127	200,920

Total Budget
\$882,430 million
 (Budget 2023-24 Portfolio Budget Statements)

**THE HON SUSSAN LEY MP
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SHADOW MINISTER FOR INDUSTRY, SKILLS AND TRAINING
SHADOW MINISTER FOR SMALL AND FAMILY BUSINESS
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FEDERAL MEMBER FOR FARRER**

MEDIA RELEASE

**DATA DEMONSTRATES KEY LABOR SKILLS PROGRAM
FAILING TO SPARK**

Friday, 5 January 2024

Labor has begun 2024 as they finished 2023 – failing the Australian people on key policy areas, particularly in the skills portfolio. Labor’s much vaunted New Energy Apprenticeships Program, which has been in place for more than a year, has only attracted 1,787 participants out of 10,000 places.

Instead of Anthony Albanese accepting responsibility for this failure – not even 18 percent of places filled – the Minister for Skills [has asked the women of Australia to fix his problem for him](#). Worse still, Brendan O’Connor is using his own policy failure to try to build a case for Labor bringing in more overseas workers instead of training Australians.

Of course we need to increase the number of women taking up trades, but the data demonstrates Labor is doing the exact opposite.

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research confirmed over its first year of government Labor delivered a 37.4 per cent decline in new training starts and a 42.9 per cent decline in commencements for female trainees and apprentices.

The only supportive voice Minister O’Connor could find was from the Electrical Trades Union. This is the same union that has consistently worked with the CFMEU to campaign against accountability and transparency.

The Australian Labor Party willingly receives millions of dollars in donations from these unions and with every day that passes, we see the quid pro quo becoming clearer.

In that light, rumours that the ETU are angling for tens of millions of dollars in Commonwealth funding and direct access to the onboarding of Australian apprentices through the *Tender for Australian Apprenticeship Support Services 2024–26*, are deeply concerning. Departmental officials dodged questions at Senate Estimates about this, but the Opposition is watching very closely.

The reality is that Labor’s skills policies are not working.

Anthony Albanese and Brendan O'Connor need to switch their focus from creating new jobs for mates and giving the unions a slice of the taxpayer pie and instead just get on with delivering a proper economic plan that reduces the cost of living for Australian apprentices.

[ENDS]

Media contact: Deputy Leader's Office - Liam Jones - 0431 000 583

Standing Committees on Education and Employment

QUESTION ON NOTICE Supplementary Budget Estimates 2023 - 2024

Outcome: Skills and Training

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations Question No. SQ23-001559

Senator Matt O'Sullivan provided in writing.

Tender for Australian Apprenticeship Support Services

Question

1. How has the Department satisfy itself that the Minister and his are complying with probity requirements for this tender?
2. Have all members of the Minister's staff all received a probity briefing regarding this contract?
3. Has the Minister received a probity briefing regarding this tender?
4. Has anyone in the Minister's Office ever worked for either the Electrical Trades Union (ETU) or the Plumbing and Pipes Trades Employees Union?
5. Has anyone in the Minister's Office declared any conflicts of interest or associations with the ETU or the Plumber's Union?
6. Will the final arrangements for this tender be signed-off by Cabinet?
7. Which Cabinet Minister/s, if any, would have to recuse themselves from the decision about this tender, given any connection or association that they might hold with the ETU or the Plumbers Union?

Answer

1. The Department provides probity support to the Minister and all ministerial staff. This includes briefings, advice, and ongoing support, which is tailored to the tender process.
2. Yes.
3. Yes.
4. No.
5. No.
6. No. The decision maker for this procurement is the Deputy Secretary for the Skills and Training Group.
7. Not applicable. Refer to answer 6.

Standing Committees on Education and Employment

QUESTION ON NOTICE Supplementary Budget Estimates 2023 - 2024

Outcome: Skills and Training

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations Question No. SQ23-001241

Senator Slade Brockman on 26 October 2023, Proof Hansard page 15-16

Australian Apprenticeship Support Services tender

Question

Senator BROCKMAN: I want to ask about requests for tender for Australian Apprenticeship Support Services. Are the right people at the table? Can I confirm that those closed on 12 September?

Ms Campbell: Yes.

Senator BROCKMAN: And how many applicants were there?

Ms Faithfull: I'm just conscious that it is a procurement process that's underway, so I don't think I'm in a position to reflect on how many applicants submitted for that tender.

Senator BROCKMAN: I'm not sure why that would be commercial in confidence—

Ms Faithfull: I can, though, go back to the Commonwealth Procurement Rules and speak to our procurement advisers to confirm that that's something I can share in this forum. Then I would be very happy to do that as a question on notice.

.....

Senator BROCKMAN: I'm happy for you to check that and if you can get back to us then that's fine. We do actually want to move on to the Education Portfolio. Within what range could we reasonably expect the contract value of a successful respondent to receive? What are we expecting in terms of the contract value?

Ms Campbell: I think this may have a similar answer to the previous one.

Senator BROCKMAN: Do you have guardrails? Do you have highest and lowest? You must have some idea of where—

Ms Faithfull: If we look at the tender documentation, which is publicly available, it talks about national coverage, service regions and service coverage. It also talks about support for specialist cohorts—clean energy, women, First Nations and people with disability. Within that, if we think about this document, it's really seeking to achieve quite a few different objectives in terms of service coverage and specialist support. So I think we're not really in a position to reflect on what the 'average' contract will look like. I suspect, and, again, I don't want to—no, sorry, I should probably step back. As per the tender documentation, we're tendering for a diverse range of services. Those look at local, state and territory, and national coverage. Those will inform what an average contract might look like as we work through the tender process and finalise the results of that.

Senator BROCKMAN: I accept this is probably going to hit the same category as my second question, but can you take on notice whether the ETU or the Plumbing Trades Employees Union are part of that tender?

Ms Faithfull: Yes, I can take those on notice.

Senator BROCKMAN: If you're willing to answer I'm happy for you to answer, but I assume that you'll have to check that.

Ms Faithfull: No. I will take those on notice.

Ms James: I'm almost certain that we wouldn't be able to answer that one, but we will take it on notice and take a closer look.

Senator BROCKMAN: I accept that is probably true. Again, I suspect you're not going to be able to tell me the person who signed off on the tender response. When will the tender response become public—once a decision is made? And, if it's not favourable, would an unsuccessful tender response be made public?

Ms Faithfull: I will take that on notice. If I reflect on the requirements of the tender, my initial response would be, 'No, it won't be made public,' but I will take that on notice and give you a more precise answer.

Answer

In order to maintain integrity and to preserve the probity of the department's purchasing processes, the department is unable to discuss any issues relating to a current tender, which includes information about the number or detail of applications submitted.

As noted in the Probity Plan, paragraph 7.23 of the Commonwealth Procurement Rules (CPRs) states: "*Submissions **must** be treated as confidential before and after the award of a contract.*"

The Deputy Secretary, Skills and Training Group, is the Delegate for this process.

All Tenderers offered a Deed will be published on [AusTender](#). Details of unsuccessful tenderers will not be made public by the department.

New Energy Apprenticeships

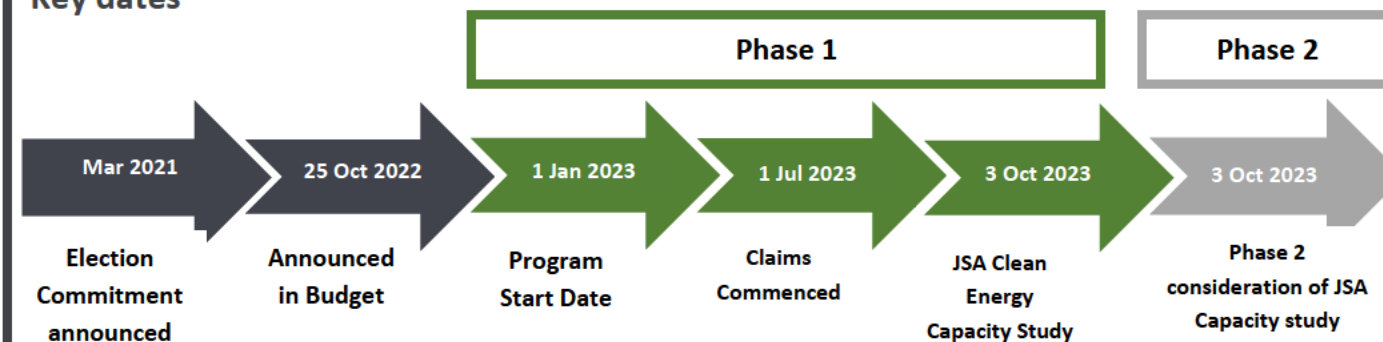
What is the Program

- As part of the Government's Powering Australia Plan announced in the October 2022-23 Budget, the Government committed to deliver the Skilling the Clean Energy Workforce measure and fund a Clean Energy Capacity Study.
- The New Energy Apprenticeships Program is available to Australian Apprentices working in the clean energy sector. Up to 40 occupations are eligible and listed on the Australian Apprenticeships Priority List
- New Energy Apprentices commencing from 1 January 2023 are eligible to receive up to \$10,000 during their apprenticeship and work with an industry mentor.
- New Energy Apprentices will be guaranteed access to personalised non-financial support services, including In-Training Support delivered by AASN providers, and the New Energy Mentoring Program which will provide industry based personalised mentoring, peer support and networking opportunities.

New Energy Apprenticeships and the Australian Apprenticeship Incentives System

- The New Energy Apprenticeships Support Payment is delivered through the Australian Apprenticeships Incentives System, which aims to strengthen the apprenticeship system by targeting skills shortages, improving completions, and ensuring supports are accessible.

Key dates



Program Performance

Phase 1 – how is it going?

- As at 7 January 2024, there have been 1,755 apprentices engaged in the New Energy Apprenticeships Program.
- The Program does not have annual targets but is aiming to deliver 10,000 New Energy Apprentices who have completed their training by 2030-31.
- The Government is currently considering the findings of the Clean Energy Capacity Study and is exploring opportunities to revise eligibility settings as part of Phase Two (to commence from 1 July 2024).
- Eligibility in Phase One was designed to focus on attracting apprentices to get experience in the clean energy sector. The requirements were quite stringent and following stakeholder engagement, were possible too tightly defined for how industry is operating in the clean energy sector. As employers are required to work in the clean energy sector. This limits who can employ NEAP apprentices such as GTO's who typically don't operating in clean energy.

Next Steps – Phase 2?

- Phase Two of the New Energy Apprenticeship Program will be informed by the JSA capacity study. The JSA capacity study was completed in October 2023, and the Government is carefully considering the findings of the Study.
- The New Energy Mentoring Program is expected to commence in first half-2024.

Current program data - as at 7 January 2024

1,678 Approved Contracts	Male 1,570 (93.6%)	Female 107 (6.4%)	QLD	363
1,755 Sign ups	First Nations	69 4.1%	VIC	345
Across 924 employers (approved contracts)	Disability	32 1.9%	NSW	323
196 cancellations/withdrawals	School-Based	55 3.3%	WA	279
			SA	259
			TAS	74
			ACT	31
			NT	4

Current Program Implementation

- Eligibility for payment is administered by the Department's contracted Australian Apprenticeships Support Network Providers (AASNs). AASNs are also responsible for administering a range of non-financial wraparound support services for New Energy Apprentices and their employers
- Claims for the New Energy Apprenticeship Support Payment became available from 1 July 2023. As at 31 December 2023, 459 claims for the payment have been approved.

Top 5 Employer Industries		Top 5 Occupations	
Electrical Services	996 (57%)	Electrician	1,368 (81.5%)
Other Electrical and Electronic Goods Retailing	77 (4.6%)	Electronics and Telecommunication Trade Workers	134 (8%)
Electricity Distribution	71 (4.2%)	Automotive Electricians and Mechanics	61 (3.6%)
Engineering Design and Engineering Consult Services	47 (2.8%)	Fabrication Engineering Trade Workers	36 (2.1%)
Plumbing Services	45 (2.7%)	Plumbers	36 (2.1%)

Total Budget: \$48.0 million over 4 years from 2023-24 (\$82.1 million over 9 years)

Item	2023-24 (\$m)	2024-25 (\$m)	2025-26 (\$m)	2026-27 (\$m)
2023-24 Budget	11.474	8.421	15.058	18.001
Movement of Funds	0	0	0	0
New Forward Estimate	-2.256	-0.107	-1.505	-1.040
Indexation/ other revisions	0	0	0	0
2023-24 MYEFO	9.218	8.313	13.553	16.961

Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) Clean Energy Capacity Study Recommendations

- Increase the uptake of New Energy Apprentices by expanding eligibility to include apprentices that commit to undertaking relevant clean energy electives in the future, not just those currently working in the clean energy sector.
- initiatives like the New Energy Apprenticeships Program could be replicated or extended to cover a broader range of qualifications, for example, industry accredited training and post-trade qualifications, not just Australian Apprenticeships.

Current eligibility for apprentices

To be eligible for the New Energy Apprenticeships Program, the apprentice must be:

- Undertaking a Cert III, IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma level qualification listed on the Priority List.
- Training towards an occupation identified as a clean energy occupation on the Priority List.
- Employed by an organisation in the clean energy sector, with most of your work in clean energy.
- Willing to sign a declaration stating your commitment to building your skills in the clean energy sector.



MINISTERS' MEDIA CENTRE

Ministers of the Employment and Workplace Relations Portfolio

Media Release

20 February 2023

New Energy Apprenticeships to power Australia's path to net zero

The Hon Brendan O'Connor MP
Minister for Skills and Training

The Australian Government's commitment to net zero emissions has been given a significant boost with the launch of the New Energy Apprenticeships program.

An army of skilled workers will be required to build and install the infrastructure needed to achieve a 43 per cent emissions reductions target by 2030 and net zero by 2050.

That's why the Australian Government is spending \$95.6 million over nine years to support 10,000 New Energy Apprenticeships.

The program will be launched today by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Minister for Skills and Training Brendan O'Connor, who will be accompanied by Member for Perth Pat Gorman, at WA's North Metropolitan TAFE, and will see eligible apprentices receive up to \$10,000 over the course of their apprenticeship to assist with the cost of living.

The program forms part of the Powering Australia Plan will help to secure a pipeline of talent to deliver Australia's clean energy infrastructure.

According to the National Skills Commission's 2022 Skills Priority List, the occupations in shortage in WA are largely reflective of the national shortage and include, among others, the care industry, hospitality and tourism, construction, and digital and technology.

Within Western Australia's list of top 20 occupations with skills shortages, there are a number of clean energy occupations with particularly strong job vacancies in WA, including:

- Metal Fitters and Machinists (around 24% of national job ads for this occupation are from WA)
- Structural Steel and Welding Trades Workers (more than 25% of the national job ads for this occupation are from WA).

- Electricians (around 20% of national job ads are from WA)
- Motor Mechanics (around 19% of national job ads are from WA).

Other occupations in the clean energy space in shortage in Western Australia include:

- Automotive Electricians (around 30% of national job ads are from WA)
- Mechanical Engineering Draftspersons and Technicians (around 25% of national job ads are from WA)
- Sheetmetal Trades Workers (around 16% of national job ads are from WA).

The New Energy Apprenticeships measure is just one of a suite of measures to arrest the declining apprentice completion rates we saw under the previous government.

The Albanese Labor Government's plan will ensure that New Energy apprentices have more than just financial advice, with further tailored support including networking, and the opportunity to benefit from an industry mentor.

The announcement comes off the back of the Australian Government's commitment to a \$1 billion 12-month Skills Agreement, delivering 180,000 Fee-Free TAFE and vocational education places to priority groups in 2023, jointly funded with states and territories.

Fee-Free TAFE will increase opportunities and workforce participation of priority groups, including First Nations Australians, young people aged 17-24, people out of work or receiving income support, unpaid carers, women undertaking study in non-traditional fields, and people with disability.

Western Australia will benefit from 18,800 places, with approximately 8,500 places in the care sector, as well as 2,400 places in technology and digital, 1,900 places in agriculture and 1,500 places in construction.

There will also be 1,400 places in hospitality and tourism, 300 places in sovereign capability including manufacturing, and around 2,800 in other sectors including foundational skills for WA.

Quotes from Minister for Skills and Training Brendan O'Connor

"After almost a decade of missed opportunities under the Coalition, Labor is securing new energy jobs for Australians.

"Clean energy industries are the future for our workers and include work in solar installation, large-scale renewable projects, electric vehicles, green hydrogen, and renewable manufacturing.

"The cost-of-living pressures faced by thousands of students, trainees and apprentices need immediate attention.

"The New Energy Apprenticeships Support Payment is designed to encourage apprentices to choose a career in the clean energy sector, support them through it, and help them complete their training to go on and have successful careers.

"We must build greater skills capacity in the clean energy sector, so our economic growth isn't impeded, and Australia's clean energy transition continues to accelerate to achieve our 2030 Emission Reduction Target."

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DEPUTY LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION
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[ENDS]

Media contact: Deputy Leader's Office - Liam Jones - 0431 000 583

Foundation Skills Program Redesign/Procurement

What has been announced

- The Government is providing **\$436.4 million over 4 years** to reform foundation skills programs in the Skills and Training portfolio through a redesigned Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) program.
- Around 3 million Australians do not have the required language, literacy, numeracy and digital (LLND) skills to meet their work/career potential and the demands of work and life. The redesigned SEE program will provide much needed LLND training to vulnerable Australians who are not being reached by existing foundation skills programs in the Skills and Training portfolio.
- The redesigned SEE program will expand access to LLND skills training to Australians over the age of 15 who have left school, including job seekers, employees and those not in education, employment or training, enabling them to actively participate in the economy and society.
- The redesigned SEE program will be delivered via 2 complementary streams of training.
 - **Stream 1: approximately \$366 million over 4 years** to deliver LLND training through Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) contracted to the department. This will include project delivery in workplaces for workers who face insecure work challenges because of low foundation skills. **This stream of delivery is expected to support around 25,000 people per year by 2026–27.**
 - **Stream 2: approximately \$46 million over 4 years** will be provided for locally tailored place-based grants to First Nations community organisations to work in partnership with RTOs or the Adult and Community Education sector providers to deliver whole of community LLND skills training. **This stream of delivery is expected to support around 2,000 First Nations people per year by 2026–27.**

Key Government statements

Media/Statement	Date
Jobs and Skills Summit, Minister of O'Connor announcement of commitment to reinvigorate foundation skills programs.	September 2022
Community Colleges Australia Conference, Minister O'Connor announcement of commitment to a comprehensive review of Skills and Training portfolio foundation skills programs.	September 2022

Current status of the policy

- A procurement process to contract providers to deliver Stream 1 services is underway. As a result, departmental staff remain unable to discuss any issues relating to purchasing activities to maintain the integrity and preserve the probity of the department's purchasing processes.
- A grants process to deliver Stream 2 (Scoping and Delivery) is expected to be released in the first half of 2024 ahead of a 1 July program commencement. A public consultation process opened on 13 February 2024 and will conclude on 12 March 2024 seeking feedback on the draft guidelines.
- The redesigned SEE program will be subject to a formal ongoing evaluation process.

Stakeholders consulted

The program redesign has been informed by:

- consultation with the Foundation Skills Advisory Group (FSAG), which was established in October 2022 and comprises representatives from a range of organisations including: foundation skills peak bodies; industry; employers; unions; First Nations people; and state and territory governments
- consultation on current Skills and Training portfolio foundation skills programs including feedback from the Delivery of the SEE Program 2023 discussion paper and the 2022 discussion paper on the Future Delivery of Foundation Skills Training in Remote Australia. A summary of responses to these papers has been published
- consultation on outstanding micro policy issues for the SEE program redesign raised in the SEE Market Preparation Paper for Stream 1 of the SEE Program 2023. A summary of responses received has not been published
- consultation with First Nations and LLND stakeholders on Stream 2 of the SEE Program. In September 2023 the Stream 2 Working Group was formed, meeting 4 times between September and December 2023 to discuss key items related to the drafting of Stream 2 guidelines
- recommendations made in the Remote Community Pilots evaluation report released 12 February 2024
- recommendations from the House of Representatives Standing Committee inquiry into adult literacy and its importance.

Next steps, including consideration by Government where expected

- The Request for Tender to contract training providers for Stream 1 was released on 6 November 2023 and closed on 14 December 2024. The RFT assessment process is being conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013, the Commonwealth Procurement Rules, and the process outlined in the RFT itself.
- ***To maintain the integrity and to preserve the probity of the department's purchasing processes, departmental staff are unable to discuss any issues relating to current, past or future purchasing activities in this forum.***
- Release of grant opportunity guidelines for Stream 2 will occur in the first half of 2024. A public consultation process opened on 13 February 2024 and will conclude on 12 March 2024 seeking feedback on the draft guidelines.

Last Cleared By	s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
Date Last Cleared	13 February 2024

Attachments:

[Attachment A – Q&As](#)

Australian Skills Guarantee

What is the Australian Skills Guarantee and how will it work?

- The Australian Skills Guarantee (Skills Guarantee) will introduce **new national targets for apprentices, trainees, paid cadets, and women** on eligible Commonwealth-funded major projects.
- From 1 July 2024**, targets will apply to new Commonwealth tender processes for **major building and construction and facilities management (construction) and information and communications technology (ICT) procurements** with a total **contract value of \$10 million or more**.
- The **Skills Guarantee Procurement Connected Policy (PCP) guidelines** will be the key mechanism to implement the Skills Guarantee. The PCP guidelines will provide high-level instructions for parties engaging in relevant Australian Government-funded projects.

Current Status

- The department is working with stakeholders on the Procurement Connected Policy (PCP) guidelines and supplementary guidance material.
- The department undertook two rounds of public consultation with stakeholders on the PCP guidelines.
- The department has been working through the feedback received and will publish the PCP guidelines prior to 1 July 2024 to assist suppliers and contracting agencies prepare for tenders.
- On 11 December 2023, the department established an Inter-governmental Committee with key Commonwealth agencies to monitor and oversee the implementation of the Skills Guarantee.
- We are also working across the Commonwealth, and with state and territory governments to apply the Skills Guarantee to other government initiatives.

Key Milestones



Consultation and Engagement

- We have already engaged with over 100 organisations and professionals on the design and implementation of the Skills Guarantee. Consultation included a discussion paper on key policy elements, and two rounds of public consultation on the PCP guidelines, which all included a series of targeted meetings with industry, unions, peak bodies, academics, and women's organisations.
- The department has revised the PCP guidelines in line with feedback from stakeholders following each round of public consultation to ensure they are practical and user-friendly. Work is continuing on implementation.

Targets

	Overarching apprentice/trainee target	Targets for women
Major construction projects Total contract value \$10 million or more	Requires a minimum of 10% of all labour hours spent on the project be undertaken by apprentices/trainees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overarching apprentice/trainee target for women initially requires a minimum of 6%* of all apprentice/trainee labour hours to be undertaken by women. Trade-specific apprentice/trainee target for women initially requires a minimum of 4%* of trade apprentice/trainee labour hours to be undertaken by women.
Flagship construction projects Total contract value \$100 million or more	Requires a minimum of 10% of all labour hours spent on the project be undertaken by apprentices/trainees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flagship construction projects will be required to set more ambitious targets for women. They will also be required to prepare Gender Equality Action Plans outlining how targets will be achieved (the Department plans to consult with OfW to design Gender Equality Action Plans).
Major ICT projects Total contract value \$10 million or more	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initially the targets will be negotiated with suppliers on a project-by-project basis. Targets will be based on workforce information provided by suppliers during the tender process. This approach will support the collection of data on entry-level pathways in the ICT sector to enable potential future development of targets for all major ICT projects. 	

Australian Skills Guarantee Targets for women

Year	Overarching Apprentice/Trainee Target for Women	Trade - specific Apprentice/Trainee Target for Women
1-Jul-24 to 30-Jun-25	6.0%	4.0%
1-Jul-25 to 30-Jun-26	7.0%	5.0%
1-Jul-26 to 30-Jun-27	8.0%	6.0%
1-Jul-27 to 30-Jun-28	9.0%	7.0%
1-Jul-28 to 30-Jun-29	10.0%	8.0%
1-Jul-29 to 30-Jun-30	11.0%	9.0%
1-Jul-30 onwards	12.0%	10.0%

Implementation streams

Procurement Connected Policy (PCP) stream	Non-PCP stream
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applies when the Commonwealth undertakes a major procurement for construction and ICT and enters into a contract with the successful supplier. The Skills Guarantee PCP outlines the requirements for these direct procurements. The Skills Guarantee PCP would not apply to projects jointly funded by the Commonwealth and a state/territory or where the Commonwealth provides a third party with funding to procure a project as this is <u>not a direct Commonwealth procurement</u>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Covers scenarios where the Commonwealth funds third parties, e.g., state and territories for construction. The third party will then use the funding to procure a supplier to deliver that construction project. This approach <u>only</u> applies to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major road and rail infrastructure projects under the Land Transport NPA (managed by Department of Infrastructure) Venue infrastructure projects under the Intergovernmental Agreement for the Brisbane 2032 Olympic Games (managed by Department of Infrastructure). Major social and affordable housing projects under the National Housing Accord (managed by Treasury).

Total Budget \$8.6 million
(Departmental)

Budget

\$m					
2022-23 Estimated Actual	2023-24 Estimate	2024-25 Estimate	2025-26 Estimate	2026-27 Estimate	Total
-	2.8	2.1	2.1	1.5	8.6

Australian Skills Guarantee – Key Design Elements

Skills Guarantee - Key Design Elements		
Projects in Scope	Building and construction and facilities management (construction) and information and communications technology (ICT) projects.	
Financial Thresholds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Major Projects</i>: Contracts valued at \$10 million or more (102 contracts* identified in the 2022-23 FY) • <i>Flagship Projects</i>: Contracts valued at \$100 million or more in building and construction facilities management (8 contracts* identified in the 2022-23 FY) <p><i>*Contracts under construction and ICT industry categories</i></p>	
Timeframe	Targets will be applied to Commonwealth tender processes from 1 July 2024.	
Major Construction Project Targets	<i>Overarching Apprentice/Trainee Target</i>	A minimum of 10% of all labour hours spent on the project be undertaken by apprentices/trainees
	<i>Apprentice/Trainee Target (Women)</i>	A minimum of 6% of apprentice/trainee labour hours to be undertaken by women
	<i>Trade Apprentice/Trainee Target (Women)</i>	A minimum of 4% of apprentice/trainee trade labour hours to be undertaken by women
	<i>Annual increase of targets for Women</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Targets for women will increase 1 percentage point each financial year. ▪ Will reach 12% for women in apprenticeships/traineeships. ▪ Will reach 10% for women in trade apprenticeships/traineeships in 2030 on Skills Guarantee projects.
Flagship Construction Project Targets	<i>More ambitious targets for women</i>	At a minimum, meet the targets that apply to major construction projects, <u>propose higher targets</u> for women, prepare <u>gender equality action plan</u> .
Major ICT Project Targets	Initially, the targets for apprentices, trainees and paid cadets, and the targets for women, will be negotiated with suppliers on a project-by-project basis, with targets based on workforce information provided during the tender process.	
How will it be counted?	Labour hours.	
Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Suppliers will need to report regularly (quarterly to Commonwealth agencies) on their performance against the targets. ▪ Further details on the reporting mechanisms will be provided in the lead up to 1 July 2024. 	
Compliance	Performance against the Skills Guarantee will be considered as part of the process for awarding future procurements undertaken by non-corporate Commonwealth entities.	
Other Australian Government Projects	The Government will also work with state and territory governments to apply Skills Guarantee requirements to major construction projects under the National Housing Accord, the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games and the National Partnership Agreement on Land Transport Infrastructure Projects.	

Women in VET

What are we doing

- The department has been consulting with stakeholders and collaborating with an academic research partner to inform evidence-based advice to Government on future opportunities for VET to support women's economic equality.
- In late 2022, the department engaged with stakeholders to understand what is most effective in attracting and retaining women in VET-based occupations with low levels of women's participation. A second round of more targeted consultations occurred in late-2023.
- The supporting women to achieve VET-based careers discussion paper was released on 13 November 2023.
- Written submissions on the issues canvassed in the discussion paper closed on 18 December 2023, however, submissions continue to be accepted. At 25 January 2024, 54 written submissions have been received.
- In-person consultations (face-to-screen and face-to-face), supported by the discussion paper, commenced on 15 November 2023.
- The 2023 consultations consisted of nine roundtables and over 20 bilateral meetings, involving over 160 stakeholders from more than 120 unique organisations that included: Industry and Employer Peaks; Business/Employers; Unions; Community and not-for-profit organisations and advocates; States/Territories; and Researchers / Academics.

Key consultation findings include

- Personalised advice, support and guidance assists women to participate in VET
- Workplace culture and conditions directly impact women's participation in VET and their retention in VET careers
- Flexible VET learning options support women to participate in VET
- Lack of confidence can be a barrier to women's participation and success in VET
- Recognition of skills gained via life experience is important for women.

Academic Research Partner

- An academic research partner was contracted to strengthen the evidence-base, provide research expertise and complement stakeholder consultation activities on the barriers and incentives for women in VET-based training, occupations, and careers.
- The research partner, University of Sydney's Gender Equality in Working Life (GEWL) research institute has been engaged in accordance with the Commonwealth Procurement Rules 2023 (CPRs) via a limited tender request for quote exercise.
- DEWR has entered a Commonwealth Contract for Services with the University of Sydney:
 - The contract is for the period 29 November 2023 to 30 April 2024 for research services
 - The value of the contract is \$ 175,018.40
 - The contract details were reported on AusTender on 18 December 2023 (CN ID4023951).
 - A final DEWR report on the research findings is expected on or before 1 March 2024.
- GEWL assisted DEWR to better understand the gendered barriers and enablers of skills attainment in Australia via a literature review and qualitative research methodology that included focus groups with women with lived experience.

Skills and training incentives may encourage women to (re)join the workforce or increase their working hours via support to improve skills. (ABS, 2022)

Main reason women not in the workforce did not want a job or more hours of work	Incentives for women to increase workforce participation
Permanently retired (38.1%)	Ability to work part-time hours (48.8%)
No need to work, satisfied, retired for now (23.8%)	Working a set number of hours on set days (42.4%)
No need to work, satisfied, retired for now (23.8%)	Finding a job that matches skills and experience (41.4%)
Long-term sickness or disability (13.3%)	Ability to vary start and finish times (34%)
Caring for children (10.7%)	Support for training or study to improve skills (32.2%)
Caring for ill, disabled or elderly person (4.8%)	Access to mentor or someone to offer support in the workplace (30%)

Key dates



NCVER Data

Data Source	Women are well represented in VET and VET can provide a pathway to enhance the economic security and equality of women.
NCVER 2023	Women made up 46.6% of all VET students in 2022. This equates to 2,111,385 women.
NCVER, 2022	At 50.6%, women had a higher observed actual VET qualification completion rate than the national rate of 47.6%, for 2018 commencements.
NCVER 2022	Since 2020, young women have made up between 46-47% of VET in schools participants each year
NCVER 2023	Women made up 50.1% of all First Nations VET students in 2022
NCVER 2023	Women made up 52.2% of all VET students with a disability in 2022

Top 5 VET Qualifications for Women by Enrolment

Qualification	Female Enrolment	Percentage in course who are female
Early Childhood Education and Care (Cert III)	66,595	94.2%
Individual Support (Cert III)	63,275	73.2%
Early Childhood Education and Care (Diploma)	36,745	96.1%
Business (Cert III)	49,515	65.1%
Hospitality (Cert II)	23,525	34.5%

Top 5 Fee-FREE TAFE Qualifications for Women by Enrolment

Qualification	Female Enrolment	Percentage in course who are female
Early Childhood Education and Care (Cert III)	6,476	93.3%
Nursing (Diploma)	5,571	86.5%
Individual Support (Cert III)	3,988	74.3%
Accounting and Bookkeeping (Cert IV)	3,793	79.8%
Hospitality (Cert II)	2,961	93.1%

Nuclear powered submarine program (NPSP)

Purpose of the program

In the 2023-24 Budget, the Australian Government provided \$3.9 million over 2 years to establish a Taskforce within the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (the department) to provide advice on utilising Australia's skills and training system to support the workforce requirements of the nuclear-powered submarine program.

Expenditure/Budget

Item	2023-24 Estimate	2024-25 Estimate
Total	1.9	2.0
DEWR – administered	0.0	0.0
DEWR- departmental	1.9	2.0
Expenditure to 31 December 2023	0.6*	0.0

*Includes staff and supplier expenditure.

What has the Government said about the program?

- The vocational education and training (VET) Defence Skills Taskforce within the department will help develop the workforce required to shape a sovereign industrial base and the delivery of Australia's nuclear-powered submarine program.
- Around 20,000 direct jobs are estimated to be created over the next 30 years, requiring a highly skilled civilian workforce for planning, construction, logistics, procurement, quality control, testing and maintenance - from highly skilled tradespeople to degree-qualified professionals.
- Australia's VET sector already contributes significantly to our naval shipbuilding and sustainment sector, providing diverse skills requirements ranging from complex engineering and design roles, project management and logistics roles, through to highly advanced technician and trade roles.

Attachment A 10 November 2023	The Hon Richard Marles MP, Minister for Defence, The Hon Brendan O'Connor MP, Minister for Skills and Training, The Hon Peter Malinauskas MP, Premier of South Australia, Joint Media Release - Investing in our defence industry workforce for the future.
Attachment B 3 October 2023	The Hon Brendan O'Connor MP, Minister for Skills and Training Address to the National Press Club - Skilling the Nation for the Future
Attachment C 16 May 2023	The Hon Richard Marles MP, Minister for Defence, The Hon Jason Clare MP, Minister for Education, The Hon Brendan O'Connor MP, Minister for Skills and Training, The Hon Pat Conroy MP, Minister for Defence Industry Joint Media Release New investment in skills paves the way for AUKUS workforce

Recent relevant media

11 January 2024 – [Diving into nuclear submarines](#), MIT News at [Attachment D](#)

MIT Department of Nuclear Science and Engineering creates a course for the Australian Submarine Agency. Titled "Nuclear Technology for Marine Propulsion," the three-week course was attended by 20 senior leaders from the Australian Submarine Agency (ASA) and other officials, and covered a broad range of topics, including the basics of nuclear reactor theory and design, operations and safety, training, the operation of nuclear shipyards, and more.

24 December 2023 – [Submarine Construction Yard Works caps off a momentous year for AUKUS | Defence Ministers at Attachment E](#)

Contracts in place for preliminary enabling work at the Submarine Construction Yard at Osborne, South Australia.

15 December 2023 – [Passage of US legislation authorising transfer of three Virginia Class submarines at Attachment F](#)

The legislation allows for the purchase of two in-service US submarines and one off the US production line. Australia will retain the option to seek congressional approval for further purchases. The legislation also authorises Australian contractors to train in US shipyards to support the development of Australia's submarine industrial base.

17 November 2023 – [Release of the South Australian Defence Industry Workforce and Skills Report and Action Plan at Attachment G](#)

On Friday 10 November, The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, the Hon Richard Marles MP, and Premier of South Australia, the Hon Peter Malinauskas MP released the South Australian Defence Industry Workforce and Skills Report and Action Plan, delivering a detailed strategy to grow and sustain South Australia's defence industry workforce for the future.

Taskforce – key details

Key roles and responsibilities

- The Taskforce is currently comprised of an SES Band 1 officer and three APS staff. The Taskforce operates in a secure IT environment and have appropriate security clearances.
- The Taskforce supports the Department of Defence by advising how the VET sector can support the supply of domestic skilled workers for the AUKUS submarine program and the training pathways required to deliver the skills supply over the coming decades.
- In undertaking its work, the Taskforce works in partnership with the Department of Defence, the Australian Submarine Agency, Department of Education, industry, Jobs and Skills Councils and state and territory governments.
- The Defence portfolio has established a range of formal committee structures to manage engagement across Commonwealth and state government departments. The Taskforce is the department's representative on relevant committees. Through these committee structures, the Taskforce:
 - contributes to the drafting of Defence portfolio strategies and plans to support the workforce needs of the AUKUS submarine program. The Taskforce explains current initiatives and reforms in the Australian VET system and how they can contribute to supporting workforce needs.
 - working closely with the Defence portfolio in considering workforce data projections being provided by AUKUS partners. This includes identifying opportunities for supplementary data to be provided by the Jobs and Skills Council responsible for the manufacturing sector.
 - working with the South Australian and Western Australian Governments to share information and provide advice on skills and training initiatives to support the submarine sustainment and construction workforce needed in these key jurisdictions.
- The Taskforce will also support the Department of Defence (through the Australian Submarine Agency) in establishing a dedicated Commonwealth-led Skills and Training Academy in South Australia.
 - The Department of Defence is the portfolio lead on establishing the Academy and questions about status and funding should be taken by the Department of Defence and the Australian Submarine Agency.
 - Broadly described, the Academy is being designed to deliver tailored education, training and skilling for Australia's submarine and naval shipbuilding workforce, including:
 - career training programs to bring new people into the workforce, such as apprentices, undergraduates and graduate apprentices
 - lifting the skills of the existing naval ship building workforce
 - transition programs to bring in people from adjacent industries in the defence, manufacturing, and technology sectors.

Background

- On 14 March 2023, the Government announced a phased approach to deliver the AUKUS nuclear-powered submarine (NPS) program, comprising of the acquisition of US Virginia class submarines from as early as the 2030s, and delivery of the first Australian built AUKUS NPS from the early 2040s.
- The Defence portfolio is responsible for the AUKUS submarine program and is developing a comprehensive national workforce strategy (the AUKUS Submarine Workforce and Industry Strategy) which will identify the job roles and the size of a civilian workforce required to build and maintain shipyards, to maintain submarines delivered by AUKUS partners and for the building and maintenance of Australian made submarines.
 - Questions on the broader workforce strategy and forecasting of workforce volumes should be taken by the Department of Defence and the Australian Submarine Agency.
 - Information on the *AUKUS Submarine Workforce and Industry Strategy* is at [Attachment H](#).

Key Performance Indicators

- The 2023-24 Corporate Plan identifies KPIs for the Taskforce to be established via recruitment and to have commenced work by 30 September 2023 (see below).
- The Taskforce is established, work has commenced and KPIs are met. A recruitment process has concluded with a total of 4 staff in the Taskforce (further details below if required):
 - Filling and commencement of the Assistant Secretary role on 21 August 2023.
 - Further recruitment of APS staff to a total of 3 APS staff concluded on 18 September 2023.
- Communication with relevant agencies has been initiated through a range of formal committees established by the defence portfolio and informal engagements managed by the Taskforce.

Program 2.3 – Nuclear-powered Submarine Program

The program establishes a taskforce within the Department to support Australia's nuclear-powered submarine program under the AUKUS partnership.

Key activity Establish a taskforce to provide advice on utilising Australia's skills and training system to support the workforce requirements of the submarine program				Years reported in			
Program	Performance measure	Target	Methodology	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
2.3	Establish a taskforce and commence work in support of the nuclear-powered submarine program ²¹	<p>a) Taskforce established by 30 September 2023</p> <p>b) Initial collaboration and engagement occurs by 30 September 2023</p>	<p>Taskforce is considered established when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> leadership is in place – SES Band 1 commenced in the taskforce staffing is in place – 2 FTE commenced in the taskforce. <p>Work is considered to have commenced when the Department has communicated with key stakeholders including the Department of Education, the Defence Industry Pathways Program, the South Australian government, JSA, Jobs and Skills Councils and the Department of Defence.</p> <p>Data source: DEWR human resources and departmental record keeping systems</p>	✓	✗	✗	✗

[SK008]

Key Activities of the Taskforce

- The role of the Taskforce is to provide advice on utilising Australia's skills and training system to support the workforce requirements of the AUKUS submarine program.
- The Taskforce is currently focusing on:
 - Policy proposals.** Drafting proposals in partnership with the defence portfolio to be considered as part of Department of Defence strategies. *Proposals are Cabinet-in-confidence and information is not publicly available.*
 - Research.** Supporting the manufacturing sector Jobs and Skills Council (JSC) to take forward a research project on the alignment between the skills system and the aspirations of the AUKUS program. The Taskforce will support, through a working group, the engagement of the defence portfolio in the research. The final report is anticipated in July 2024. The Government will consider the evidence collected by the JSC and how appropriate policy responses may be developed.
 - Implementation of actions in the SA Defence Industry Workforce and Skills Report** (published 10 November 2023). The Taskforce are members of the intergovernmental implementation committee that will oversee implementation of actions in the plan. Fee-Free TAFE is a particular area of interest to all agencies and states with regard to data on take-up and opportunities to improve targets and settings. The Taskforce is also delivering career resources to assist with a workforce pipeline in the SA context. The existing set of Little Ripples career education e-books will be expanded to show careers in advanced manufacturing – a key sector for delivering Australia's future submarines. The resources will spark conversations with children about STEM career possibilities beyond those typically discussed in school settings and depict women working in traditionally male-dominated trades. (Topic of separate brief for ^{s 22(1)}).
 - WA context.** The Taskforce is collaborating with the defence portfolio, central agencies, and WA to draft a workforce plan drawing on the experiences of the SA plan (as above) that focus on maintenance of submarines in WA. This work is in the early stages.
- Other areas of recent focus have been on supporting development of defence sector strategies in collaboration with the defence portfolio and states.
 - The Taskforce supported the development of the SA Defence Industry Workforce and Skills Report through the Department of Defence, the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and the South Australian Government. The DEWR Taskforce provided policy advice on a range of policy and program supports focused on workforce needs in the South Australian context.
 - The Taskforce has provided robust input to the Defence Industry Development Strategy to assist the Defence portfolio in refining the Strategy in the VET and tertiary context. The Strategy is anticipated for release by the Defence portfolio in early 2024.
 - The Taskforce also supported Commonwealth and WA engagement in exploring training delivery models through a joint travel to UK facilities in late 2023 (topic of separate brief for ^{s 22(1)}).

Related Questions received on notice

PDR Link	Submitted By	Subject	Answer Summary
SQ23-001590	Brockman, Slade	Defence vocational skills task force: Dates of briefings	As at 28 November 2023, the taskforce has provided 2 written briefings on the work of the taskforce to the Hon Brendan O'Connor MP, Minister for Skills, and Training



MINISTERS' MEDIA CENTRE

Ministers of the Employment and Workplace Relations
Portfolio

Joint Media Release

10 November 2023

Investing in our defence industry workforce for the future

The Hon Richard Marles MP

Deputy Prime Minister

Minister for Defence

The Hon Brendan O'Connor MP

Minister for Skills and Training

The Hon Peter Malinauskas MP

Premier of South Australia

The Acting Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, the Hon Richard Marles MP, and Premier of South Australia, the Hon Peter Malinauskas MP, today released the *South Australian Defence Industry Workforce and Skills Report and Action Plan*, delivering a detailed strategy to grow and sustain South Australia's defence industry workforce for the future.

Through the South Australian Defence Industry Workforce and Skills Taskforce, the Commonwealth and South Australian Governments have engaged with industry, unions, and education and training providers to deliver an integrated workforce and skills plan.

This plan will ensure the necessary support for the delivery of some of the nation's most complex defence projects, including Australia's conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarines and continuous naval shipbuilding.

These capabilities will only be realised through the strength of a highly educated and highly trained workforce, equipped with cutting edge skills for the future.

The Report details 22 initiatives to further address workforce challenges and grow the South Australian defence industry workforce from 3,500 direct jobs to more than 8,500 in the 2040s.

These tangible and solutions-focussed initiatives will:

- Engage an estimated 27,000 students and 1,500 teachers in at least 180 South Australian schools to support STEM education pathways for students.
- Establish an industry capability pipeline of around 2,600 additional VET and university students through flexible training programs, technical colleges and STEM focused higher-education places.
- Employ more apprentices, graduates and undergraduates through the Early Careers Program with more than 70 young Australians to join the program this year.
- Engage and upskill experienced workers and industry leaders through mid-career transition programs, the Skills and Training Academy and Defence Industry Leadership Program
- Improve workforce data and insights across industry and government
- Promote defence industry workforce opportunities, and better connect jobs with potential candidates through a multi-tiered communications strategy.
- Strengthen STEM evaluations through a consistent methodology and support industry to sponsor security clearances to engage highly-skilled workers from our AUKUS partners.
- Growing the defence industry workforce in South Australia requires a coordinated and collaborative approach.

The Commonwealth and South Australian Governments look forward to continuing their close engagement with sector leaders and industry and union partners on this significant undertaking.

Implementation of the package of initiatives will commence from 2024.

Quotes attributable to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, Richard Marles:

“This report presents a comprehensive and methodical plan to grow, build and sustain the South Australian defence industry workforce, which is critical to delivery of SSN-AUKUS, continuous naval shipbuilding and our other defence projects.

“Some initiatives will leverage and expand on existing programs, building on substantial work already underway across government, defence industry and education and VET sectors. Other initiatives are new to help address identified skills gaps.

“Collaborative and enduring partnerships between the Commonwealth and South Australian Governments, defence industry, unions and education and training providers will underpin this critical workforce expansion and capability uplift over time.”

Quotes attributable to the South Australian Premier, Peter Malinauskas:

“South Australia will play a leading role in building Australia’s industrial base by building the most complex machines in the world.

“Our critical national defence projects, including nuclear-powered submarines, will be delivered with the strength of a highly educated, highly trained workforce with the cutting edge skills and capabilities of the future.

“The challenge to grow and sustain a highly skilled defence industry workforce cannot be under-stated, but neither can the opportunity.

“The South Australian Defence Industry Workforce and Skills Taskforce has enabled our South Australian and Commonwealth Governments to work together towards a common goal - an agile and highly-skilled local workforce equipped to execute Defence’s most complex national security projects.

“It is my hope the integrated workforce and skills plan for South Australia can be used as a best practice model for workforce expansion across the defence industry nationally.”

Quotes attributable to Minister for Skills and Training, Brendan O’Connor:

“Whether it’s in construction, electrical or metal fabrication or a degree apprenticeship in systems engineering, we will need to expand and skill our workforce to deliver and maintain the defence assets necessary for our national security.

“Many of these jobs have, or will have, a VET pathway, and making sure Australians are aware they can access those opportunities through VET is vital.

“We will continue to bring together the tertiary sectors, all levels of government, industry and unions because that’s the only way we’ll get the strong and highly skilled future workforce we need.”



MINISTERS' MEDIA CENTRE

Ministers of the Employment and Workplace Relations
Portfolio

Speech

3 October 2023

Address to the National Press Club – Skilling the Nation for the Future

The Hon Brendan O'Connor MP
Minister for Skills and Training

In this momentous month for our nation, it is more important than ever to acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands that we meet on - the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples.

I pay my respects to their elders past and present. And I extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with us today.

What a privilege it is for us to have as a central part of our national history and identity, the oldest continuous, living culture in the world.

In just under two weeks, each of us will be given the opportunity to answer the generous invitation made at Uluru six years ago, to walk together with First Nations Australians for a better future.

The simple act of accepting that invitation, by saying YES, will make us an even better, more united, country.

It's exactly fifty years since the Whitlam Government commissioned Myer Kangan to provide advice on the development of technical and further education in Australia.

His report to the Government established the foundations for a modern TAFE sector, built on the traditions of our finest state technical schools and trade colleges.

But with a vision for something bigger.

The Report made the link between vocational education and training and national prosperity,

and for the first time this link was comprehensively acknowledged by a Commonwealth Government.

Significantly, the report was tripartite. It brought together employers, unions and educators, State and Territory governments.

The report was of such seminal importance to Australia's national development that one of Australia's exceptional TAFE colleges bears the author's name.

For the first time, significant Commonwealth funds were invested through grants to the states to build new technical colleges, create new and more facilities, and train new teaching staff.

It was the birth of Australia's modern vocational education sector.

It was a moment of promise that should have created a great national skills training sector, equal in status to our university sector, as is the case in many other countries.

But if we're being honest, the policies of successive governments have cast TAFE, community providers, and the VET sector adrift from its purpose of national prosperity.

The VET sector has endured underfunding, de-regulation, loose rules of VET market entry, a lack of national cohesion and an obsession for competition at the expense of collaboration.

In the face of this neglect, and policy missteps, the sector has performed admirably – but we can do better.

And fifty years since Myer Kangan first conceived of a national TAFE sector, in 2023 we are restoring TAFE to its rightful place, at the heart of Vocational Education and Training.

TAFE is one of our strongest national assets, despite the headwinds it has faced.

Every time I visit a TAFE or a community college I'm encouraged by the passion of the teachers and the enthusiasm of the students.

Upon election, not only was the Albanese Government faced with a trillion dollars of debt, we were bequeathed one of the worst skills shortages this country has experienced.

A decade of Commonwealth dysfunction on skills policy was never going to help address severe skills shortages across the country.

Our vocational education and training sector needed genuine ambition, investment, and cooperation.

And it needs champions.

That's exactly what it has in the Albanese Government.

Regardless of the challenges we inherited, we are determined to produce the reforms required.

And skilled migration will play a role.

I'm working with ministers Jason Clare, Claire O'Neil and Andrew Giles to ensure the skills

delivered by our education and training sectors are complemented by informed skilled migration pathways.

Equally important will be reaching out to Australians currently under-represented in the vocational education and training sector, and ensuring they're supported to successfully complete their qualifications.

Today, I want to outline the key reform areas the Albanese Government has embarked on to transform vocational education and training.

A five-year National Skills Agreement will be concluded before the end of the year. It is a reform Agreement that will embed true collaboration in the interests of regional and national prosperity.

The National Skills Agreement will create TAFE Centres of Excellence to increase the collaboration between universities and the VET sector and deliver the skills and knowledge our labour market and economy requires.

It will accelerate higher and new degree apprenticeships to bridge the outdated divide between the VET and University sectors.

We're driving qualifications reform to ensure qualifications are relevant, timely, portable and of high-quality.

We're improving foundation skills delivery to respond to the alarming statistic that one in five adults have skills gaps in literacy, numeracy and digital literacy.

We're lifting apprenticeship completion rates and supporting more women, First Nations people, and people from a range of backgrounds to access apprenticeships.

We are progressing the VET Workforce Blueprint to support, attract and retain teachers and trainers.

We are continuing to deliver Fee-Free TAFE and VET places to respond to immediate industry needs.

We have established Jobs and Skills Australia, a tripartite expert body that will improve our capacity to plan the workforce needs of the future.

Its work will be complemented by ten new Jobs and Skills Councils to ensure that government decisions are informed by real economy insight.

And because more must be done to stop substandard and dodgy VET providers, we are strengthening VET integrity, lifting RTO standards and implementing stricter rules of entry to the sector.

A high-performing and world-class VET sector is crucial for our country's future in so many ways.

For a start, it's essential for achieving a fairer society and a stronger economy.

And for producing qualified students with the skills to compete and succeed now and in the new economy.

For many decades we have been understandably focused on the shift to a knowledge economy.

In much discussion and debate this has resulted in a competition between VET and University, between the hand and the head. Between doing and thinking.

As if hands and heads are somehow disconnected and we need to choose between them.

Data in the Employment White Paper paints a more nuanced picture of the trends that are shifting in the economy.

The shift in employment has not been from manual to cognitive work. It has been from routine to non-routine work.

High-skilled, non-routine work, both manual and cognitive is growing. While repetitive, routine work, both manual and cognitive is declining.

Thinking and doing are not in tension with each other, together they are far more powerful, and more of what the economy needs.

If we as a nation are going to meet major national challenges, such as growing the care economy, reaching net zero, responding to rapidly changing technology, and building a future made in Australia, we need education and training sectors that are fit for purpose.

Vocational education and training must be held in the same high public esteem as a university pathway – just as it is in countries such as Germany and Switzerland.

In Switzerland over 60 per cent of students take a vocational education pathway and around half of those go on to gain a university level qualification.

The interim report of the Accord Panel review, commissioned by my colleague the Hon Jason Clare, affirmed that we need to increase collaboration between the two tertiary sectors.

And if that wasn't always evident you only need to look at what will be required to assist our economy transform to net zero to conclude that such collaboration must accelerate.

It shouldn't be surprising therefore that the first major workforce study I assigned to Jobs and Skills Australia was the Clean Energy Workforce Capacity Study.

The study provides governments, industry and education providers with a workforce planning roadmap of the type and volume of skills that will be needed.

After years of profound neglect towards skills needed for decarbonisation and net zero transformation, the task is bigger and more urgent than ever.

Decarbonising will need highly skilled workers to do all the rewiring, replacing, the relocating, the re-programming and the maintaining.

Having been briefed on the study, which will be released shortly by Jobs and Skills Australia, it identifies the most critical occupations comprising the clean energy workforce: including electricians; engineers; and construction and production managers.

Emerging occupations include solar installers, wind turbine technicians, energy auditors and

energy efficiency engineers.

The report outlines that the pace and complexity of the work needed for the huge job ahead will require new methods of delivering and designing curricula.

This presents a significant challenge in preparing a workforce. It also presents a myriad of opportunities for the next generation of workers.

Many of the jobs we will need for our clean energy future straddle traditional trades and professions.

A pilot program for example combines an electrical engineering degree with a Certificate III electrical trade apprenticeship.

Federation University is planning to launch an apprenticeship with NECA to provide a Cert III in parallel with an Electrical Engineering degree.

This is important work but we need to ensure that these types of programs are the norm, not the exception.

Which is why nationally networked TAFE Centres of Excellence that bring industry, universities and TAFEs together will prioritise clean energy skills, along with other critical areas.

These Centres of Excellence will help in the development of new degree apprenticeships in this field and to double the number of higher apprenticeships in clean energy, care and IT within five years.

Engaging industry and academic experts in the design and delivery of training, engaging students in emerging research to solve real world industry problems and bridging the gap between vocational and university education.

What this is all about is giving workers the depth and breadth of skills they need to meet future challenges.

Helping Australians to get the right skills for the jobs the economy will need.

Let me be clear: Our nation's economic, social and environmental agenda – the Albanese Government's agenda – cannot be achieved without a major systemic change to the way we educate and train our people.

We not only have to arrest the current skills crisis, but we must avert a future skills crisis that could have very real and profound consequences for our future national wellbeing.

We just need to look at meeting our national security challenges. To deliver AUKUS, we will rely on the skills of our people.

And defence industries are a core example of the skills development that necessitate a focus on the hand and the head.

We have to expand our sovereign workforce with skills across engineering, operations and support functions to keep building and sustaining our defence assets whether they be land, air, ocean or space.

Similarly, the \$15 billion National Reconstruction Fund led by Minister Husic will create demand for more and different skills, providing great opportunities for good secure jobs.

Whether it is advanced manufacturing, green minerals, or supply chain, the NRF will facilitate innovation that will require new ways of working and new skills.

Whether it is our national security, our economic security, or our environmental security, we are going to need to ensure the VET and higher education sectors work collaboratively.

Skills development of our people is the foundation of every major agenda we are pursuing.

As I mentioned earlier, we're finalising a new five-year National Skills Agreement with the States and Territories. Along with funding for Fee-Free TAFE, this delivers a \$13 billion investment in VET over the next 5 years.

Together we can fill skills shortages in priority areas.

The goal is to achieve National Stewardship, ensuring the coordination of strategic investment in skills across the economy.

I'd like to thank my counterpart State and Territory Ministers for their genuine cooperation in looking to rebuild national vocational education and training with TAFE at its heart.

I look forward to a National Skills Agreement signed by all governments before the year is out.

This cooperation hasn't always been evident.

The Coalition Government failed to land a national skills agreement with any State or Territory.

They just gave up.

Apathy and hubris meant they thought it wasn't worth their effort.

Well we need this agreement to kickstart real change.

Change that makes VET what Myer Kangan and the Whitlam Government intended it to be – an engine room of opportunities and an essential tool in modernising Australia's economy and society.

The agreement has several crucial elements that when pieced together will revitalise the sector.

Ensuring adequate opportunities are provided for lifelong learning and foundation skills development so Australians can skill and reskill as the economy transforms.

Improving completion rates of VET qualifications through better and more targeted support.

A key element of our agenda is Fee-Free TAFE and VET places.

Delivered in partnership with State and Territory governments it's a flagship initiative to help support key industries experiencing skills shortages, as well as providing access to those that have historically experienced barriers to training.

And the numbers speak for themselves.

In the first 6 months, we exceeded our target for 180,000 enrolments, with around 215,000 Australians enrolling in a Fee-Free course already.

That's 215,000 people who are accessing high-quality education and training in areas we need skilled workers; like nursing and aged care, traditional trades and IT.

And we're not taking our foot off the pedal.

We're funding a further 300,000 Fee-Free TAFE and VET places starting next year, to continue this vital program.

Every time I visit a TAFE I meet with students who tell me how they wouldn't have been able to study in these areas of critical need if the cost barriers to studying hadn't been lifted.

And I'm proud to be part of a Labor government that can provide these opportunities to students and industries crying out for skilled workers.

To give industry the up-to-date skills that they really need, we want to see a return to true tripartism.

That's governments working together with employers and unions, and educators and training providers to ensure we have the complete picture of the skills industry needs.

Our government's deep commitment to consultation and inclusion comes from an understanding that listening gets better answers.

The ten new Jobs and Skills Councils are a case in point. They are collecting intelligence on the needs of industry to ensure the VET sector delivers the right training outcomes for students, workers and employers.

And for too long unions have been locked out of this crucial area of our economy.

We know that you get better policy outcomes when those who are affected by those policies have a seat at the table.

To ensure skills and training is relevant and enduring I have established, with the support of my state and territory ministerial colleagues, the tripartite Qualifications Reform Design Group.

For too long, we have treated the VET system as one amorphous thing, rather than a diverse sector meeting the needs of different industries with widely varying attributes and needs.

I have asked the group to look at how we keep the best of what we have where it is working, and how we can adopt different approaches in industries and jobs where it makes sense.

Ultimately, we need to make it easier for workers to gain transferable skills so they have more mobility and more choice.

Recasting vocational education and training to make it less fragmented and rigid, and more responsive and user friendly.

So that people don't have to take years out of work to receive a new qualification.

So that the skills and knowledge learnt are relevant and enduring, and that people can deepen and build on those strong foundations over the course of their lives.

None of this is going to be easy.

In order for any of this agenda to be successful, we first have to overcome perceptions about the poor relative quality of vocational education and training in Australia.

That is why I asked my colleague Lisa Chesters to chair a parliamentary inquiry into the perceptions and status of vocational education and training, which will report this year.

The next wave of vocational education and training reforms must focus on guaranteeing integrity.

We are serious about stamping out the unethical and badly performing training providers that tarnish the whole sector.

The sense of drift regarding vocational education and training is over.

In August the Skills Ministerial Council agreed to tighten the eligibility of who can run and operate Registered Training Organisations.

Today I've announced further measures - a compliance blitz on unlawful behaviour with other government agencies and a significant boost to the capacity of the Australian Skills Quality Authority to achieve this end.

The Albanese government will require ASQA to establish an Integrity Unit to identify and address threats to the integrity of VET and improve student protections.

A new confidential tip-off line will be established, giving a safe and confidential avenue for potential whistle-blowers to alert the regulator to serious allegations of non-compliance and fraudulent practices.

We will also improve ASQA's technology to improve intelligence gathering and to more effectively detect and prevent unlawful conduct.

These improvements address recommendations made by Christine Nixon in her review of Exploitation of Australia's Visa System.

They will enhance ASQA's ability to detect and remove unlawful and non-genuine providers, following a decade of inaction under the previous Coalition Government.

Not only do we need to lift the standards on behaviour, we need to lift the focus on quality to ensure students are getting the skills they and the economy need.

Whether that's from TAFE, GTOs, not-for-profit industry or private providers.

Fifty years after the commissioning of the Kangan Report, I am proud to work to fulfil a great Labor aspiration for a modern VET sector.

This is a generational reform agenda for our vocational education and training sector.

By investing in the people and institutions that deliver the skills that workers and the economy need, we are improving national prosperity.

By getting the right people with diverse perspectives around the table in common purpose, we are focussing on the right skills for now and the future.

By providing genuine national leadership in partnership with states and territories, we are bringing together our national, regional and local interests to embrace global opportunities.

We are building a system that is greater than the sum of its parts.

And in doing so we are giving life to a great Labor vision of fifty years.



MINISTERS' MEDIA CENTRE

Ministers of the Employment and Workplace Relations
Portfolio

Joint Media Release

16 May 2023

New investment in skills paves way for AUKUS workforce

The Hon Richard Marles MP

Deputy Prime Minister

Minister for Defence

The Hon Jason Clare MP

Minister for Education

The Hon Brendan O'Connor MP

Minister for Skills and Training

The Hon Pat Conroy MP

Minister for International Development and the Pacific

Minister for Defence Industry

The Albanese Government's Budget invests nearly \$150 million to start delivering the skills and workforce we need to deliver Australia's nuclear-powered submarine program through AUKUS.

The AUKUS plan for Australia to acquire and manufacture nuclear-powered submarines will create around 20,000 direct jobs over the next 30 years across industry, the Australian Defence Force and the Australian Public Service.

The biggest challenge Australia's nuclear-powered submarine program faces right now is to develop the skills and workforce needed to build this sovereign capability here in Australia.

The Government is committed to providing the skills and training for a home-grown workforce to build and maintain Australian nuclear-powered submarines. The 2023-24 Budget delivers on this promise.

Starting this year, the Government's package for AUKUS skills and training will see:

- **\$128.5 million over four years to fund an additional 4,000 university places** and for the Department of Education
 - These places will be targeted at STEM disciplines, including physics, chemistry, mathematics, materials science, naval architecture, computer science, as well as mechanical, electrical, chemical and nuclear engineering.
 - This includes the 800 places at South Australian universities announced in the Cooperation Agreement between the Commonwealth and South Australia.
 - It will also enable the Department of Education to support the nuclear-powered submarine program through international engagement advice and research.
- **\$3.9 million over two years to establish the skills taskforce** within the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
 - Working with industry, tertiary education sector leaders, unions, State and Territory Governments and across the Commonwealth to plan and build the skilled workforce needed for Australia's future.
- **\$11.4 million over three years to extend the Defence Industry Pathways Program** within the Western Australian shipbuilding sector
 - The extension of this program will continue the pipeline of skills and talent into the Defence shipbuilding industry, providing a key pathway to gain essential skills that will be required by Australia's defence industry into the future.

We will also develop the **AUKUS Submarine Workforce and Industry Strategy**. Working hand-in-glove with the South Australian Government, together we will co-design a Skills and Training Academy to deliver tailored education, training and skilling for the submarine and naval shipbuilding workforce in South Australia.

To match the investment in Australian industry, we must also invest in the workforce and skills which will deliver this ambitious program.

Australia's nuclear-powered submarine program will be the most transformative industrial endeavour in our history – exceeding in scale, complexity, and economic significance the creation of an Australian automotive manufacturing sector and the construction of the Snowy Hydro Scheme.

Developing a pipeline of highly skilled STEM graduates and a talented skilled workforce will build Australia's sovereign industry capabilities, playing a crucial role in delivering on our AUKUS commitments and strengthening national security.

Quotes attributable to the Deputy Prime Minister, Richard Marles:

"The Albanese Government understands that front and centre of the success of Australia's nuclear-powered submarines will be the many thousands of Australians who help build them.

"We need to start investing in those skills now – this is a project which starts this year and will span decades with enormous opportunities."

Quotes attributable to the Minister for Education, Jason Clare:

"These extra 4,000 places are in addition to the existing 20,000 more Commonwealth Supported Places already funded by the Australian Government to address skills shortages in areas of national priority.

"This funding commitment will ensure more Australians have the opportunity to go to uni and develop the advance technical skills needed to work on these nation-changing projects."

Quotes attributable to the Minister for Skills and Training, Brendan O'Connor:

"This taskforce will play a vital role in advising how the vocational skills and training sector can be geared up to support this new workforce.

"It's important we work in lock-step with industry, tertiary education sector leaders, unions, State and Territory Governments to plan and build the skilled workforce needed for Australia's future."

Quotes attributable to the Minister for Defence Industry, Pat Conroy:

"The AUKUS submarine program will be the most transformative industrial endeavour in Australian history.

"Young Australians starting training now have a bright future ahead of them with secure high skilled, well-paid jobs that will make an important contribution to Australia's defence industry and our national security."

Diving into nuclear submarines

MIT Department of Nuclear Science and Engineering creates a course for the Australian Submarine Agency.

Peter Reuell | Department of Nuclear Science and Engineering

January 11, 2024



Nuclear Technology for Marine Propulsion, a three-week course by the Department of Nuclear Science and Engineering, covered a broad range of topics, including the basics of nuclear reactor theory and design, operations and safety, training, the operation of nuclear shipyards, and more.

Photo: Marcio Silva/iStock

In 2021, the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia formed a partnership, dubbed AUKUS, which will allow the Royal Australian Navy to

purchase several nuclear-powered submarines in an effort to modernize their fleet.

Building a nuclear submarine program from scratch is anything but easy, but when they set out to do so, the Australian navy knew exactly who to turn to for expertise. Shortly after the announcement, Australian Vice Admiral Jonathan Mead in an interview suggested sending staff to MIT.

That offhand comment eventually found its way to [Jacopo Buongiorno](#), professor of nuclear science and engineering and director of the [Center for Advanced Nuclear Energy Systems](#) at MIT, and served as inspiration for the newest executive education course offered by the Department of Nuclear Science and Engineering (NSE).

A deep dive on nuclear programs

Titled “Nuclear Technology for Marine Propulsion,” the three-week course was attended by 20 senior leaders from the [Australian Submarine Agency](#) (ASA) and other officials, and covered a broad range of topics, including the basics of nuclear reactor theory and design, operations and safety, training, the operation of nuclear shipyards, and more.

“NSE is truly excited for the opportunity to help the Australian navy as they navigate the establishment of their nuclear program,” says [Benoit Forget](#), NSE department head and Korea Electric Power Professor of Nuclear Engineering, who co-directed the course. “Understanding the technology and establishing foundational safety principles is essential to the long-term success of their project, and we were glad to see the importance they attributed to these principles by seeking our help.”

Sessions were led by MIT faculty and a variety of external subject matter experts and included special guests like MIT Vice President for Research Maria Zuber and retired U.S. Navy admirals Jim Ellis and John Richardson.

“The technical content of the course was rich,” Buongiorno says. “We started with nuclear physics, reactor physics, thermal-hydraulics, nuclear materials, fuel performance, and the nuclear fuel cycle, and then expanded into what one might call the ‘softer’ aspects of nuclear technology, such as training, oversight, safety culture, supply chain, the role of the national labs, etc.”

In fact, these aspects are not soft at all, Buongiorno explains, as they can determine whether a nuclear technology program succeeds or fails.

“This is one of the great lessons from the successful nuclear naval propulsion program in the U.S.,” he says. “It’s about the technology, the people, and the governance in equal parts.

“For example, in-depth training of people and the creation of a robust safety culture are critically important because nuclear reactors are not a particularly tolerant technology,” he continues. “Hence the need for relentless attention to detail and conservative decision-making. Therefore, we felt from the very beginning that this should not be a purely technical course.”

A long history of professional education

While it is the newest professional education course offered by NSE, the ASA course was modeled after another course, called “Reactor Technology Course for Nuclear Utility Executives,” which the department has offered for more than three decades, jointly with the Institute of Nuclear Power Operations. In both cases, Buongiorno says, the goal is to ensure participants come away with a basic understanding of nuclear technology, feel confident to ask smart questions, and make the right decisions in their respective positions.

Given the important future roles of the course participants — many were senior leaders in the Australian navy, government, and policy community — the course may end up having significant impacts, he adds.

“The Australian navy course is one more recent example of the international involvement and impact of my NSE colleagues,” Forget says. “Two additional recent examples are the [Global Forum Rising Stars Workshop](#), in collaboration with the Nuclear Energy Agency, that brought together incredible female researchers from around the world, and the [2023 David J. Rose Lecture](#) given by International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Mariano Grossi, who discussed the role of the IAEA on global nuclear safety.”

Providing such executive education, Buongiorno says, is central to MIT NSE’s mission. In addition to courses for the ASA and utility executives, the department in recent years launched a three-day course for policymakers, legislators, journalists, and others, titled [Nuclear Energy: Facts and Issues](#), has offered a course on Nuclear Operational Risk Management for a decade, and its longest-running course, on Nuclear Plant Safety, has been offered annually since 1966.

“The mission of our department is not limited to technology development and education of our students. It includes also informing the broader community of stakeholders in the media, the government, the industry, the investment community, all the way to the general public, about the beneficial uses of nuclear science and technologies,” he says.

AUKUS Submarine Workforce And Industry Strategy

Media release

Tuesday 14 March 2023



Prime Minister



Deputy Prime Minister



Minister for Defence



Minister for Defence Industry



Minister for International Development and the Pacific

The Albanese Government is developing a comprehensive AUKUS Submarine Workforce and Industry Strategy to support delivery of advanced conventionally-armed nuclear-powered submarines to the Australian Defence Force.

The AUKUS submarine program will be the most transformative industrial endeavour in Australian history – exceeding in scale, complexity and economic significance the creation of an Australian automotive manufacturing sector and the construction of the Snowy Scheme in the post-war decades.

Australia's industrial base will be just the second in history to be granted access to highly sensitive US nuclear propulsion capability

and afforded the ability to access, handle, build and sustain this sensitive technology.

The program will create around 20,000 direct jobs over the next 30 years across industry, the Australian Defence Force and the Australian Public Service including trades workers, operators, technicians, engineers, scientists, submariners and project managers.

At its peak, building and sustaining nuclear-powered submarines in Australia will create up to 8,500 direct jobs in the industrial workforce

With hundreds of thousands of components, nuclear-powered submarines will present a unique opportunity for Australian companies to contribute not only to the construction and sustainment of Australia's new fleet but to the supply chains of partner nations.

Australia's scientific, education and training institutions will also play a central role.

Australians have already commenced training and working on UK and US nuclear-powered submarines and in UK and US facilities.

Between 2027 to 2032, an additional 500 direct jobs are expected to be created to sustain the Submarine Rotational Force-West US and UK presence in Western Australia.

This will mean Australia has a trained and experienced sovereign workforce for the arrival of Australia's Virginia class submarines from as soon as the early 2030s.

At its peak, up to an estimated 4,000 Australian workers will be employed to design and build the infrastructure for the new submarine construction yard in South Australia.

A further 4,000 to 5,500 direct jobs will be created to build the nuclear-powered submarines in South Australia when the program reaches its peak in 20 to 30 years, almost double the workforce the former Government forecast for the Attack class program.

To support delivery of the submarine program, the Government has commenced developing the AUKUS Submarine Workforce and Industry Strategy to:

- Attract, recruit, develop, qualify and retain a highly-skilled trades, technical, scientific and engineering workforce.
- Invest in new infrastructure for sustaining and building nuclear-powered submarines in Australia.
- Support and build the capabilities of Australia's world-leading defence industry.

This will involve working closely with state and territory governments, industry, unions, education and training institutions and the scientific and technical sectors.

We understand this is a whole of nation effort – as such, the Prime Minister will be putting this on the agenda for the next National Cabinet to ensure all jurisdictions can access the workforce and industry opportunities.

Key elements of the Strategy the Government is planning include:

Infrastructure

- **New sustainment infrastructure in Western Australia** at HMAS *Stirling* including wharf upgrades, warehousing and sustainment facilities.
- **New submarine construction infrastructure in South Australia** at the Osborne shipbuilding precinct, including site identification and design, land transfer discussions, civil works and prototype facilities.
- **National engineering and technology facilities.**

Workforce

- **Australian submarine industrial workforce planning** including forecasting workforce demand and supply, identifying priority skills areas, identifying education and training requirements and finalising a workforce strategy.
- Working with the South Australian Government on a **dedicated Skills and Training Academy** to deliver tailored education,

training and skilling for Australia's submarine and naval shipbuilding workforce including:

- Career training programs to bring new people into the workforce, such as apprentices, undergraduates and graduate apprentices.
 - Lifting the skills of the existing naval shipbuilding workforce.
 - Transition programs to bring in people from adjacent industries in the defence, manufacturing and technology sectors.
- Working with the **Western Australian** Government to develop a **skills and training program**, leveraging existing relationships with WA vocational and tertiary institutions.
- Early **opportunities to embed** industrial, Australian Defence Force and Australian Public Service **personnel in UK and US** facilities and shipyards.
- **New education and training courses** including:
- Expanding the **Sovereign Shipbuilding Talent Pool (SSTP)**, commencing with an initial cohort of 74 apprentices, undergraduates and graduates in coming months.
 - Developing nation-wide **education and skilling plans** with the university and vocational education sectors.
 - Supporting an existing cohort of over 50 Australians to commence **new specialised courses** in the UK and US and new tertiary courses for nuclear engineering at the University of New South Wales and nuclear science at the Australian National University.

Industry

- Developing opportunities for **Australian industry to carry out maintenance for US Virginia class and UK Astute class submarines** during their rotational presence in Western Australia.
- **Opportunities to embed Australian industry** in the UK and US nuclear-powered submarine construction and sustainment programs and supply chains with our partners, including **Australian industry supplying Australian-manufactured**

materials and components to the UK and US submarine programs.

- Establishing **mechanisms for Australian industry to register interest** in participating in the Australian, UK and US nuclear-powered submarine programs.

The AUKUS Submarine Workforce and Industry Strategy will be finalised and implemented in consultation with our trilateral partners and state and territory governments, industry and unions.

It will complement the Albanese Government's wider agenda to revitalise Australian manufacturing, ensuring we are a country that makes things – including identifying defence capability as a priority funding area for the \$15 billion National Reconstruction Fund.

Australia's defence industry and workforce will be vital partners in the AUKUS submarine program over the next four decades and beyond – delivering a critical defence capability and supporting an industrial and skills expansion of national economic significance.



Passage of priority AUKUS submarine and export control exemption legislation by the United States Congress

 Joint media release

The Hon Richard Marles MP

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15 DECEMBER 2023

Today the US Congress passed the 2024 *National Defense Authorization Act* (NDAA), which includes substantial enabling provisions for Australia's AUKUS nuclear-powered submarine program.

The NDAA will also establish a national exemption for Australia and the United Kingdom from US defence export control licensing, and adds Australia and the United Kingdom to the US Defense Production Act.

Specifically, the NDAA will:

Authorise the transfer of three Virginia class submarines to Australia, including two in-service submarines and one off the production line. This significant contribution is vital to the pathway and will ensure there is no gap in Australia's critical

submarine capability in the lead up to delivering Australian-built SSN-AUKUS from the early 2040s. Australia will retain the option to seek congressional approval for purchase of up to two more Virginia class submarines.

Authorise the maintenance of US submarines by Australians in Australia. This is a key component of the pathway, which includes increased port visits by UK and US nuclear-powered submarines, and will lead to a rotational presence from as early as 2027 under Submarine Rotational Force West (SRF-West). The most complex maintenance activity on a US nuclear-powered submarine in Australia to date is planned at HMAS *Stirling* in the second half of 2024.

Authorise Australian contractors to train in US shipyards to support the development of Australia's submarine industrial base. Australian industry workers, alongside APS and ADF personnel, will benefit from unprecedented opportunities to enhance their skills and qualifications in US shipyards.

Establish a mechanism for the US to accept funds from Australia to lift the capacity of the submarine industrial base. Australia is committed to making a fair and proportionate investment in the US submarine industrial base to help us get boats in the water faster. This will lift US capacity to deliver Virginia class submarines to Australia as soon as possible. This investment will also complement Australia's significant investment in our domestic submarine industrial base.

Include a national exemption from US export control licencing requirements. This will be complemented by the Defence Trade Controls Amendment Bill 2023, introduced into the Australian Parliament by the Albanese Government on 30 November 2023, and will allow the transfer of controlled goods and technology between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States without the need for an export licence. This is a significant step forward for Australian Defence Industry.

Directs expedited decision-making for Foreign Military Sales and exports not covered by the national exemption. This includes a pre-clearance list and expedited decision process for Foreign Military Sales and a maximum of 45 days for a decision on exports not covered by the national exemption. This will expedite the delivery of critical defence capability.

Adds Australia and the United Kingdom to Title III of the US Defense Production Act. This Act allows the US Government to incentivise its industrial base to expand the production and supply of critical materials and goods. Australia's addition will open new opportunities for Australian based industry to directly compete for business with the US Government.

The Albanese Government welcomes the significant and tangible steps the US Congress and the Biden Administration have taken to deliver on its commitment to both Pillar I and Pillar II of AUKUS.

The NDAA will see the transfer of Virginia Class Submarines to Australia- the first time in the US' history- and will streamline the flow of defence trade between AUKUS partners.

Quotes attributable to Deputy Prime Minister, Richard Marles:

"The US Congress has provided unprecedented support to Australia in passing the National Defense Authorization Act which will see the transfer of submarines and streamlined export control provisions, symbolising the strength of our Alliance, and our shared commitment to the AUKUS partnership.

"We are on the precipice of historic reform that will transform our ability to effectively deter, innovate, and operate together.

"AUKUS is a game-changer for Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States – the legislation passed by US Congress will enhance our individual and collective capacity to support security, peace, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific.

"I thank the United States Congress for their support for AUKUS."

Quotes attributable to Minister for Defence Industry, Pat Conroy:

"Australia's alliance with the United States is unprecedented in scale, scope and significance, underscored by this momentous day for the AUKUS partnership which demonstrates the historic AUKUS agreement is being implemented at pace.

"The Congressional approval of the National Defense Authorization Act brings us closer to realising a generational opportunity to ensure Australia is best equipped to not only protect Australians and their interests but to also support stability and security in the Indo-Pacific.



“Crucially, the passage of the NDAA will revolutionise and enable unprecedented levels of collaboration, scientific, technological and industrial cooperation and co-development and paves the way for Australia to continue to build up its sovereign workforce capacity.”

Other related releases

[Navy sailors travel to Guam to embed with United States sailors](#)

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Release of the South Australian Defence Industry Workforce and Skills Report and Action Plan

17 NOVEMBER 2023

On Friday 10 November, The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, the Hon Richard Marles MP, and Premier of South Australia, the Hon Peter Malinauskas MP released the South Australian Defence Industry Workforce and Skills Report and Action Plan, delivering a detailed strategy to grow and sustain South Australia's defence industry workforce for the future.

The South Australian Defence Industry Workforce and Skills Report is the result of close collaboration between the Commonwealth and South Australian governments, in consultation with defence industry, unions and the education providers who will build the skills of this workforce.

The Report details 22 initiatives to further address workforce challenges and grow the South Australian defence industry workforce from 3,500 direct jobs to more than 8,500 in the 2040s.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, Richard Marles said this report helps to identify what is working, what more needs to be done, and where additional investment is needed to attract, skill and retain the workforce we need.

"This report presents a comprehensive and methodical plan to grow, build and sustain the South Australian defence industry workforce, which is critical to delivery of SSN-AUKUS, continuous naval shipbuilding and our other defence projects," Mr Marles said.

"Some initiatives will leverage and expand on existing programs, building on substantial work already underway across government, defence industry and education and VET sectors. Other initiatives are new to help address identified skills gaps.

"Collaborative and enduring partnerships between the Commonwealth and South Australian Governments, defence industry, unions and education and training providers will underpin this critical workforce expansion and capability uplift over time."

Premier of South Australia, Peter Malinauskas said South Australia will play a leading role in building Australia's industrial base.

"Our critical national defence projects, including nuclear-powered submarines, will be delivered with the strength of a highly educated, highly trained workforce with the cutting edge skills and capabilities of the future," Mr Malinauskas said.

"The challenge to grow and sustain a highly skilled defence industry workforce cannot be understated, but neither can the opportunity."

These tangible and solutions-focussed initiatives will:

Engage an estimated 27,000 students and 1,500 teachers in at least 180 South Australian schools to support STEM education pathways for students.

Establish an industry capability pipeline of around 2,600 additional VET and university students through flexible training programs, technical colleges and STEM focused higher-education places.

Employ more apprentices, graduates and undergraduates through the Early Careers Program with more than 70 young Australians to join the program this year.

Engage and upskill experienced workers and industry leaders through mid-career transition programs, the Skills and Training Academy and Defence Industry Leadership Program

Improve workforce data and insights across industry and government

Promote defence industry workforce opportunities, and better connect jobs with potential candidates through a multi-tiered communications strategy.

Strengthen STEM evaluations through a consistent methodology and support industry to sponsor security clearances to engage highly skilled workers from our AUKUS partners.

Growing the defence industry workforce in South Australia requires a coordinated and collaborative approach.

Implementation of the package of initiatives will commence from 2024.

The full report is available on the South Australian Defence Industry Workforce and Skills Report website.

Details

Author

 By ASA Media

Australian Submarine Agency acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia. We recognise their continuing connection to traditional lands and waters and would like to pay respect to their Elders both past and present.





Submarine Construction Yard Works caps off a momentous year for AUKUS

 Joint media release

The Hon Richard Marles MP

Deputy Prime Minister

Minister for Defence

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The Hon Pat Conroy MP

Minister for Defence Industry

Minister for International Development and the Pacific

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General enquiries

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24 DECEMBER 2023

The Albanese Government has taken the next significant step towards building nuclear-powered submarines in Australia, marking the commencement of preliminary enabling work at the Submarine Construction Yard at Osborne, South Australia.

Australian Naval Infrastructure Pty Ltd (ANI) this week signed a contract with Shamrock Civil to commence construction of a staging and laydown area to support the future construction workforce for the Submarine Construction Yard.

Other preliminary work set to commence in 2024 includes the construction of a pedestrian bridge and road, which will support the movement of thousands of workers during the construction of the yard and build of Australia's SSN-AUKUS submarines.

The works were assessed through an *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* standard referral process, which included a period of public consultation.

At the peak, up to 4,000 workers will be employed to design and build the infrastructure for the Submarine Construction Yard in Osborne.

A further 4,000-5,500 direct jobs are expected to be created to build the nuclear-powered submarines in South Australia, when the program reaches its peak. This is almost double the jobs forecast for the Attack class program.

This announcement caps off a momentous nine months for the AUKUS pathway:

In March, we announced the pathway through which Australia would acquire a conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarine capability.

The Australian Submarine Agency was launched, which will be responsible for the management and oversight of the nuclear-powered submarine program.

Australian submariners and industry workers have commenced training and placements in both the United States and United Kingdom.

United States nuclear-powered submarines have visited HMAS *Stirling* in Western Australia, building our capacity in the lead up to Submarine Rotational Force-West (SRF-West) from 2027.

The Australian and South Australian Governments reached agreement on a land exchange for the new Submarine Construction Yard at Osborne and the future site of the Skills and Training Academy.

The South Australian Defence Industry Workforce and Skills Report and Action Plan was handed down, delivering a detailed strategy to grow and sustain the state's defence industry workforce for the future.

More than 4,000 Commonwealth supported places in STEM courses were allocated across 16 Australian universities, to help grow the AUKUS workforce.

Five pieces of legislation in support of the AUKUS pathway have been introduced to Parliament, including; the Defence Trade Controls Amendment Bill 2023, the Australian Nuclear Power Safety Bill 2023 and the Safeguarding Australia's Military Secrets Bill.

The United States Congress passed the 2024 National Defense Authorisation Act which, among other significant enabling provisions, authorises the transfer of Virginia class submarines to Australia, for the first time in US history.

Australia's acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines is the most significant industrial undertaking in our nation's history. The important work that has happened over the past year will continue to progress at pace into the future.

Quotes attributable to Deputy Prime Minister, Richard Marles:

"The start of enabling works at Osborne is another important milestone for the Australian Government as we progress at pace towards commencing construction of the first SSN-AUKUS by the end of the decade.

"The Submarine Construction Yard at Osborne will employ thousands of Australians to work on Australia's SSN-AUKUS submarines and this announcement is a key first step towards realising those important local jobs.

"There is an enormous amount of work that has occurred over the last 12 months towards realising the AUKUS pathway and that progress will continue in 2024."

Quotes attributable to the Minister for Defence Industry, Pat Conroy:

"This is yet another milestone that makes good on our commitment to construct conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines in South Australia.



"It underscores our comprehensive plan to deliver the AUKUS program at pace, including through local submarine construction, while ensuring Australians and their economic interests are protected.

"Not only will this create local jobs, it also helps deliver the most critical defence capability acquisition in our nation's history."

Other related releases

Navy sailors travel to Guam to embed with United States sailors

[The Hon Richard Marles MP](#)

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Standing Committees on Education and Employment

QUESTION ON NOTICE Supplementary Budget Estimates 2023 - 2024

Outcome: Skills and Training

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations Question No. SQ23-001590

Senator Slade Brockman on 26 October 2023, Proof Hansard page 20

Defence vocational skills task force: Dates of briefings

Question

Senator BROCKMAN: Has the minister requested a briefing from the taskforce?

Ms Angus: We have briefed the minister's office and had regular conversations with them.

Senator BROCKMAN: Can I get, on notice if necessary, the dates of the briefings? Is this a regular event, or is it done on an ad hoc basis when there is something to report?

Ms Angus: Because this taskforce has only come into existence since the budget and we've been establishing it, we've had a couple of meetings and a briefing request from the minister. We anticipate that it will become regular. We of course have very regular, as in weekly, engagement with the minister's office broadly. We often use that as a forum to identify activities or things that we think are of interest to the office, and that includes issues around the taskforce work.

Answer

As at 28 November 2023, the taskforce has provided written briefing material on the work of the taskforce to the Hon Brendan O'Connor MP, Minister for Skills and Training on the following dates:

- 3 November 2023
- 23 November 2023.

International Students and Skills

Government Position

- The Government released the **Migration Strategy** on 11 December 2023 outlining a new vision for Australia's migration system, including reforms to international education and training.
- The Migration Strategy notes findings by both the **Review of the Migration System** and the Nixon Review of systemic exploitation of the student visa system, particular in the VET sector, with international students identified as among cohorts most at risk of exploitation at work and becoming 'permanently temporary'.
- In response, the Migration Strategy commits to strengthening the integrity and quality of international education and improving and clarifying pathways for international graduates with the skills Australia needs to demonstrate their ability to succeed in the labour market and attain permanent residency. This will lift standards for international students and education providers while ensuring graduates who stay in Australia to help to meet skills shortages do not become 'permanently temporary'.
- The Department works closely with the Department of Home Affairs, Department of Education, and the VET regulator, ASQA, on reforms to ensure student visa holders are genuine students and are studying at genuine providers.
- The Department also works with these same agencies to enhance the student experience and improve employment outcomes. This will help international students better meet critical skills needs, either in Australia or their home countries.
- Key actions in the Migration Strategy specific to Skills and Training are at **Appendix A**.
- For details and 'If Asked' questions regarding reducing Net Overseas Migration (NOM), criticism from the VET sector on changes to international student policy settings and Government's response to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (JSCFADT) Inquiry into Australia's tourism and international education sectors, refer to **EC24-00247**.

Portfolio Responsibilities

- The Minister for Skills and Training has **limited but specific portfolio responsibilities** in relation to international VET students, which include:
 - skills assessments for migration (see **Appendix B**), including implementing actions from the Migration Strategy relating to improving skills recognition.
 - VET sector policy, including:
 - regulation through Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) (see **Appendix C**)
 - response to the Nixon Review (see **Appendix D**)
 - Jobs and Skills Australia's (JSA) role in providing advice on labour market and skills needs, including as they relate to international students (see **Appendix E**).
- The Skills and Training, Education and Home Affairs portfolios have overlapping interests in the regulation, design and scope of the international education sector (see **Appendix F**).
- Ongoing collaboration between all three portfolios is essential to delivering stronger social and labour market outcomes for students and migrants, and improving the contribution of Australia's migration program to meet the genuine skills needs of the economy.

Key Considerations

Rapid increase in temporary migration, including international students

- The international student sector represents one of the largest components of Australia's temporary migration program and the biggest feeder into the non-employer-sponsored permanent migration program.
- Australia's international education sector operates on a demand driven model. The Home Affairs portfolio is responsible for policy settings and decisions regarding student visas approvals.
- Australia has experienced strong growth in Net Overseas Migration (NOM), driven in part but not exclusively by a significant increase in student visa-holders since borders reopened to students in December 2021.
 - The current spike in student and graduate numbers is in part due to returning students who departed Australia during the pandemic, and students who deferred their study plans.
 - Viewed over a longer timeframe current VET enrolments are broadly in line with the historical growth trajectory.
 - Measures already taken to strengthen the integrity and quality of international education and training, including those announced as part of the Migration Strategy, may be expected to dampen international student visa numbers, although this is not their primary purpose.
- There is also opportunity to diversify international VET, including through transnational delivery, either online or offshore, to capitalise on growing demand for Australian VET to support the skills priorities of countries in the Indo-Pacific region.
- The Department is working closely with the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Education, and the Department of Home Affairs and the and Trade on the Government's response to the Moore Report, and recommendations of the interim report of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade into Australia's tourism and international education sectors.

Importance to the Australian Economy

- In 2022, the VET sector supported 273,838 international enrolments, or 36.7% of all international enrolments.
 - In 2022, the top represented nationalities were India (26%), Nepal (13%) and the Philippines (5.8%).

Economic considerations

- In 2022-23, international VET enrolments generated \$8.5 billion for the Australian economy of a total \$36.43 billion, equating to 23.4%, of total international education exports.
 - Approximately 70% of this income is estimated to be attributed to the goods and services paid by students such as rent, travel and compulsory private health insurance, with the remainder tuition fees.
- The Department supports the international VET sector's continued economic contribution through engagement with partner countries and the Overseas Education Counsellor Network and key agency partners including the Department of Education, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Department of Home Affairs and Austrade.

Workforce considerations

- Student and temporary graduate visa holders make a significant contribution to our labour market, particularly in essential casual and part time employment. This was particularly evident during the pandemic which highlighted how important such roles are to our supply chains and key sectors in the economy. The Review of the Migration System recommended investigating opportunities to reduce the misuse of the student visa by those using it primarily to seek work in Australia instead of studying.

Diplomatic considerations

- The learning experience and people-to-people links facilitated by VET, and international education more broadly, provide influence and enduring international relationships. International students who have studied with Australian VET providers and lived in our communities become 'brand ambassadors' maintaining strong life-long connections with Australia.
- A 2022 analysis from the Lowy Institute noted increasing VET enrolments presented new opportunities for Australia's relationships with Southeast Asia as part of the transition to the next phase in the digitisation of the manufacturing sector (i.e., fourth industrial revolution). This is supported by the findings and recommendations of the Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040 (the Moore Report), which highlights the potential for returned International VET students to support existing trade relationships and investment by Australian companies in the region.

Key media

<p>The Weekend Australian 6 January 2024</p>	<p>Government's crackdown on 'dodgy operators' in the VET sector following the launch of ASQA's confidential VET tip-offline. The article reported that more than 400 tip-offs have led to regulatory action against 70 VET providers and ASQA is investigating a further 60 providers.</p>
<p>Media release 11 December 2023</p>	<p>The Ministers for Home Affairs, Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, Education, and Skills and Training announced the release of the Government's <i>Migration Strategy</i>.</p>
<p>The Australian 24 October 2023</p>	<p>The Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia (ITECA) were highly critical of the recommendations listed in a parliamentary report delivered by Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade. ITECA believe that measures listed would derail the international education sector's recovery from COVID 19 whilst promoting an 'ideology that public providers are best'.</p>
<p>Media release 3 October 2023</p>	<p>The Ministers for Home Affairs, Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, Education, and Skills and Training issued a joint media release announcing \$37.8 million for measures to improve integrity in the VET system and protections for students.</p>
<p>Media release 12 September 2023</p>	<p>The Hon Brendan O'Connor MP, the Hon Clare O'Neil MP and the Hon Andrew Giles MP media release on the publication of the <i>Best Practice Principles and Standards for Skilled Migration Assessing Authorities</i> discussion paper – Skills assessment reform for migrants and local businesses.</p>

Appendices

Appendix A: Key actions in the Migration Strategy specific to Skills and Training

Key Action	Response	Timeline for delivery
Improve the approach to skills recognition and assessment to better unlock the potential of migrants.	<p>The department is developing an enhanced assurance framework for the skills assessment sector. Enhanced standards and best-practice principles for skilled migration assessing authorities and a new IT reporting system will help to raise the integrity, quality, and timeliness of skills assessments for migration.</p> <p>The release of a public discussion paper (<i>Draft Best Practice Principles and Standards for Skilled Migration Assessing Authorities</i>) was announced on 12 September 2023 and closed on the 23 October 2023. 126 responses were received, which will inform the development of the new standards.</p> <p>The standards will be implemented in May 2024 in the form of updated Guidelines for Skilled Migration Assessing Authorities. The new IT system will be implemented by June 2024.</p>	June 2024
Support international students and graduates to realise their potential	JSA is undertaking a point in time analysis of migration pathways and employment outcomes for international students and graduates to support actions in the Migration Strategy, including identifying barriers faced by international students, post-study, in fields linked to skills in demand in the Australian labour market. This is due to be completed in June 2024.	June 2024
Building a new temporary skilled migration system to address skills needs and enhance worker mobility	The Department of Home Affairs is introducing a new Skills in Demand visa to replace the Temporary Skilled visa. This includes a coordinated, evidence-based approach to defining skills needs, through Jobs and Skills Australia , including developing a new occupation list for the Core Skills Pathway using its new Migration Labour Market Indicator Model and tripartite stakeholder engagement.	November 2024
International Education Strategic Framework	<p>The department is working with the Department of Education on the development of a new International Education and Skills Strategic Framework to be released later in 2024, which will ensure international education continues to meet Australia's economic, social, and strategic interests.</p> <p>The Framework will underpin a high quality and sustainable international education sector that is well positioned to advance Australia's international reputation and provide quality outcomes for Australian and global skills needs.</p> <p>The Framework will be developed in consultation with the Council for International Education and targeted consultation with the sector.</p>	TBC 2024

Appendix B: Skills Assessments for Migration

Skills assessments for migration

- The department supports the Minister for Skills and Training's responsibilities for the approval and ongoing assurance of entities which undertake skills assessments for migrants.
- The Minister for Skills and Training is empowered under the *Migration Regulations 1994* to approve assessing authorities to undertake skills assessments for occupations eligible for skilled migration.
- Historically, about 90,000 skills assessments were delivered annually by 39 skilled migration assessing authorities. In 2023, more than 190,000 skills assessments were completed, indicating the significant increase in demand for assessing authority services post-pandemic. Almost half of these assessments (88,000) were for former international students.
- International students provide a pipeline of skilled labour, particularly for VET occupations. Between 1 January 2023 and 31 December 2023:
 - 53% of applicants (approximately 21,000) who received a positive VET skills assessment outcome were migrants with an Australian qualification, i.e., international graduates.
 - 72% of VET skills assessments were for occupations in shortage (and 97% in the case of trades occupations specifically).
- Under the *Migration Regulations 1994*, assessing authorities are responsible for setting and maintaining the skills assessment standards for the occupations they assess.
- See an overview of Australia's skilled migration system at **Attachment A**.

Trades Recognition Australia

- Trades Recognition Australia (TRA) is the department's in house assessing authority responsible for assessing 131 technical and trade occupations under the *Migration Regulations 1994*.
- Funding for TRA is structured as fully cost recovered through the collection of fees from applicants, in accordance with the Australian Government Charging Framework.
- Trades Recognition Australia delivers six programs, eligibility for which is determined by factors such as qualification, employment experience, nationality, and whether an applicant's occupation requires licensing (**EC24-000245 refers**).
- The top occupations assessed across TRA's programs include chefs and cooks, motor mechanics, carpenters, painting trades, electrical trades, fitters and welders.

Skills Assessment Pilots

- The department's Skills Assessment Pilots consist of three pilots that together aimed to remove barriers to skills assessments and ensure skilled migrants have the core skills required to thrive in Australian workplaces. To date, the Pilots have supported over 4,000 onshore migrants with skills relevant to priority occupations.
- Minor adjustments in the 2023-24 Budget delivered savings of \$3.86 million whilst ensuring the Pilots still serve enough participants to provide a sufficient evaluation sample and robust data to inform future policy design.
- Adjustments to Pilots 2 and 3 include: 8-month extensions, new eligible occupations to reflect the 2022 Skills Priority List and expanding eligibility criteria to make the Pilots more accessible to migrant women. Changes aim to maximise uptake and ensure participants are successful in gaining work.
- The department renewed promotion efforts for Pilots 2 and 3 in August through October 2023 to increase program uptake, including translation of promotional materials into 20 languages, program webpage updates, promotional videos, renewed social media campaign, integration

into the MyAus app, and continuous stakeholder engagement with Home Affairs, Workforce Australia, Services Australia and other migration and refugee organisations.

- The department is exploring ways to improve and streamline skills recognition processes and support migrants to participate in the labour market at a level commensurate with their skills and qualifications. The Pilots are gathering valuable information about assessing authority processes, applicant demographics and employment outcomes for skilled migrants following their skills assessment.
- Substantive findings are scheduled for June 2024, with formative reports to provide any initial findings and inform ongoing Pilot delivery.

Pilot	Description
<p>Pilot One – <i>Faster Migrant Skills Assessments</i> Contract Start: 28 February 2022 Contract End: 17 June 2022</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracted assessing authorities were funded to expedite relevant skills assessment applications they had on-hand at the time of the Pilot’s commencement. • This was to reduce assessing authority backlogs and speed up migrants’ progression towards a skilled visa application. • As at 30 June 2022, contracted assessing authorities had serviced 3,977 onshore migrants.
<p>Pilot Two – <i>Skills Assessment Opportunities for Migrants</i> Contract Start: 28 February 2022 Contract End: 29 February 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracted assessing authorities are being funded to provide free, fast-tracked skills assessments to migrants on family, partner, humanitarian, and refugee visas, and secondary entrants of skilled visa holders. • This is to support the employment prospects of migrants who have not formerly undergone a skills assessment but may have skills relevant to priority occupations. • As at 31 December 2023, contracted assessing authorities had completed 169 skills assessment applications.
<p>Pilot Three – <i>Employability Assessments</i> Contract Start: 26 September 2022 Contract End: 29 February 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free employability assessments and subsidised training for underemployed, onshore, skilled migrants with a suitable skills assessment outcome. • Contracted assessing authorities are being funded to identify applicants who have previously received a suitable skills assessment outcome in a priority occupation and refer them to the Employability Assessment Provider (EAP). • The contracted EAP is being funded to deliver employability assessments to help underemployed migrants identify and address any employability skills gaps. • The employability assessments will focus on the 10 core competencies developed by Jobs and Skills Australia (e.g., teamwork and oral communication) and identify any employability skills gaps. • These migrants will also have access to subsidised training to strengthen their employment opportunities in the Australian job market. • Pilot 3 supported 121 onshore migrants through coaching and training as at 31 December 2023.

Appendix C: Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)

- The Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) is the national regulatory agency for Australia's VET sector. The *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011* (NVETR Act) establishes ASQA and the legislative framework for the regulation of VET nationally.
- Australia has a comprehensive international education and training quality framework, set out in the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* (ESOS Act), to safeguard overseas students studying in Australia on a student visa. Policy responsibility for the ESOS Act sits within the Department of Education.
- Regulation of the ESOS Act is shared between three ESOS bodies:
 1. Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) - VET
 2. Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) – higher education
 3. Department of Education – schools education.
- Providers must meet all eligibility requirements under domestic frameworks before being considered for registration under the ESOS framework. Using a risk-based approach, ASQA and TEQSA have a variety of regulatory tools, such as compliance audits, monitoring visits and data analysis to determine education providers' compliance with the relevant standards (**EC24-000031 refers**).

Appendix D: Government Response to Nixon Review (SB24-000134 refers)

- **The Nixon Review** made 34 recommendations around 7 key findings designed to strengthen the visa system to prevent, deter and sanction those who seek to abuse or exploit vulnerable migrants, in particular international students.
- Most of these recommendations are within the portfolio responsibility of the Department of Education and the Department of Home Affairs.

Recommendations: Skills and Training (DEWR)	Response (announced on 2 October 2023)	Timeline for delivery
<p>Rec 14: The Review recommends a targeted compliance operation, focussed on assessing high risk private VET providers be conducted.</p> <p>AGREED</p>	<p>The Government is implementing reforms to further build the capability and capacity of ASQA to identify and address threats to the integrity of VET and improve student protections including a \$37.8m investment to establish a new Integrity Unit and to support an uplift in digital and data systems.</p>	<p>Integrity Unit and supporting digital and data uplift announced on 3 October 2023.</p> <p>Confidential tip-offline operating from 4 October 2023.</p>
<p>Rec 15: The Review recommends a targeted data matching activity to compare information holdings across Commonwealth agencies for private VET providers be conducted.</p> <p>AGREED IN-PRINCIPLE</p>	<p>The Government is investing in reforms to support ASQA’s digital and data capability, improving data capture and analysis and supporting data sharing activities between agencies. This will also support the implementation of recommendations 16 & 17.</p>	<p>Questions regarding implementation of Integrity Unit and digital/data uplift should be referred to ASQA.</p>
Recommendations: Education	Response	Timeline for delivery
<p>Rec 16: The Review recommends education regulators develop a broader set of systemic risk indicators for CRICOS-registered education providers.</p> <p>AGREED</p>	<p>The Department of Education will work across government agencies and relevant regulators to develop risk indicators as a whole-of-system approach to identifying risk and improving compliance.</p>	<p>Refer to Department of Education</p>
<p>The Review recommends education providers’ compliance with reporting non-attendance by international students through Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS) be closely monitored.</p> <p>AGREED</p>	<p>The Department of Education will work across government agencies and relevant regulators to consider how to enhance compliance with reporting and monitoring nonattendance.</p>	

Appendix E: Jobs and Skills Australia

- The Skills and Training portfolio includes policy responsibility for Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), which provides independent advice to Government on labour market and skills needs, including for migration purposes.
- JSA is undertaking a point in time analysis of migration pathways and employment outcomes for international students and graduates to support actions in the Migration Strategy, including identifying barriers faced by international students, post-study, in fields linked to skills in demand in the Australian labour market. This is due to be completed in June 2024.
- JSA will also use its new Migration Labour Market Indicator Model to develop a new occupation list for the Core Skills Pathway of the Skills in Demand visa. The Skills in Demand visa will be a 4-year temporary skilled worker visa and will replace the Temporary Skilled (subclass 482) visa. A feature of the new visa is enabling mobility for visa holders, rather than single employer sponsorship. This means visa holders can change approved employers more easily, with exploration of a model where employers make trailing rather than upfront charges and fees.

Appendix F: Key Touchpoints with Other Portfolios

Areas of shared portfolio interests regarding international students include:

- stronger regulation of providers and agents
- promotion of providers of choice, such as TAFE
- stronger entry and language proficiency requirements
- improved student experience
- changes to student working hours to ensure they can focus on obtaining a quality Australian education and qualification, and
- clearer and more effective graduate pathways for migration and employment.

Department of Home Affairs

- Home Affairs is responsible for student and graduate visa processing, and the design of Australia's migration system.

Department of Education

- Australia has a comprehensive international education and training quality framework, set out in the *Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act*, to safeguard overseas students studying in Australia on a student visa.
- Policy responsibility for the *ESOS Act*, under which ASQA operates in addition to the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (NVETR) Act*, sits with Education.

Department of the Treasury

- The department has been actively engaged with the Department of Treasury to provide input for the Employment White Paper where intersections between the skills and training, employment and migration systems have been identified.

Key data

Attachment A – Infographic on Australia's skilled migration system.

Last Cleared By	s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
Date Last Cleared	05 February 2024

Australia's skilled migration system



Jobs and Skills Australia and Governance Arrangements

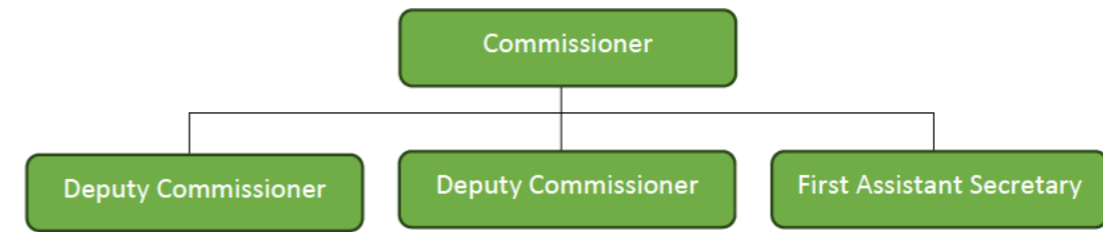
- Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) was established as a new secondary statutory body to work in partnership with business leaders, unions, education providers and state and territory governments to address the current skills crisis across the country.
- JSA provides independent advice on current, emerging, and future workforce, skills, and training issues to improve employment opportunities and economic growth. JSA's advice to Government will help inform decision making around the policies and programs targeting skilled workers needed to support the economy.
- JSA was established on 16 November 2022 through the *Jobs and Skills Australia Act 2022* and on 18 August 2023, the *Jobs and Skills Australia Amendment Act 2023* (the Amendment Act) commenced and established JSA's permanent model by providing additional and clarified functions and settling its governance arrangements (timeline for establishment of JSA is at Attachment A).
- On 3 October 2023, JSA released their **Clean Energy Workforce Capacity Study** as the first major study under their new arrangements. More information on this study is available in SB24-000138. Attachment B provides details on JSA's major studies, including the current Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Capacity Study.
- As funding for establishment was allocated until 2024-25, JSA will experience a significant funding reduction of around \$20 million in 2024-25 (from approximately \$60 million in 2023-24 to \$40 million) subject to consideration of ongoing funding arrangements.

Expenditure/Budget

Item	2023-24 Budget \$m	2024-25 Estimate \$m	2025-26 Estimate \$m	Total \$m
Jobs and Skills Australia – administered	16.175	4.474	1.900	22.549
<i>National Study on Adult Foundation Skills (2022-23 October Budget)</i>	9.696	2.574	0.000	12.270
<i>Funding transitioned from National Skills Commission (NSC) - (2022-23 October Budget)</i>	6.479	1.900	1.900	10.279
Jobs and Skills Australia – departmental¹	46.183	37.481	32.990	116.654
<i>New Energy Skills Program (Clean Energy Capacity Study) - (2022-23 October Budget)</i>	0.533	0.000	0.000	0.533
<i>Funding transitioned from NSC and other sources² (2022-23 October Budget)</i>	36.387	34.185	32.990	103.562
<i>Jobs and Skills Australia Establishment - (2022-23 October Budget)</i>	7.381	1.368	0.000	8.749

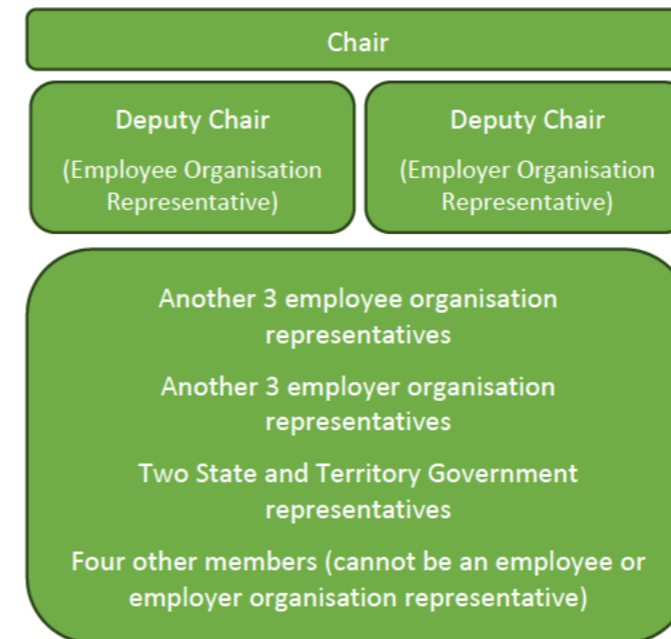
- (1) JSA's departmental funding is not visible as a separate item in the PBS/PAES as it is included in the DEWR Outcome 2 departmental resource funding. The departmental funding in this table has been provided by JSA.
- (2) Figure includes departmental funding transitioned from NSC, funding for Vnda and Micro-credentials and other internal transfers.

JSA Statutory Offices



- On 10 February 2024, the Minister announced the appointment of Professor Barney Glover as the JSA Commissioner. Professor Glover's five-year term as JSA Commissioner will begin in April 2024.
- The appointment of Professor Glover as JSA Commissioner is considered to be a significant appointment and as such a merit-based competitive process was undertaken.
- The appointment was conducted in accordance with the Merit and Transparency Policy and the Cabinet Handbook. More information about these processes is at Attachment C.
- Mr David Turvey, First Assistant Secretary – Jobs and Skills Australia, will continue as acting Commissioner until Professor Glover commences.
- A merit-based selection process for up to two Deputy Commissioner positions is ongoing. Advertising for the roles commenced on 17 November through until 10 December 2023 with recruitment activities well underway.

Ministerial Advisory Board



- The Amendment Act established a 14-member (plus a Chair) Ministerial Advisory Board to provide strategic advice to the Minister for Skills and Training and the JSA Commissioner.
- While Deputy Chairs are not established in legislation, they will be established as part of the Terms of Reference.
- A public nomination process was conducted between 13 and 27 October 2023 to ensure broad representation of Advisory Board members. The Government is currently considering the membership.
- More information around the public nomination process, composition of, and appointment process for the Board is at Attachment D.
- Prior to the Amendment Act commencing, the Government established a time-limited Consultative Forum (More information is at Attachment E). The Forum's final meeting was held on 1 December 2023.

Remuneration

Statutory Office	Remuneration	Source
Commissioner	\$473,820 per year and an entitlement to Tier 2 travel (business class).	Remuneration Tribunal (Remuneration and Allowances for Holders of Full-time Public Office) Determination (No. 2) 2023 Compilation No. 2
Deputy Commissioners	\$325,750 per year and Tier 2 travel.	
Ministerial Advisory Board	Daily fees for the Chair at \$1,070 and Members at \$856, both with Tier 2 travel.	Remuneration Tribunal (Remuneration and Allowances for Holders of Part-time Public Office) Determination (No. 2) 2023 Compilation No. 2

Related Questions received on notice

PDR Link	Submitted By	Subject	Answer Summary
SQ23-000346	Senator Matt O'Sullivan	JSA - Legislation	The Amendment Bill has been drafted to support the permanent arrangements of JSA, organisations who consent to their submissions from the discussion paper will be published, a gender impact statement was undertaken as part of the October 2022-23 Budget.
SQ22-001112	Senator Matt O'Sullivan	Severance package for National Skills Commissioner	Compensation for the loss of statutory offices is made in line with subsection 8(2) of the <i>Remuneration Tribunal (Compensation for Loss of Office for Holders of Certain Public Offices) Determination 2018</i>
SQ22-001111	Senator Matt O'Sullivan	National Skills Commissioner	Section 18 of the JSA Act provides the Minister with the power to appoint a person as Director of Jobs and Skills Australia if the Minister is satisfied that the person has appropriate qualifications, knowledge, or experience.

Attachment A - Jobs and Skills Australia Establishment Timeline

Critical date	Event or action
27 Jul 2022	<i>Jobs and Skills Australia Bill 2022 and Jobs and Skills Australia (National Skills Commissioner Repeal) Bill 2022</i> introduced to Parliament.
27 Oct 2022	<i>Jobs and Skills Australia Bill 2022 and Jobs and Skills Australia (National Skills Commissioner Repeal) Bill 2022</i> pass House of Representatives and the Senate.
16 Nov 2022	Commencement of the <i>Jobs and Skills Australia Act 2022</i> , establishing Jobs and Skills Australia as a secondary statutory body within the department.
5 Dec 2022	Interim JSA Director, Emeritus Professor Peter Dawkins AO appointed.
5 Jan 2023	JSA Discussion Paper released, seeking feedback on functions and permanent governance arrangements (see Stakeholders consulted below for further information).
10 Feb 2023	JSA Discussion Paper consultation period closed.
22 Mar 2023	<i>Jobs and Skills Australia Amendment Bill 2023 (the Bill)</i> introduced to Parliament.
23 Mar 2023	The Bill is referred to the Education and Employment Legislation Committee for inquiry and report by 24 April 2023.
11 Apr 2023	Public submissions due to the Education and Employment Legislation Committee. Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) submission lodged.
17 Apr 2023	Public hearing into the Bill by the Education and Employment Legislation Committee, including representatives from the Department and JSA.
24 Apr 2023	Education and Employment Legislation Committee report produced, which included single recommendation that the Bill be passed.
11 May 2023	<i>Jobs and Skills Australia Amendment Bill 2023</i> passed by the House of Representatives.
8 Jul 2023	Advertising goes live for JSA Commissioner recruitment.
28 Jul 2023	Advertising ceases for JSA Commissioner recruitment.
7 Aug 2023	<i>Jobs and Skills Amendment Bill 2023</i> passed both house of Parliament.
7 Aug 2023	<i>Jobs and Skills Australia Amendment Bill 2023</i> passed by the Senate.
18 Aug 2023	<i>Jobs and Skills Australia Amendment Act 2023</i> commenced.
18 Aug 2023	<i>Jobs and Skills Amendment Act 2023</i> came into effect and office of Commissioner was established.
11 Sept 2023	Interviews conducted for JSA Commissioner.
3 Oct 2023	JSA released the Clean Energy Workforce Capacity Study (the Clean Energy Generation: workforce needs for a net zero economy).
4 Oct 2023	JSA released their 2023-24 Annual Work Plan and the Annual Jobs and Skills Report (Towards a national jobs and skills roadmap).
13 Oct 2023	JSA Ministerial Advisory Board public nomination process commenced.
27 Oct 2023	JSA Ministerial Advisory Board public nomination process closed.
30 Oct 2023	Further interviews conducted for JSA Commissioner (Phase 2).
17 Nov 2023	Deputy Commissioner positions advertised via DEWR website, JSA website, LinkedIn, and targeted national press.
10 Dec 2023	Deputy Commissioner application period closed.
18 Dec 2023 - ongoing	Interviews conducted for JSA Deputy Commissioners.
25 Jan 2024	JSA Commissioner appointed
Feb 2024	Deputy Commissioner and MAB appointments in progress

Attachment B – Major JSA Studies and Reports (questions on the content and development of each of these reports should be directed to JSA)

- The *Jobs and Skills Australia Act 2022* (the JSA Act) requires the tabling of an annual skills report (Towards a National Jobs and Skills Roadmap) however it does not require the Government to formally respond. All reports need to be published on the JSA website.
- The Australian Government established JSA to work in partnership with business, unions, education and skills providers, sectors and peaks and State and Territory governments. Its reporting and recommendations are for all constituents.
- Any recommendations received by Government will need to be weighed against policy and funding priorities.

Study	Release Date	Summary
<p>Clean Energy Workforce Capacity Study</p> <p><i>Refer SB24-000138</i></p>	<p>3 Oct 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The final report included 50 recommendations covering a range of issues including: for the National Energy Workforce Strategy; data improvement; considerations for industry, Jobs and Skills Councils, and the VET and higher education sectors around pathways and education and training reform opportunities. • This study represented a significant step change in how JSA works with stakeholders. JSA partnered with unions, industry, higher education institutions, VET providers and state and territory governments to delivery this report. Numerous government agencies are already actioning clean energy and net zero initiatives informed by JSA’s study. • Refer to SB24-000138 for more information about the report and the potential action to address each recommendation.

Study	Release Date	Summary
Annual Jobs and Skills Report – ‘Towards a national jobs and skills roadmap’	4 Oct 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Jobs and Skills Report 2023 (Towards a national jobs and skills roadmap) (the Report) provides Jobs and Skills Australia’s initial assessment of the national skills system and Australia’s current, emerging, and future skills needs, as required by the <i>Jobs and Skills Australia Act 2022</i>. • The Report outlines the key priorities and opportunities that JSA has identified for the national jobs and skills environment (which can be found at Attachment F). • This is the first of the overall JSA requirement to produce a report on current, emerging and future skills needs each year and it forms part of their role to advise government and key partners in the national skills system on Australia’s skills needs and the adequacy of the skills system in meeting those needs. • The findings in this Report provides the strong evidence based to set the foundation for a National Jobs and Skills Roadmap that will be delivered over the coming year – and beyond. • The report highlights the need for these Jobs and Skills reports, and that the work must be delivered in collaboration with industry, Jobs and Skills Councils, the education and training sectors, states and territories, and Australian Government agencies. JSA discuss in this Report how a joined up national skills system allows for immense benefits – minimising unemployment, increased productivity and economic growth and increasing equity while reducing disadvantage. • The Jobs and Skills Reports 2023 highlights the three key pillars of the national skills system being vocational education and training (VET), higher education and migration. The report focuses primarily on these three pillars and how they work within the broader jobs and skills ecosystem including the school system, unaccredited and industry-based training and wage setting in workplace relations frameworks. • The Report further outlines critical reform processes to the national skills system have been progressed, including the National Skills Agreement, a review of higher education leading towards a new Universities Accord, and the Australian Government’s Migration Strategy and how these have progressed and the role for JSA to support these through implementation and monitoring to ensure they continue to complement each other. • The Report further discusses how Megatrends are shaping the economy and the workforce. These megatrends include - Digital Transformation, Clean energy and the net zero transformation, the growth of the care and support economy.

Study	Release Date	Summary
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Report outlines detail and analysis of the current skills shortages, showing 36% of occupation assessed were in national shortage. There is a persistence of skills shortages in areas, reveals occupations that have a strong gender imbalance are more likely to be in shortage and skills shortages remain more pronounced in regional areas of Australia. • The Report does outline the elements required to achieve a world class roadmap while outlining key pressures and drivers, posing this will be a key focus area of this first year and will be further developed and refined over the life of the roadmap in partnership with the JSCs, states and territories and in consultation with key tripartite stakeholders. • The Minister does have the legislated requirement to table the annual Jobs and Skills Report in each House of Parliament (in line with section 27A of the JSA Act). This was actioned in relation to the 2023 report on 9 October 2023 in the Senate and 17 October 2023 in the House of Representatives. • The Department supports the critical role that JSA plays in informing employment, workforce, and skills policy, as well as generating data to ensure relevant programs operate effectively into the future
2023-24 Annual Work Plan	4 Oct 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Annual Work Plan includes business-as-usual activity and the production of regular products along with the following key workforce capacity and cohort studies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) workforce capacity study. ○ Food supply chain capacity study. ○ VET workforce cohort study. ○ A point in time analysis of pathways and barriers to employment outcomes for international students (cohort study). • The Work Plan also covers JSA's input to emerging skills and workforce challenges and broader priorities, such as the Employment White Paper and the Migration Review. • A copy of JSA's 2023-24 Annual Work Plan is at Attachment G.

Study	Release Date	Summary
Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) workforce capacity study	Due May 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government has commissioned JSA to undertake a capacity study on the workforce needs for Australia’s Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) sector. The capacity study will be undertaken in partnership with HumanAbility, the Jobs and Skills Council with responsibility for the Children’s Education and Care, Aged and Disability, Health, Human Services and Sport and Recreation industries. • The ECEC Capacity Study will provide critical evidence, insights and recommendations as appropriate to support current and future workforce planning, including a detailed understanding of the current state and future needs of the sector’s workforce to support the development of Government strategy and vision on early years education and care of Australia’s children. • The ECEC capacity study’s consultation paper was published on Monday 20 November 2023 and the current closing date for submissions is Tuesday 30 January 2024. The study’s final report, due to Government in May 2024 is timed to be ahead of the Productivity Commission’s report due in June 2024 • Themes from the submissions will inform stakeholder roundtables and other activities planned for March/April 2024 and the final capacity study report due in May 2024. JSA is also due to provide a report on interim progress in February 2024.
Food supply chain capacity study	Due Jun 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The food supply chain workforce capacity study will be undertaken to identify the best opportunities to grow a targeted workforce in the agriculture sector. • The capacity study will inform how the training, education and migration sectors can best work together to meet the workforce needs of agriculture and the food supply chain. • JSA is yet to conduct public consultation on this study. • The final report is expected by June 2024.

Study	Release Date	Summary
A point in time analysis of pathways and barriers to employment outcomes for international students	Due Jun 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the context of the Government’s Migration Strategy, JSA was commissioned a study to better analyse international student outcomes and pathways into the labour market, with deep tripartite consultation of unions, employers, and training and education providers. • This study is due to commence in January 2024. • The final report is expected by June 2024.

Attachment C – Jobs and Skills Australia Commissioner Recruitment and Appointment Process

- The recruitment of the Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) Commissioner was conducted in accordance with the Government’s Merit and Transparency Policy and the Cabinet Handbook. This included:
 - Undertaking a national recruitment process, incorporating the views of the Minister for Skills and Training and the Secretary of the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations on the scope of advertising and the selection criteria.
 - Convening an assessment panel comprising of six members:
 - s 22(1) (Chair)
 - s 22(1) APSC representative)
 - s 22(1) (Member)
 - s 22(1) (Member)
 - s 22(1) (Member)
 - s 22(1) (Member)
- The process commenced on 8 July 2023.
- The Minister sought the Prime Minister’s approval before making the appointment under section 18 of the *Jobs and Skills Australia Act 2022* in line with Cabinet Handbook processes.
- Professor Barney Glover AO was appointed by the Minister via written instrument on 25 January 2024, and announced by the Minister on 10 February 2024.
- The incoming Commissioner will commence in the role in April 2024.

Attachment D - Ministerial Advisory Board – Additional Information

- The Amendment Act established a 14-member (plus a Chair) Ministerial Advisory Board to provide strategic advice to the Minister for Skills and Training and the JSA Commissioner. The Advisory Board will not be a decision-making body but will support the JSA Commissioner to develop JSA's annual work plan and provide independent advice to Government on skills, labour market and workforce needs and priorities through discussions on JSA's key products.
- The Advisory Board must be established within 12 months of the Amendment Act (by 18 August 2024) and will replace the Consultative Forum.
- Under the legislation, when considering all Advisory Board appointments, the Minister for Skills and Training must be satisfied the person has substantial knowledge or experience in at least one of the following fields: VET; higher education; industry; employment; industrial relations; labour market analysis; workforce planning; economics; governance; regional, rural and remote Australia or any other appropriate field of expertise. The Minister may also appoint people with lived experience of disadvantage in the labour market or individuals who represent them.
- To ensure the Advisory Board membership includes key tripartite representatives, legislation stipulates the Board will consist of 2 state and territory representatives, and employee groups and employer groups must be in balance, with 4 representatives each, with the intent of at least one employer group representing small business.
- The additional 4 places have been reserved for other stakeholders to ensure a broad range of interests are represented on the Advisory Board. For example, these 4 places could be filled by those with evidence or experience that is relevant to JSA's remit, or filled by people with lived experience of disadvantage in the labour market or individuals who represent them. The legislation stipulates the additional 4 people cannot be a representative of an employee group, nor an employer group.

Public Nomination and Appointment Processes

- Unlike with the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner statutory offices, the Ministerial Advisory Board appointments are not subject to the Government's Merit and Transparency Policy as they are part-time statutory offices.
- The Minister for Skills and Training chose to conduct a public nomination process. This nomination process was conducted between 13 and 27 October 2023.
- The position of Chair and the two state and territory government representative positions were not subject to the public nomination process.
 - The Chair was directly selected by the Minister for Skills and Training.
 - The two state and territory government representatives were agreed by state and territory Skills Ministers before being nominated to the Minister for Skills and Training.
- The Government is currently considering the wider membership.
- Appointments will be made by the Minister for Skills and Training. Appointees must complete a Private Interest Declaration advising of matters such as:
 - Disclosable criminal convictions or whether they have been a defendant in any civil or criminal court actions.
 - Any declaration of bankruptcy or personal insolvency.

- Private, business, and financial interests, including taxation affairs, that may conflict with their public duties if appointed.
- Pending appointment of the Ministerial Advisory Board members, the first meeting of the Board is anticipated to occur in March 2024.

Attachment E – Jobs and Skills Australia Consultative Forum

- Prior to the *Jobs and Skills Australia Amendment Act 2023* commencing, the Government established a time-limited Consultative Forum to provide the acting JSA Commissioner with advice from tripartite partners on matters such as the development of JSA’s annual work plan, the delivery of early JSA products and studies and enhanced stakeholder engagement functions.
- The Forum was convened by Mr John Azarias, included individuals with expertise in the union movement, education and vocational training, small business, industry and representatives from state and territory governments. The Minister for Skills and Training selected members based on specific expertise and institutional knowledge.

Membership

Member	Organisation
Mr John Azarias	<i>Convenor</i>
Mr Liam O’Brien <i>(Replaced Mr Scott Connolly)</i>	Australian Council of Trade Unions
Ms Correna Haythorpe	Australian Education Union
Ms Megan Lilly	Australian Industry Group
Mr Bran Black <i>(Replaced Ms Jennifer Westacott)</i>	Business Council of Australia
Mr Dom Schipano	Council of Small Business Organisations Australia
s 22(1) <i>(Replaced Ms Danielle Wood following her appointment as Productivity Commission Chair)</i>	Grattan Institute
Ms Mary Faraone	TAFE Directors Australia
Ms Catriona Jackson	Universities Australia
Ms Natalie Heazlewood	Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Ms Annie Butler	Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation
Mr Andrew Dettmer	Australian Manufacturing Workers’ Union
Ms Catherine White	Small state and territory representative, Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade, NT (shared with ACT)

Member	Organisation
Ms Lill Healy	Large state and territory representative, Department of Jobs, Skills Industry and Regions, Victoria
Ms Kareena Arthy	Small state and territory representative, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, ACT (shared with NT)
Mr Troy Williams	Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia

Meetings held

- The Consultative Forum has met on 6 occasions:
 - **13 February 2023** - The first Consultative Forum meeting covered the legislation establishing JSA on an ongoing basis, the Clean Energy Capacity Study, the Employment White Paper and JSA's work program for 2022–23 and process for development of the work program for 2023–24.
 - **13 April 2023** - The second meeting covered the Forum's purpose, the Strategic Plan on a Page, development of a National Jobs and Skills Roadmap as a core strategic deliverable, outcomes from the JSA State and Territory Partnership meeting and progress on the development of the 2023–24 Work Plan.
 - **18 July 2023** - The third meeting covered JSA engagement with the newly formed Jobs and Skills Councils, JSA's stakeholder engagement and outreach strategy, potential implications of the Migration Review on the work of JSA.
 - **21 August 2023** - The fourth meeting covered topics original proposed for the July meeting including the Skills Priority List, the finalisation of Clean Energy Workforce Capacity Study, and the Annual Jobs and Skills Report.
 - **14 September 2023** - The fifth meeting was a short meeting that provided the Minister for Skills and Training, the Hon Brendan O'Connor, the opportunity to thank members for their contributions to date.
 - **1 December 2023** - This was the final meeting of the Forum and covered the National Skills Passport, developing the Australian Standard Skills Taxonomy and the development of the 2024-25 JSA Work Plan.

Attachment F – Additional Information regarding Annual Jobs and Skills Report ‘Towards a national jobs and skill roadmap’

<p>An emerging reform for agenda To achieve low unemployment, strong productivity and wages growth and increase inclusion in the labour market will require all elements of the national skills system to improve and work better together. These areas of emerging reform include:</p>	
<p>Vocational education and training</p>	<p>Workers qualified through VET pathways play a key role in the Australian economy. Job roles requiring applied learning and practical skills continue to be in demand and in persistent shortage across Australia.</p>
<p>Higher Education</p>	<p>One problem to be solved is that the current construct of higher education poses a challenge to providers in terms of balancing their research and knowledge accumulation role with teaching and preparing students with the skills and knowledge they will need in the workplace</p>
<p>A more joined-up tertiary education system</p>	<p>A key aim would be to enhance the ability of students to navigate the tertiary education system to obtain the knowledge, skills, and capabilities they need to successfully participate in the labour market.</p>
<p>Migration systems reform</p>	<p>The Australian Government Review of the Migration System released in April 2023, concluded that the migration system is not fit for purpose. The Review considered that Australia needs a new data-driven approach to identifying skills needs, with Jobs and Skills Australia playing an important role as the trusted source of evidence, research and analysis on the labour market and workforce skills and training needs</p>
<p>A joined-up national skills system</p>	<p>There is significant policy work underway across the national skills system and each element has called for a more joined-up, whole-of-system approach to meet Australia’s current and future skills needs.</p>

JSA suggest 8 priorities should guide the further development of the national jobs and skills roadmap:

- deep engagement with key partners and stakeholders
- close collaboration with key policy advising/policy making bodies and departments of government
- set ambitious goals/outcomes, such as the 3 strategic objectives for the Australian population as a whole and keep them in mind
- set and chart goals and milestones for how the national skills system and each of its 3 key pillars are seeking to contribute to these goals/outcomes
- ensure that Jobs and Skills Australia focuses strongly on the interoperability and complementarity of the component parts of the national skills system
- produce subsidiary roadmaps in priority areas (industry, regions, and cohorts)
- chart progress against roadmap milestones
- ensure feedback loops and continue to enhance the evidence base

Potential roadmap opportunities

1. Identifying Australia's top 20 persistent skill shortages and charting a joined-up approach to solving them, including the respective roles of a range of different levers such as: – increasing the throughput of qualified workers by increasing intake and/or completion rates of relevant training and education pathways – enhancing the attributes of graduates of VET and higher education by improving their employability skills and creating greater work experience opportunities – working with employers and unions and governments to enhance job opportunities through better working conditions, including strategies to tackle gender imbalance in key skill shortage occupations – supplementing the Australian workforce through well-targeted migration.
2. Continue the dialogue between Jobs and Skills Australia, the states and territories and Jobs and Skills Councils on a nationally consistent approach for labour market and skills forecasting and improve the coherence of workforce planning across regions and industries.
3. Support the reform of the VET, higher education, and migration systems by providing advice and analysis and monitoring achievement of progress against their objectives. This should be done in a way that highlights the synergies between the 3 reform processes.
4. Work with Jobs and Skills Councils to assess how the range of reforms implemented as a result of the National Skills Agreement, the Australian Universities Accord and migration reforms, help meet the skills needs of industry.
5. Identifying the top 10 examples of weak pathways between VET and higher education, where collaboration between VET and higher education, supported by Jobs and Skills Australia and Jobs and Skills Councils, in consultation with business and unions can create a stronger pipeline of skilled graduates.
6. Identifying VET qualifications which if completed alongside higher education qualifications would enhance graduate employability.
7. Supporting the existing process of VET qualifications reform to enhance the adaptability, resilience, and employment prospects of VET graduates.
8. Identifying key enhancements in the evidence base that will assist the development of the roadmap and improve our ability to monitor its success, including in relations to the outcomes of learners and workers. For example, expanding the VET National Data Asset into the higher education sector.
9. Supporting the net zero transition challenge by charting a roadmap for education, training, and migration to make that transition successful, in partnership with the new Net Zero Authority.
10. Shaping a national skills taxonomy in a collaborative partnership between business, unions, higher education and VET, and the Jobs and Skills Councils, to underpin more joined-up tertiary education system.
11. Develop a regional Australia jobs and skills roadmap to identify the key steps in enhancing regional Australia's human capital in ways that will ensure success in meeting regional employment opportunities.
12. Co-create a First Nations workforce roadmap in partnership with First Nations people and with key partners in the national skills system.
13. Develop a roadmap for enhancing the prospects of international students playing a significant role in enhancing Australia's skills profile as permanent migrants.
14. Establish a dialogue between Jobs and Skills Australia and the Productivity Commission to identify key elements of the national jobs and skills roadmap that will assist Australia's productivity growth strategy.



2023-24 work plan

(as at 2 August 2023)



Annual Jobs and Skills Report

Analysis and advice on the short, medium and long-term skills needs of the Australian economy and how they could be met.

The Annual **Jobs and Skills Report** will bring together our analysis and advice on Australia's jobs and skills needs.

Published by October 2023



Strategic advice and deliverables

Strategic advice on the national skills system, including our major in-depth studies and input into policy processes

Undertaking **capacity studies** of national significance for the labour market and the national skills system, including a focus on regional, rural, and remote aspects, and cohort-specific issues:

- the [National Study of Adult Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Skills](#) to assess the current foundation skills across Australia
- the [Clean Energy Capacity Study](#) to examine the workforce that Australia needs to transition to a clean energy economy
- an early childhood education and care (ECEC) workforce capacity study.
- food supply chain capacity study

Study commenced as part of 2022-23 work plan and will continue in 2023-24, with initial findings by end 2024

Ongoing into first quarter of 2023-24, with a final report by September 2023.

July 2023 – March 2024

January 2024 – June 2024

Delivering studies on priority **cohorts** including in key industries and including a focus on regional, rural, and remote aspects, and cohort-specific issues:

- Vocational education and training (VET) workforce
- International student pathways and outcomes.

July 2023 – December 2023

October 2023 – June 2024

Making significant contributions to shape **national projects**. This includes:

- responding to any **new priorities** in the 2023-24 Budget and the Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook
- supporting the [National Skills Agreement](#) process; with an option to co-design a performance framework for the VET system to support the National Skills Agreement

Ongoing through 2023-24 and beyond

Details to be determined

Commenced as part of 2022-23 work plan and ongoing through 2023-24

- follow on work from the [Employment White Paper](#), [Review of the Migration System](#) and [Universities Accord](#) processes.

Details to be determined

Strengthening our **partnerships with Jobs and Skills Councils** and collaboration with the **states and territories**, including by:

- providing a platform to share workforce planning and training data with Jobs and Skills Councils and settling a regular cadence of engagement between JSA and JSCs
- pursuing opportunities to better integrate our data into state and territory analysis and products, including providing a platform for data sharing with states and territories
- better integrating state and territory information into our products such as Skills Priority List
- a joint project with the Finance, Technology and Business Jobs and Skills Council to define digital skills and pilot measuring them in the workplace
- a joint project with Northern Territory Government on measuring foundation skills in First Nations communities
- a project with Victorian Skills Authority using a skills approach to analyse VET to employment pathways.

Ongoing through 2023-24 and beyond



Labour market and skills analysis and products

Ongoing and regular publications, including analysis of labour markets, skills needs and skills shortages

Refining approaches to delivery of legislative functions, and, subject to its passage, developing approaches for **new functions in the *Jobs and Skills Australia Amendment Bill*** – including on the impact of work arrangements and insecure work, and labour market imbalances.

Ongoing through 2023-24 and beyond

Continuing to deliver **analysis of the labour market**, including the following **regular releases** – including a focus on regional, rural, and remote aspects, and cohort-specific issues:

- Nowcast of Employment by Region and Occupation
- Labour Market Dashboards
- Recruitment Insights Report
- Internet Vacancy Index
- Small Area Labour Markets
- Australian Labour Market for Migrants
- Skills Shortage Quarterly.

Frequency	Publication timing
Monthly	~Week 1 of each month
Monthly	~Week 2-3 of each month
Monthly	~Week 3 of each month
Monthly	~Week 3-4 of each month
Quarterly	September, December, March, June
Quarterly	July, October, January, April
Quarterly	August, November, February, May

Progressing detailed analysis of **skills and skills needs**, including through the:

Frequency	Publication timing
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• Quarterly Labour Market Update	Quarterly	August, November, February, May
• Skills Priority List	Yearly	September
• 5-yearly employment projections	Yearly	November/December
• National skills taxonomy project	Ongoing throughout 2023-24 and beyond	



Expanding the evidence base

Ongoing research and development to enhance advice, drive continuous innovation and improvement, develop new intellectual property and address data gaps

Expanding our capability on the labour market and skills outlook across industries, occupations, regions, and cohorts. Priorities also include development of:

- a national skills supply and demand framework to assess the demand and supply of skills across the economy over time
- search and matching model to understand how well the labour market is matching supply and demand
- analysis of VET and Higher Education outcomes, transitions and career pathways (combining Jobs and Education Data Infrastructure model with real-world transitions from administrative data)
- development of further outputs based on the VET National Data Asset (for example, on student outcomes), and scoping a Higher Education Data Asset
- utilising the Skills Tracker linked dataset to analyse labour market transitions for occupations, regions and cohorts
- emerging occupations analysis, including analysis of real-time data on job advertisements
- cognitive skills research and analysis
- integrated analysis of employment and related formal training by gender
- developing and publishing a framework for assessing the relative strength of regional labour markets
- more detailed region-specific analysis that integrates labour market outcomes, labour demand and income volatility

Ongoing through 2023-24 and beyond

Details to be determined – the specific projects in this area will be developed with partners and stakeholders; new areas for expanding the evidence may also be identified based on these consultations – to be implemented as our resourcing capacity allows



Enabling activities

Enterprise systems and enabling activities to support strategic and effective operations

Operationalising the functions and responsibilities in the permanent legislative model, subject to passage of the *Jobs and Skills Australia Amendment Bill*.

- This includes investing in **deepening our engagement** and outreach and onboarding the proposed Ministerial Advisory Board.

Ongoing through 2023-24 and beyond

Details to be determined

Ensure our **governance and data sharing** are fit for purpose in a tripartite arrangement, including expansion of data access and digital products to reflect user requirements and legislative functions.

Ongoing through 2023-24 and beyond

Jobs and Skills Councils

- A national network of 10 Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs) have been established as part of reforms to VET sector.
- JSCs are empowered to develop skills and workforce solutions for their industries, bringing together employers and unions to work in partnership with governments and training providers.
- Strong governance is a core design element of the program, and an Integrity Framework has been implemented to set clear expectations and provide guidance on conduct for all levels of a JSC (board, members, sub-committees).

How are JSCs different?

- Broader remit than previous arrangements, including workforce planning, industry stewardship and implementation, promotion and monitoring functions - not just Training Product Development.
- Strong governance requirements and an integrity framework to address accountability issues, conflicts of interest and power imbalances experienced under previous arrangements.
- Program designed to provide industry with a strategic voice to drive collaboration, address workforce challenges and ensure VET qualifications are developed and updated faster to meet the evolving needs of industry.
- By representing multiple industry sectors and operating as a national network, JSCs will overcome the silos experienced by the 67 Industry Reference Committees (IRCs) and 6 Skills Services Organisations (SSOs) and improve cross-sector collaboration to achieve better outcomes for employers, employees and learners.

Who are the 10 JSCs?

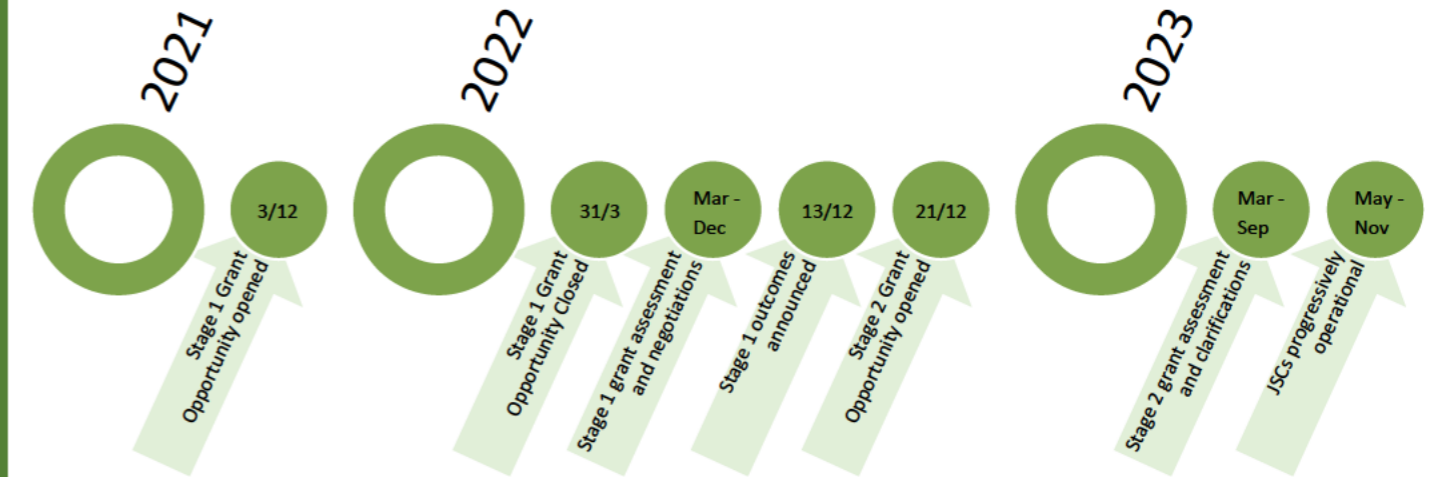
<p>Aged & Disability, Children's Education & Care, Health, Human Services, Sport & Recreation</p> 	<p>Agribusiness, Fibre, Furnishing, Food Animal and Environment Care</p> 	<p>Arts, Personal Services, Retail, Tourism and Hospitality</p> 	<p>Building Construction, Property and Water</p> 	<p>Energy, Gas and Renewables</p> 
<p>Finance, Technology and Business</p> 	<p>Manufacturing</p> 	<p>Mining and Automotive</p> 	<p>Public Safety and Government</p> 	<p>Transport and Logistics</p> 

JSC Funding Summary

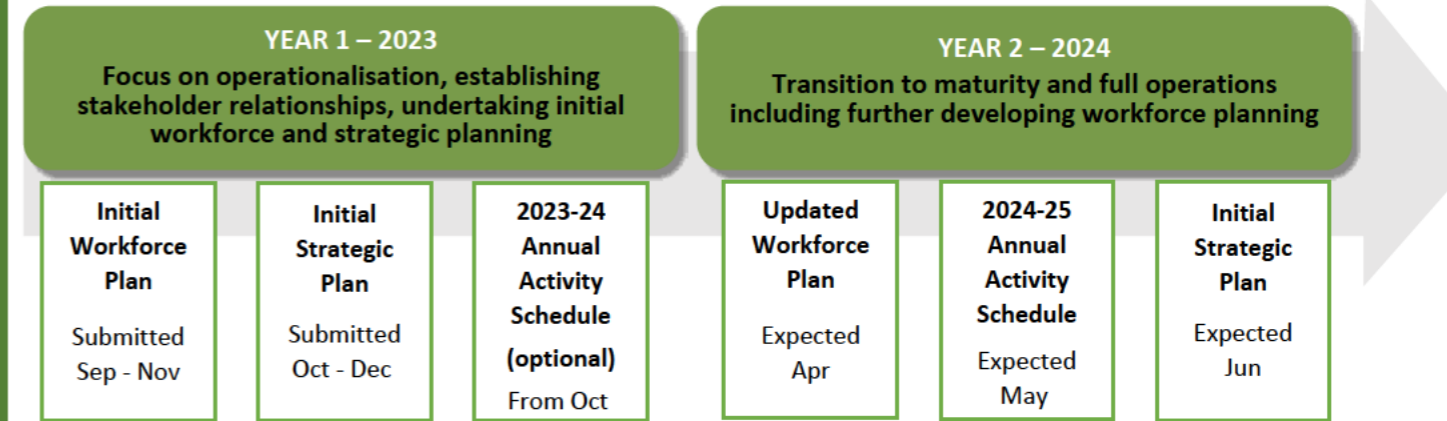
The JSC program has a total of \$450.283m across 4 years, 2023-24 to 2026-27.

Item	2023-24 (\$m)	2024-25 \$m	2025-26 \$m	2026-27 \$m
2023-24 Budget	104.609	110.200	114.264	112.767
Movement of Funds	4.000	4.000	0	0
New Forward Estimate	0	0	0	0
Indexation/ other revisions	0	0	0.223	0.220
2023-24 MYEFO	108.609	114.200	114.487	112.987

Key dates



Initial activities and deliverables



JSCs Governance

Tripartism

JSC governance is tripartite to facilitate strong industry representation and engagement. This is demonstrated by employer organisations and unions aligning on JSC governance (board composition, membership structures), and operational arrangements (strategic taskforces and technical sub-committees). Participation by employer organisations and unions is intended to be fair and equitable at each level of JSC governance and operations.

Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise ultimate control over the entity. • Representative of all industry sectors within JSC's remit.
Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set the strategic direction, focus on financial and organisational performance, risk, assurance. • Skills-based, majority independent, gender balanced, drawn from industry.
Sub-committees/ taskforces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead/ inform work drawing on intelligence and advice on the strategic approach of the JSC and ensure delivery of critical functions. • Representative of industry sectors within JSC remit and draws on specific expertise as required.

Cross JSC forums

JSC & Jobs and Skills Australia

JSCs and JSA complement each other

JSCs are focused on sector-specific workforce planning and industry stewardship.	Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) has a broader economy wide remit.
JSCs to provide JSA information on emerging skills needs and changes in occupations that are being observed in the labour market.	JSA can provide JSCs labour market information and analysis, including industry and occupation level projections to use as a starting point for their analysis.

JSCs and JSA are working together:

- JSCs have informed the development of JSA's Jobs and Skills Report.
- JSA has provided advice on JSC initial workforce plans.
- Department is developing protocols for working together

Related Questions received on notice

PDR Link	Submitted By	Subject	Answer Summary
SQ23-000711	O'Sullivan, Matt	JSC – Boards – Names and Organisation Represented	Provides details of JSC Board directors
SQ23-001178	O'Sullivan, Matt	Jobs and Skills Councils	Detail on Jobs and Skills Councils including company membership.

VET Quality and Integrity

- RTOs have a critical role in ensuring training delivery on the ground is high-quality and meets the diverse range of learner and employer needs.
- Regulators support this by delivering risk-based regulation to ensure quality training and confidence in the integrity of qualifications issued by RTOs.

How are we strengthening quality and integrity?

- Introduced amendments to the NVETR Act in the Autumn sittings.
- Revising the Standards for RTOs to support high-quality training delivery in the VET sector.
- Developing a VET Workforce Blueprint to build a high-quality and sustainable VET workforce.
- Stronger Fit and Proper Person Requirements to support ASQA to respond to and remove non-genuine operators.
- Working with ASQA to build their capability and capacity, such as the establishment of a new Integrity Unit and uplift in digital and data capability (\$37.8M over 4 years, commencing 23/24 FY).

Strengthening Quality and Integrity in VET (No.1) Bill

- Addresses integrity risks to the VET sector posed by the minority of non-genuine or unscrupulous RTOs.
- Measures in the Bill will cause a dormant/shell provider's registration to automatically lapse and prevent RTOs from expanding scope for their first 2 years of registration.
- The Bill will provide for ASQA to prioritise consideration of applications for registration.
- It will empower the Minister (with agreement of state and territory skills Ministers) to determine that ASQA need not or must not accept or process new RTO applications.
- Expand penalty provisions to cover a broader range of false and misleading representations and increase penalties for a range of offences.
- Make a number of technical and administrative changes.

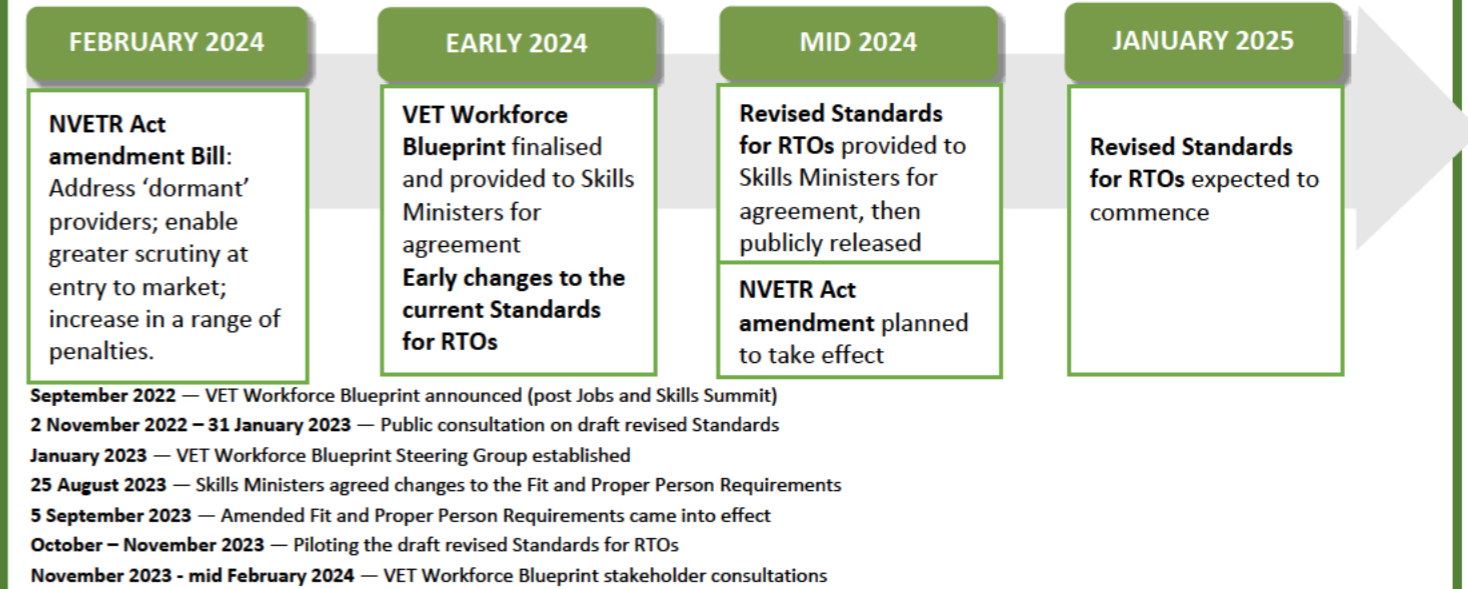
Revising the Standards for RTOs

- All Governments agreed to revise the Standards to strengthen the focus on quality outcomes for learners and employers.
- Draft revised Standards have been piloted and are being finalised for Skills Ministers' agreement. They are anticipated to take effect from January 2025.
- There has been a high level of engagement from stakeholders including RTOs, VET regulators, RTO peak bodies, learners, industry and unions.
- Early changes to the current Standards to provide immediate benefits for the sector, including by expanding the VET workforce pool. These changes will take effect in March 2024.

VET Workforce Blueprint

- Announced as an outcome of the Jobs and Skills Summit in September 2022. The Blueprint will identify effective strategies for attraction, retention, building capability and career progression.
- A Steering Group is guiding the development of the Blueprint, consultation with VET stakeholders is informing the development of the Blueprint.
- JSA is undertaking analysis of supply and demand and developing a VET workforce profile which identifies job roles and career pathways. A First Nations research paper will consider the challenges and barriers faced by the First Nations VET workforce.

Timeline



Funding allocation for integrity measures

2023–24 Estimate	2024–25 Estimate	2025–26 Estimate	2026–27 Estimate	Total
\$5.121m	\$11.065m	\$10.972m	\$10.625m	\$37.783m

Project expenditure for quality reforms by financial year (GST excl) as at 31 Dec 2023

2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	Total
\$166,265.00	\$1,139,096.27	\$407,927.25	\$42,488.64	\$1,755,777.16

Stakeholder engagement

Standards for RTOs consultation

Phase 1: 1,276 survey responses and 641 workshop and webinar participants
Phase 2: over 500 survey responses
Consultation on draft Standards: 900 forum participants and over 250 written submissions
Piloting: 177 survey responses and 74 focus group participants

Targeted discussions with VET regulators, RTO peak bodies (TDA, ITECA, ERTOA, CCA), and the AEU
 Ongoing engagement with states and territories and VET regulators

7 Blueprint Steering Group meetings.

25 consultations undertaken, including:

- 8 roundtables in each state and territory
- 4 general online roundtables
- 13 online targeted consultations (including First Nations, regional, rural and remote, foundation skills, VET for secondary students, VET peak bodies and ACTU).

Blueprint Steering Group:

Renae Houston (Com), Trish Mullins (NSW), Bec Curtain (SA), Ross Kelly (WA), Jenny Dodd (TDA), Troy Williams (ITECA), Jenny Macaffer (ALA), Evelyn Goodwin (CCA), Pamela Simon (ERTOA), Liam O'Brien (ACTU), Maxine Sharkey (AEU), Alison Barnes (NTEU), Natalie Heazlewood (ACCI), Megan Lilly (AIG), Pieta Davis (BCA),
 Experts: Damian Oliver (JSA), Marie Persson, John Firth, Maria Peters, Erica Smith, Robyn O'Brien



MINISTERS' MEDIA CENTRE

Ministers of the Employment and Workplace Relations
Portfolio

Media Release

7 February 2024

Integrity legislation to crack down on dodgy Vocational Education and Training (VET) providers

The Hon Brendan O'Connor MP
Minister for Skills and Training

The Albanese Government is introducing new legislation to tackle unscrupulous and non-genuine providers and improve the integrity of the nation's vocational education and training (VET) sector.

The *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Amendment (Strengthening Quality and Integrity in Vocational Education and Training No. 1) Bill 2024*, to be introduced into parliament today, responds to integrity and quality issues in the VET sector.

These issues were highlighted by the *2023 Rapid Review into the Exploitation of Australia's Visa System, (the Nixon Review)*, the *All eyes on Quality: Review of the National Vocational Education and Training Regulatory Act 2011 (the 2018 Braithwaite Review)* and the 2023 report of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade: *'Quality and Integrity - the Quest for Sustainable Growth': Interim Report into International Education*.

The Bill empowers the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) to take decisive action against the minority of RTOs that use their operations as a veil of legitimacy for fraudulent activity, or to circumvent regulatory requirements.

The Bill will enable ASQA to take swift action to deter and remove these RTOs and apply greater scrutiny to new RTOs seeking to enter the VET sector.

The Bill also expands the kinds of false and misleading conduct that ASQA can target through offence and civil penalty provisions and provides for long overdue increases to the penalties

applicable to egregious conduct and breaches of the NVETR Act.

This Bill supports the majority of providers who are doing the right thing. They, along with students, industry and the whole Australian community will benefit from the removal of dodgy providers, who undermine integrity and trust in VET.

The key amendments in the Bill will:

- Cause an RTO's registration to automatically lapse where the RTO has not delivered training and/or assessment for 12 months. This addresses integrity risks of dormant/"shell" RTOs failing to show genuine commitment to VET;
- Prevent RTOs from expanding their course offering if they have been operating for less than 2 years. This will allow ASQA to scrutinise new RTOs to ensure they demonstrate capability and genuine commitment to VET over a reasonable period;
- Provide ASQA with greater discretion in prioritising, considering and deciding RTO applications. This will allow ASQA to quickly progress applications for reputable organisations, while scrutinising high risk ones.
- Empower the Minister (with the agreement of state and territory Skills Ministers) to determine that ASQA need not, or must not, accept or process new RTO applications (or those for one or more classes of RTO). This will enable ASQA to address trends in applications by non-genuine providers, or manage unsustainable influxes into the VET sector and address associated risks;
- Expand offence and civil penalty provisions to cover a broader range of false or misleading representations by RTOs about their operations. This will allow ASQA to target egregious RTO conduct exploiting and luring students with false descriptions of training, facilities and false testimonials;
- Increase five-fold maximum penalties for a breach of relevant offences or civil penalties under the Act. Tougher penalties will deter RTOs that currently see penalties as a risk worth taking or a 'cost of doing business'.

Other minor amendments streamline regulatory processes and clarify review processes for RTOs.

These changes build on the Albanese Government's investment in integrity and quality in the VET sector.

Last year, the government invested \$37.8 million to support the establishment of an Integrity Unit within ASQA, upgrade ASQA's digital and data systems, and create a tip-off line to detect and address unacceptable and egregious RTO conduct.

The Government has strengthened the Fit and Proper Person Requirements under the Act and work is underway to revise the Standards for RTOs to support high-quality delivery across the sector.

Quotes attributable to the Minister for Skills and Training, the Hon Brendan O'Connor MP:

"These legislative changes provide ASQA with greater powers to prevent and remove non-genuine training organisations.

What we are doing is simple. We are making it tougher for the bottom-feeders, the fraudsters, and the cheats to take advantage of students for a quick buck. We are restoring integrity to the sector.

We will weed out dodgy providers that exist in the sector, who seek to exploit students and compromise the integrity and reputation of the entire sector in the process.

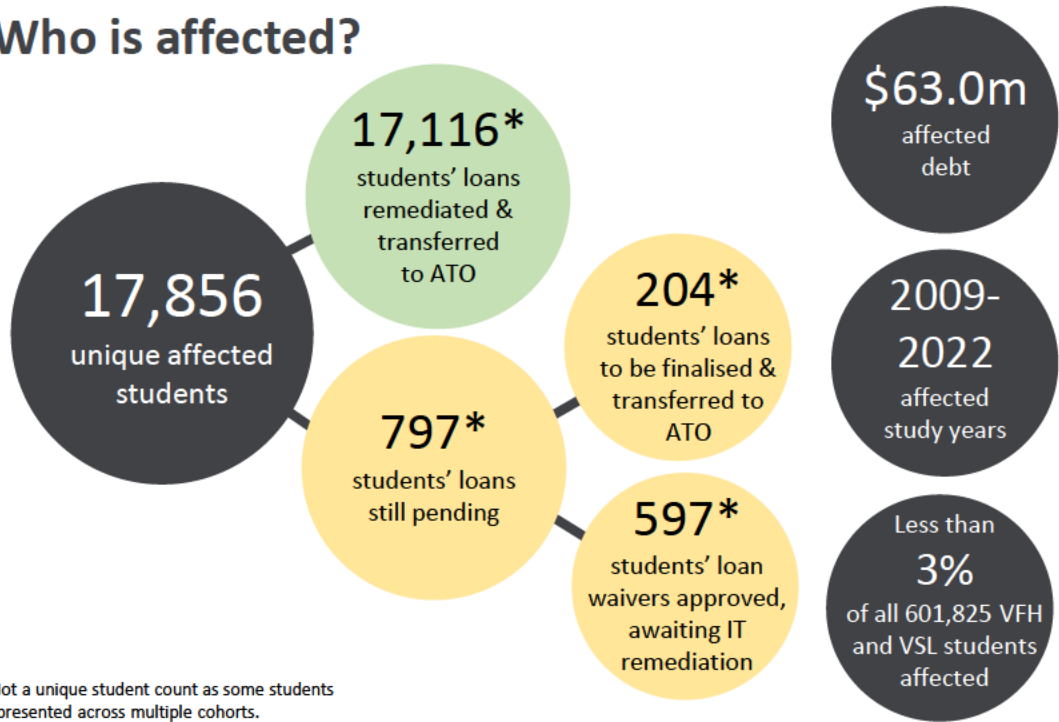
Most providers do the right thing and are in the business of education and training for the right reasons. They will benefit from the removal of non-genuine actors, who undermine integrity and trust in VET.”

VET Students affected by delayed student loans IT issue

Please use placemat at Attachment A.

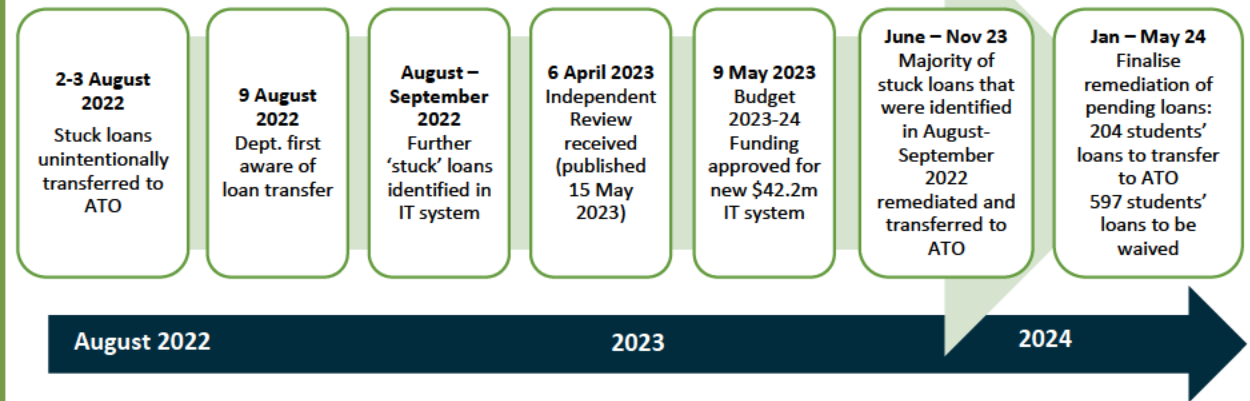
VET Students affected by delayed student loans IT issue

Who is affected?

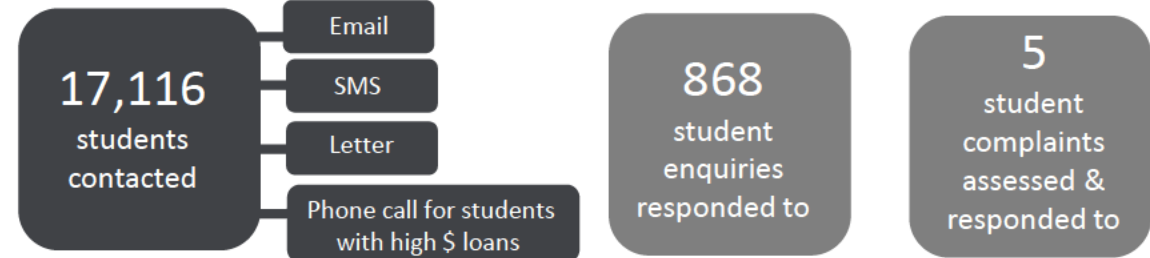


*Not a unique student count as some students represented across multiple cohorts.

Key Dates



Student Engagement, Assistance & Support



What happened?

IT system issues caused loans to be 'stuck' and not transfer to students' ATO accounts

An unrelated IT system fix caused the initial loans to be transferred to the ATO

Independent Review found the VSL IT system is complex, fragmented and not fit-for-purpose

What is left to do?

Finalise remaining 797 students' loans

Continue assisting students & working with stakeholders

Build VSL Connect – new \$42.2m IT system

Implement all 11 Review recommendations

What did we do?

Financial Mitigations

- Waive historical indexation
- Waive debts for pre-2017 loans
- Extend VFH Student Redress until 31 December 2023

Independent Review

- Engaged PwC to conduct Independent Review (cost \$438,477)
- 11 Recommendations - all accepted by DEWR
- Report published on DEWR website

Stakeholder Engagement

- Cross-Agency Taskforce with ATO, VSL Ombudsman and Dept. Education
- Contacted affected students & providers as loans transferred to ATO
- Published information (website, media release)

System Assurance

- Manual reconciliation of loans within IT system
- New assurance & reporting process
- Implementing Review recommendations within current IT system

University Accord / tertiary policy

- On 16 November 2022, the Hon Jason Clare MP, Minister for Education, announced the appointment of the Australian Universities Accord (the Accord) Panel, chaired by Professor Mary O'Kane AC, and the Accord Terms of Reference.
 - As part of the Terms of Reference, the Accord panel explored possible opportunities to support greater engagement and alignment between the vocational education and training (VET) and higher education systems. In particular, the panel gave regard to the experience of students in navigating these systems and ensuring a cohesive and connected tertiary education system.
- The Universities Accord Interim Report was announced and released by the Government on 19 July 2023 outlining immediate priorities for action and areas for further consideration.
- The five areas for priority action identified by the Interim Report (see Attachment A) were supported by the Government.
 - Questions relating to progress on these priority actions should be directed to the Department of Education.
- The interim report included possible ideas to achieve greater engagement and alignment between VET and higher education, such as:
 - setting targets for tertiary education participation and attainment
 - establish a Tertiary Education Commission with a responsibility that spans across the VET and higher education sectors, to promote long-term strategic thinking
 - expand current digital platforms to include both higher education and VET
 - progress the intent of the recommendations from the Review of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)
 - give more TAFEs (where they are registered higher education providers) access to CSPs at some AQF levels, to encourage dual sector provision and improve pathways to higher education.
- Questions on next steps should be directed to the Department of Education.

Engagement with the Department of Education

DEWR uses a number of mechanisms to engage with the Department of Education to provide a skills and training view on matters of shared policy.

DEWR and the Department of Education share responsibility for tertiary policy advice, including on the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), formalised through a memorandum of understanding.

Regular meetings are held between the departments, including:

Senior Executive Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Held every three weeks to discuss matters impacting both VET and higher education, including on the progress of the Accord process.
First Assistant Secretary-level Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Held once a month to discuss tertiary policy.
Accord Inter-Departmental Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chaired by the Department of Education to provide updates on the Accord to any other departments that may be impacted.

Engagement with the Accord Panel

Date	Attendees	Purpose
7 February 2023	Accord Panel / DEWR	A deep dive providing an overview of the VET and tertiary sectors
8 March 2023	Professor O'Kane (Panel Chair) / the Hon Brendan O'Connor MP, Minister for Skills and Training	Update on the Accord
4 April 2023	Accord Panel / DEWR	Discussion of key VET considerations, including reforms currently underway
8 May 2023	Accord Panel / DEWR	A deep dive providing a briefing on the National Skills Agreement
19 May 2023	Professor O'Kane (Panel Chair) / Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council	Update on the Accord
22 June 2023	Professor O'Kane (Panel Chair) / the Hon Brendan O'Connor MP, Minister for Skills and Training	Update on the Accord
20 September 2023	Accord Panel / Skills Senior Officials Network	Discussion on the Accord in the VET context

Recent Media on VET and the Accord

- Several media articles have been published over the course of the Accord process in relation to its potential recommendations.
- An editorial was published by The Australian on 5 January 2024 entitled *Unis and TAFE must share blame*. The article states 'Australia needs "parity of esteem" and pathways between vocational and higher education, with industry engaging on the design of qualifications...The training curriculum is a shambles and there is minimal co-operation across the sectors; just six universities also teach vocational education...we can no longer afford a workforce where what workers can do is defined by where they attended, not what they studied or how long it took and where there is a hierarchy of courses.'

(Author Unknown. (2024, 5 January). 'Unis and TAFE must share blame'. *The Australian*. <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/commentary/editorials/unis-and-tafe-must-share-blame/news-story/bf3b602b48dac97ffa2a8be501daf38c>)

Budget/Expenditure

Nil.

Australian Universities Accord – Interim Report

Priority Actions

Priority Action 1

Extend visible, local access to tertiary education by creating further Regional University Centres (RUCs) and establish a similar concept for suburban/metropolitan locations

Priority Action 2

Cease the 50% pass rule, given its poor equity impacts, and require increased reporting on student progress

Priority Action 3

Ensure that all First Nations students are eligible for a funded place at university, by extending demand driven funding to metropolitan First Nations students.

Priority Action 4

Provide funding certainty, through the extension of the Higher Education Continuity Guarantee into 2024 and 2025, to minimise the risk of unnecessary structural adjustment to the sector. Interim funding arrangements must prioritise the delivery of supports for equity students to accelerate reform towards a high equity, high participation system.

Priority Action 5

Through National Cabinet, immediately engage with state and territory governments and universities to improve university governance, particularly focusing on:

- Universities being good employers
- Student and staff safety
- Membership of governing bodies, including ensuring additional involvement of people with expertise in the business of universities.

New Training Hubs Network for Central Australia

Purpose of the program

- The Remote Training Hubs Network (Hubs) makes up \$30.2 million of the \$250 million A Better, Safer Future for Central Australia Plan (Central Australia Plan) announced by the Prime Minister on 6 February 2023.
- The Hubs will generate opportunities for working age people, supporting two of the six action areas identified by the Prime Minister under the Central Australia Plan - job creation and on-Country learning.
- Informed by community consultations undertaken by Government alongside the Office of the Central Australia Regional Controller (OCARC) and endorsed by the Central Australia Plan Aboriginal Leadership Group, this measure will involve DEWR, the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) and the Northern Territory Government (NTG) working in partnership with Central Australian communities to establish the Hubs.
- Funding will be used to design and establish a network of up to seven remote training hubs to connect and enable communities to access training in the skills they need on-Country. Mentors and local solution brokers will be engaged to work directly with the Hubs and local community members to support learners and align and connect training offerings with job opportunities.
- In the first phase, subject to community workforce planning and consultation to inform design, two Hubs are expected to be delivered at Yuendumu (Yoo-en-doo-moo) and Ntaria (Dar-ia) and be operational next year.
- DEWR will be working closely with the NIAA as it trials new approaches to inform the replacement of the Community Development Program and the two programs will be complementary.

Background

- Funding for courses expected to be delivered as part of this measure will be provided through the NTG.
- The Commonwealth contributes to the NTG's training system through the new National Skills Agreement, with course funding within the existing NTG training budget.
- This measure builds on earlier investments and complements the Central Australia Plan Phase One investment which allocated \$155.9 million in the 2023-24 Budget.
- Phase One investment supported measures against four of the Prime Minister's six action areas – improved community safety and cohesion, better services, on-Country learning, and preventing and addressing issues attributed to neurodevelopmental disorders.
- The Central Australia Plan builds on the \$48.8 million announced on 24 January 2023 to stabilise Alice Springs and support immediate community needs.

Expenditure/Budget (\$m)

(m)	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	Total
DEWR	5.4	6.7	8.0	5.7	4.4	30.2

What has the Government said about the program?

Prime Minister, Minister for Indigenous Australians and Minister for Skills and Training.

Media Release 'Next steps on Closing the Gap: delivering remote jobs'

- \$30.2 million for Remote Training Hubs in up to seven remote locations in Central Australia.

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet	13 February 2024
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Prime Minister and Chief Minister of the Northern Territory Announcement of the Central Australia Plan

Media Release 'A better, safer future for Central Australia'

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet	6 February 2023
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Describe how the program operates (service providers, eligibility, place-based, grant/procurement, etc)

- Up to seven Hubs are to be delivered through a phased approach.
- The first phase will partner with 2 communities with existing infrastructure, to facilitate design and fit out of Hubs and mobile units, as well as provide wrap around supports including mentors and possible bus services, with expected delivery next year.
- The second phase will deliver up to a further 5 Hubs where new infrastructure may need to be established.
- Specific design features around eligibility, training delivery and funding are yet to be determined and will be explored in partnership with NIAA, the Northern Territory Government, and remote Central Australian communities.

Announcement (details of when the program was announced)

- This measure was announced by the Prime Minister on 13 February 2024, as part of tabling the 2023 Closing the Gap Annual Report and the 2024 Implementation Plan.

A better, safer future for Central Australia

Media release

Monday 6 February 2023

Prime Minister

Chief Minister of the Northern Territory

The Australian and Northern Territory Governments have today announced a landmark package for Central Australia that will improve community safety, tackle alcohol-related harm, and provide more opportunities for young people.

The Northern Territory and Australian Governments will continue to work with the Central Australian community on longer-term solutions to the issues locals are facing.

As experts and community leaders have pointed out, alcohol restrictions alone will not address the underlying causes of antisocial behaviour. The issues are complex and have developed over decades.

The Northern Territory Government will bring forward legislation next week to strengthen alcohol restrictions so that town camps and communities will revert to dry zones. This new legislation will follow a local decision making process, where Community Alcohol Plans will be developed by the community and then must be approved by the Director of Liquor Licensing. Communities that want to opt-out of a dry-zone will need 60% of the population to vote in support of the Community Alcohol Plan.

Local areas will be able to choose to remain dry, or select tailored restrictions which work for them.

To address the decline in services and investment over the last decade in particular, the Australian Government will invest \$250 million in a plan for *A Better, Safer Future for Central Australia*. This plan will focus on:

1. **Improved community safety and cohesion** – through more youth engagement and diversion programs.
2. **Job creation** – particularly in the communities that surround Alice Springs – including urgent changes as part of replacing the failed Community Development Program (CDP).
3. **Better services** – by improving health services in surrounding communities, there will be less pressure on Alice Springs.

4. Preventing and addressing the issues caused by **Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders** – including better responding through the health and justice systems.
5. **Investing in families** – including by better supporting elders and parents, boosting domestic violence services.
6. **On country learning** – improving school attendance and completion through caring for culture and country.

These actions by the Northern Territory and Australian Governments are based on the recommendations of Central Australian Regional Controller, Dorrelle Anderson.

For too long decisions about Central Australia have been made in Canberra. This time, the Australian Government will take a new approach by listening to communities first.

Today's announcements are in addition to the \$48 million investment in community safety announced by the Australian Government on 24 January, which included:

1. \$14.2 in additional funding for extra high visibility police and law enforcement operations including targeting grog running, and increasing liquor licensing compliance inspectors and boosting security guards in public places.
2. A \$2m investment to improve CCTV, lighting and safety measures throughout Alice Springs.
3. \$5.6m for additional emergency accommodation and safe spaces to give young people a place to go to at night and boost the effectiveness of the night patrol program which will commence shortly to help get young people off the streets.
4. \$2m for the Tangentyere Women's Family Safety Group to boost Domestic Violence services.
5. \$25m to extend funding for safety and community services which are currently scheduled to end in June 2023 to provide certainty to providers and their employees and ensure this work continues.

The Australian Government's landmark investment in the Northern Territory will be delivered in partnership with the local community. Because the most effective solutions come from the local community.

The Australian Government will work with the local community, organisations, the Central Australian Regional Controller, the Northern Territory Government, businesses, local government and in line with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Next steps on Closing the Gap: delivering remote jobs

Media release

Tuesday 13 February 2024



The Hon Anthony Albanese MP

Prime Minister of Australia



The Hon Linda Burney
MP

Minister for Indigenous
Australians



Senator the
Hon Malarndirri
McCarthy

Assistant Minister
for Indigenous
Australians

Assistant Minister
for Indigenous
Health



The Hon Amanda Rishworth MP

Minister for Social Services



The Hon Brendan O'Connor
MP

Minister for Skills and
Training



The Hon Michelle Rowland MP

Minister for Communications

The Albanese Government is announcing a new Remote Jobs and Economic Development Program (RJED) that will help close the gap in employment outcomes by creating 3,000 jobs in remote Australia.

This \$707 million investment is the first step in delivering on our commitment to replace the failed Community Development Program (CDP) with real jobs, proper wages, and decent conditions.

The new Remote Jobs and Economic Development Program, starting in the second half of this year, is about self-determination through economic and community development.

It will be implemented in partnership with First Nations people, build skills and experience, and deliver services that communities want.

The Albanese Labor Government is also announcing it will establish a National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People to help achieve progress under the Closing the Gap agreement.

Indigenous children are almost eleven times more likely to be in out-of-home care than non-Indigenous children. The National Commissioner will focus on working with First Nations people on evidence based programs and policies to turn those figures around.

Establishing the National Commissioner is the result of extensive discussions with the peak body, SNAICC – National Voice for our Children, which has been calling for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Commissioner for many years.

An interim Commissioner will be appointed mid-year and will work with the government and First Nations expert advisers to determine the powers, roles and functions of the National Commissioner, which will be established under legislation.

The Prime Minister will today hand down the 2023 Closing the Gap Annual Report and the 2024 Implementation Plan. The report assesses progress and commits to new initiatives focussed on improving the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

Other key initiatives include:

- \$30.2 million for Remote Training Hubs in up to seven remote locations in Central Australia.
- \$10.7 million to continue funding for the Justice Policy Partnership, working to reduce incarceration rates.
- Community Wi-Fi services for around 20 remote communities

connected, with funding arrangements to be settled through commercial negotiations with NBN Co.

- \$24 million to expand the Junior Rangers program to 50 sites to boost engagement and attendance rates of First Nations students.

Significant progress has also been made against commitments made in the 2023 Closing the Gap Implementation Plan:

- 183 people have enrolled in the Health Worker Traineeship Program as part of our commitment to funding 500 First Nations health workers.
- We are improving access to safe and reliable drinking water in the remote Northern Territory communities of Yuendumu and Milingimbi.
- We are delivering the Commonwealth's \$100 million investment for urgent repairs and maintenance to housing and essential infrastructure on Northern Territory Homelands – including Utopia, Paru and Rockhole.
- 157 houses are on track to be delivered months earlier than anticipated, easing severe overcrowding in remote Northern Territory communities.
- We are delivering on our landmark justice reinvestment package supporting communities to find local solutions to improve community safety and reduce incarceration rates.
- Over 14,000 First Nations students have enrolled in Fee-Free TAFE courses.
- Work is progressing to improve access to renal services in remote communities for people with end stage kidney disease.
- Applications are open for organisations to expand Indigenous Rangers by up to 1,000 jobs, as part of our plan to double the number of Rangers by 2030.
- Continuing to support the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation to employ 260 new workers in community controlled health organisations to deliver cancer treatments and other supports.

Over the next year, the Albanese Government will strengthen our relationship with the Coalition of the Peaks and work in partnership

to design and implement programs that make a difference at the local level.

By backing self-determination and listening to locals and working with communities, we can make progress on Closing the Gap.

Quotes attributable to Prime Minister Anthony Albanese:

"The National Commissioner will be dedicated to protecting and promoting the rights, interests and wellbeing of First Nations children and young people, as well as calling on their strengths, sense of hope, and ideas for change.

"The Commissioner will address the unacceptable rates of out-of-home care. What it all comes down to is strengthening families and keeping children safe.

"It is what experts and the Coalition of the Peaks have been calling for, guided every step of the way by the evidence. We have listened.

"The Remote Jobs and Economic Development Program will deliver real jobs with proper wages and decent conditions, developed in partnership with Indigenous communities. These jobs will build skills and experience, and deliver services that communities want."

Quotes attributable to Minister for Indigenous Australians Linda Burney:

"The new Remote Jobs and Economic Development Program is about fixing up the mess left by the Liberals failed CDP and

putting communities in the driver's seat to create local jobs and businesses.

"People in remote communities should have access to the benefits and dignity of work – for themselves, their families and the next generation.

"Establishing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Commissioner is about changing the trajectory and creating brighter futures for Indigenous children and young people.

"The status quo cannot continue and we are committed to making real change, strengthening families and getting better outcomes for Indigenous children and young people."

Quotes attributable to the Assistant Minister for Indigenous Australians and Indigenous Health Malarndirri McCarthy:

"Our delivery of a proper jobs program in the bush will make a positive difference in the lives of Indigenous Australians and ensure they can fulfil their full potential regardless of where they live.

"As a former participant of a remote jobs program myself, I know all too well the importance that meaningful employment has on economic empowerment, health, happiness, and general wellbeing.

"Building on our significant delivery of better health, housing, education and employment services will help build stronger communities for all Australians and ensure more Indigenous Australians can live longer, healthier and happier lives.

"Every child deserves to live a healthy and happy life, and this is why it is critical we are working hand in hand with

SNAICC – National Voice for our Children, to ensure more kids can achieve their full potential in life."

Quotes attributable to the Minister for Social Services Amanda Rishworth:

"Improving outcomes for First Nations communities, children and young people requires First Nations-led solutions and a National Commissioner will build on our important work under Safe and Supported: the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children.

"The Commissioner will improve accountability and advocate for systemic change, informed by the voices and experiences of First Nations children and young people.

"Systemic change takes time, and elevating the voices of First Nations children through this Commissioner, will further embed the partnership elements of the Priority Reforms."

Quotes attributable to the Minister for Skills and Training Brendan O'Connor:

"All Australians have a right to education, training and employment. It is our responsibility to ensure that accessibility and quality is not limited to those living in larger, more developed parts of the country.

"This is an on-the-ground example of our Government's
Department of Employment and Workplace Relations - Released under FOI 115 of 140
commitment to ensure no one is left behind and no one is

held back."

Quotes attributable to the Minister for Communications Michelle Rowland:

"In 2024, access to reliable broadband is a critical part of everyday life. It's how we stay connected with loved ones, run businesses, and engage with essential services.

"That's why reliable connectivity is essential to closing the gap.

"These free Wi-Fi services in remote First Nations communities will support communities to get online and experience the transformational benefits of broadband."

Closing the Gap Skills Data

Productivity Commission Closing the Gap data shows that Targets 5, 6 and 7 are not on track to be met by 2031

Skills and Training Group contribution to meeting socioeconomic targets 5, 6, and 7

- Despite relatively high participation in VET, First Nations peoples are less likely to complete a VET qualification, and/or undertake a Cert III or higher qualification.
- Providing more opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to achieve higher level qualifications is a vital step in significantly improving employment prospects, and other social and life outcomes for First Nations peoples.
- Closing the Gap is identified as a national priority in the new 5-year National Skills Agreement (NSA). This means that all governments will deliver publicly available national and jurisdictional skills plans that set out how they will meet Closing the Gap outcomes in the vocational education and training (VET) system.
- The NSA provides for a step-change in government's approach to delivering on Closing the Gap commitments for skills, with dedicated investment to progress specific initiatives, aligned to the four Priority Reforms in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.
- The Australian government will invest up to \$214 million over five years to help meet Closing the Gap skills targets. Included in this, around \$36 million has been committed to progress a nationally partnership framework to ensure active engagement with First Nations peoples, organisations and communities on national policy and programs in VET.
- **2024 will see the design and delivery of the first of up to seven remote Training Hubs in Central Australia (due to be announced 13 Feb).**
- The 2024 Closing the Gap Implementation Plan outlines a number of skills initiatives to support further education and economic development for First Nations peoples. This includes implementation of the new Skills for Education and Employment program and the new Australian Apprenticeships service delivery by July 2024.
- These implementation measures form an initial response to improving the Closing the Gap targets trajectory and we will continue to work with our First Nations partners to identify further opportunities to Close the Gap and improve outcomes for First Nations people's outcomes in the VET system.

Skills and Training Group actions aligned to Closing the Gap priority reform areas

Example under Priority Reform One (Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision Making)

- The Commonwealth is progressing a national partnership framework, to ensure national policy and programs in VET are developed and decided in partnership with First Nations peoples and organisations.

Example under Priority Reform Two (Building the Community-Controlled Sector)

- Under the NSA, all governments have committed to working with First Nations organisations to scope the development of a sector strengthening plan for the Aboriginal Community Controlled and First Nations owned training sector.

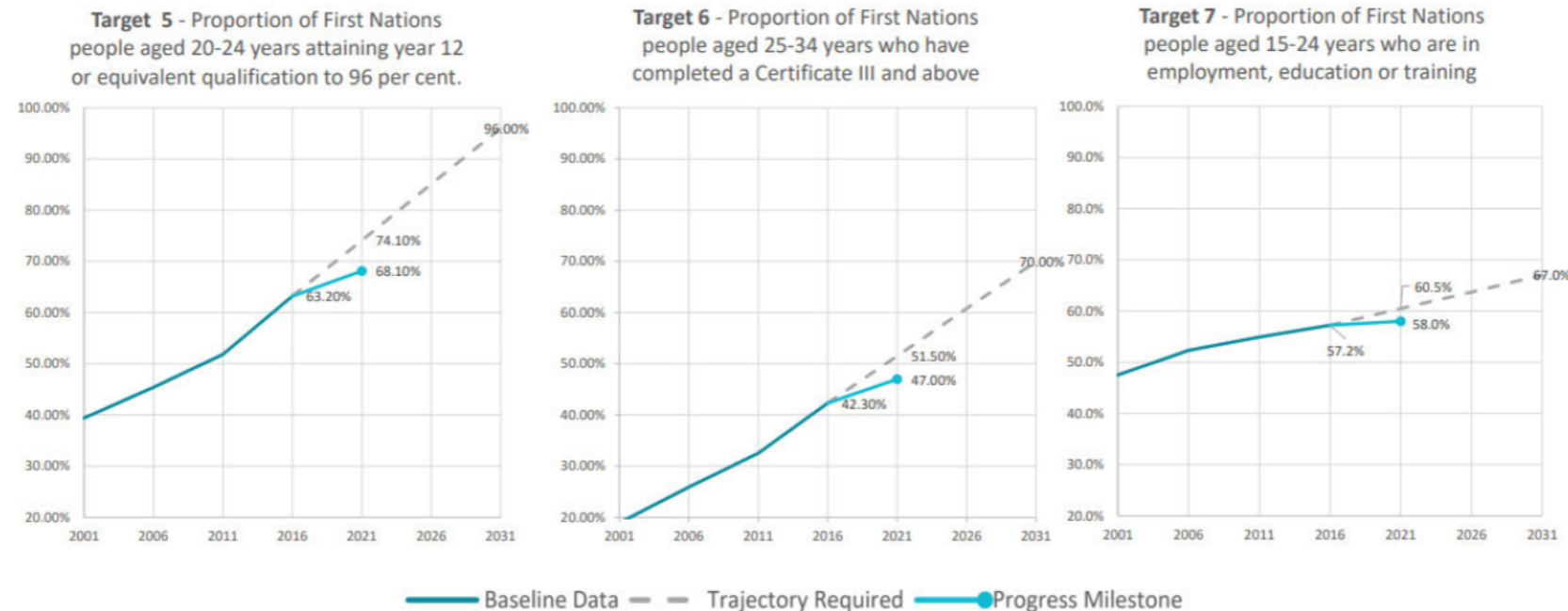
Example under Priority Reform Three (Transforming Government Organisations)

- The NSA provides funding support to boost cultural capability of mainstream Registered Training Organisations.
- A key focus of the new Australian Apprenticeships service delivery model is to increase the diversity of the apprentice workforce and the types of services delivered to ensure tailored support to specific cohorts is delivered by specialist providers.
- The re-designed Skills for Education and Employment program will be delivered through a mix of national and local solutions to improve access and delivery, including providing specific place-based support for First Nations peoples.

Example under Priority Reform Four (Shared Access to Data and Information at a Regional Level)

- Through the NSA, the Commonwealth will work with jurisdictions to boost data and evaluation capability in the First Nations VET sect

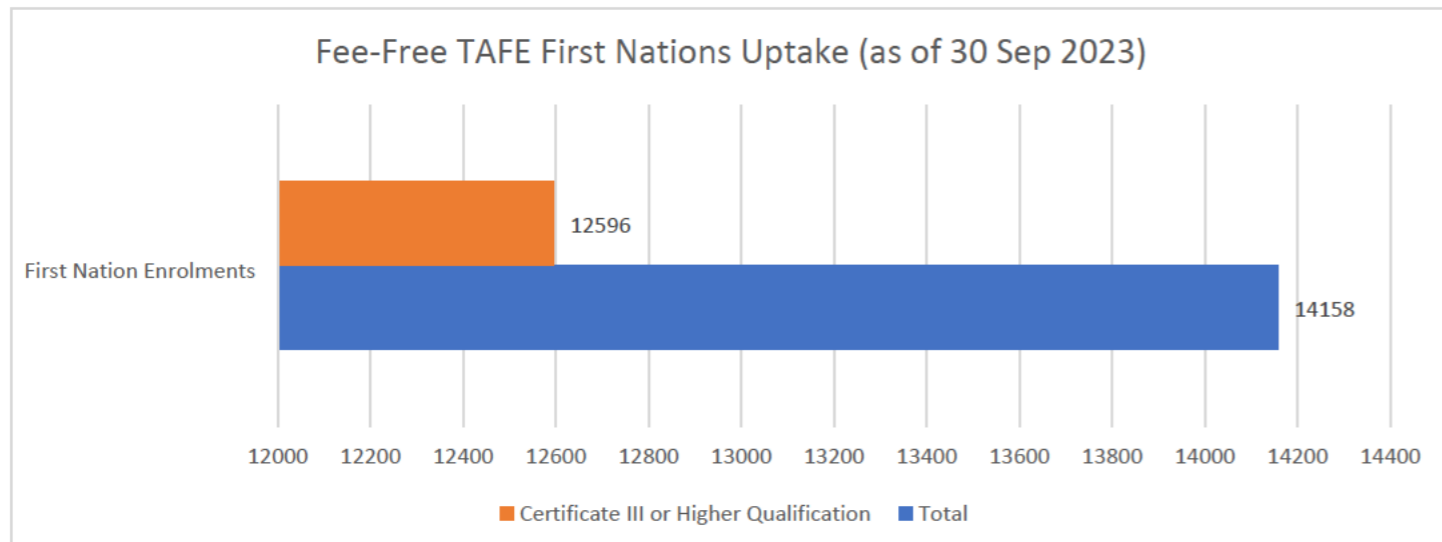
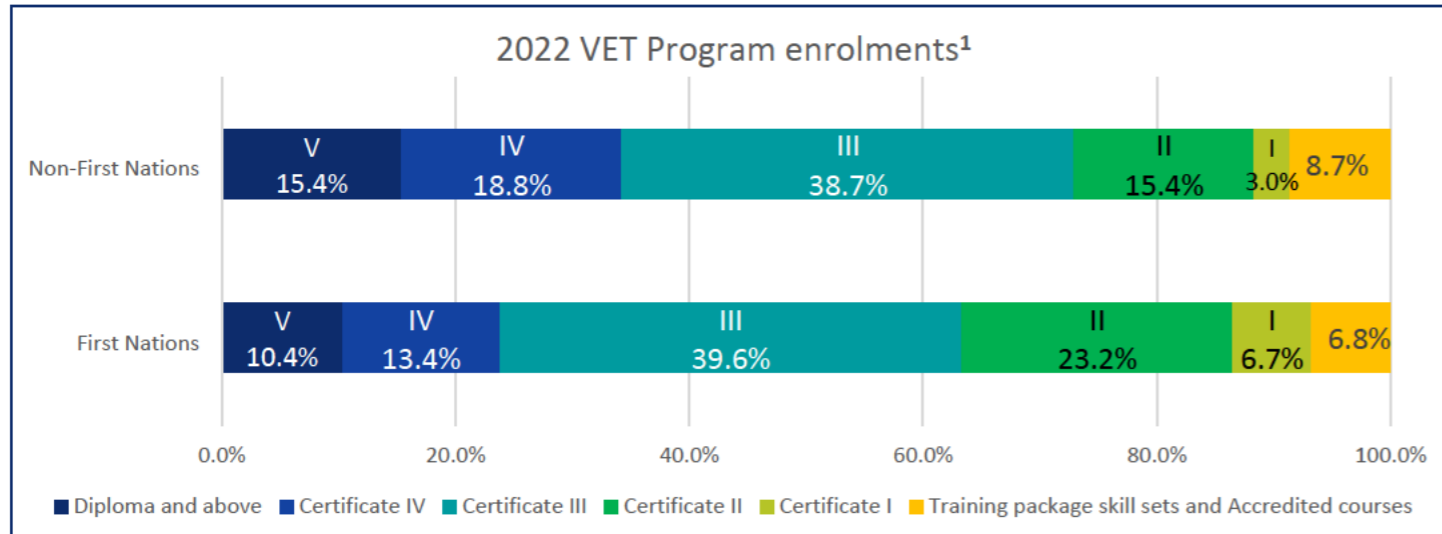
Socioeconomic Target Trajectory (shared with Department of Education)



State of Play First and Nations Students in VET

First Nations students' proportion of VET¹ (all ages and qualification levels)

- In 2022, 161,655 First Nations Students participated in vocational education and training (VET). This was 3.6% of all students, which is similar to the total population share of First Nations people (3.8%), as reported in the 2021 Census².
 - The true proportion of First Nation students in the VET system is likely to be higher due to a high number of 'Unknown' First Nations status in the reporting.
- As at 30 Sep 2023, Fee-Free TAFE has supported 14,158 First Nations peoples nationally, with at least 12,596 of those enrolled in a Certificate III or higher, which supports progress towards target 6, and the delivery of an additional 100,000 Fee-Free TAFE places, with First Nations peoples identified as a priority cohort.
- The proportion of First Nation student enrolments in lower Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)-level qualifications such as Certificate I and II is higher than non-First Nations (Certificate I qualifications 7.8% higher and Certificate II 0.9% higher).
- The proportion of First Nation student enrolments in Certificate IV and above qualifications are lower than non-First Nations (Certificate IV qualifications 5.4% lower and Diploma qualifications 5% lower).



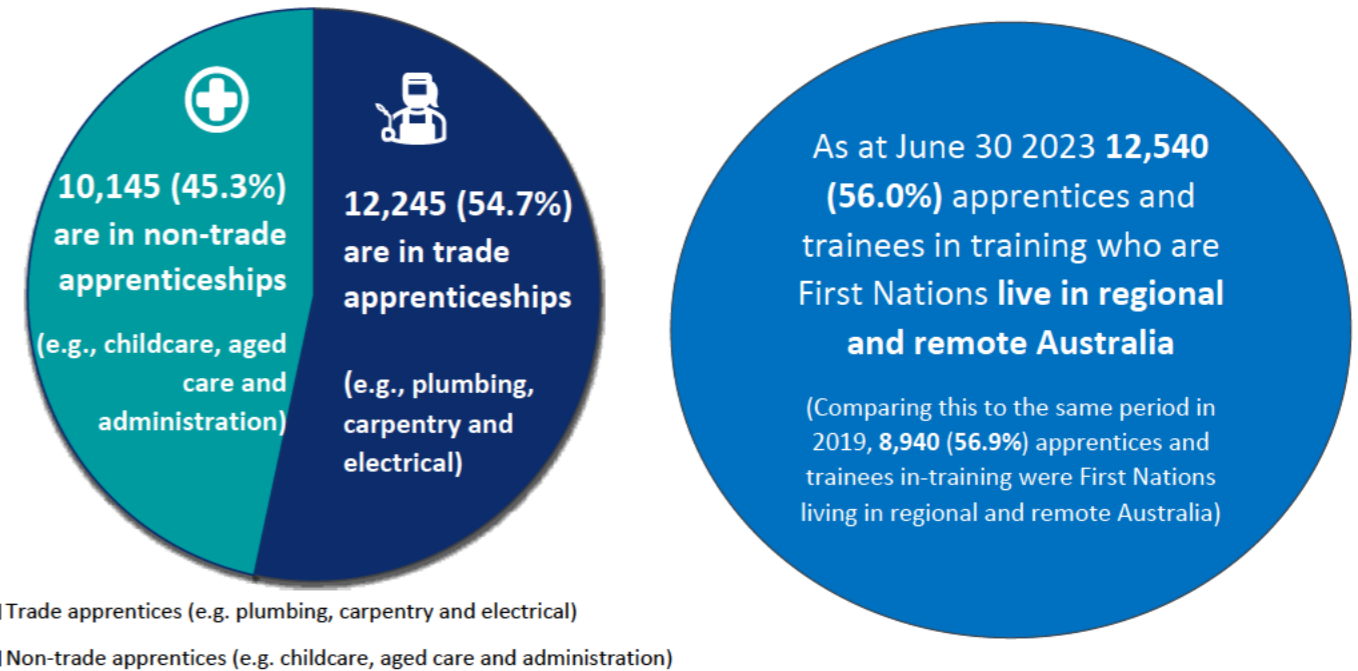
Top 3 qualifications for First Nations students (by program enrolment) in 2022¹

Qualification name	First Nations enrolments	% in course who are First Nations
Certificate III in Business	5,105	6.7%
Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care	4,325	6.1%
Certificate III in Individual Support	3,895	4.5%

- 40.4% of First Nations enrolments in the *Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care* were at TAFEs, compared to 24.9% of non-First Nations enrolments.
- 49.8% of First Nations enrolments in the *Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care* were delivered in NSW, compared to 38.5% of non-First Nations enrolments.
- The top 3 courses by enrolment for non-First Nations students were the same as for First Nations students in 2022. However, the rankings were slightly different: (1) *Certificate III in Individual Support*; (2) *Certificate III in Business*; (3) *Certificate III of Early Childhood Education and Care*

First Nations Apprentices and Trainees in Training⁴

- As at 30 June 2023, there were 22,395 First Nations apprentices and trainees in-training (5.9% of all apprentices and trainees). Comparing this to the same period in 2019, there were 15,700 First Nations apprentices and trainees (5.7% of all apprentices and trainees). In 2022, there were 23,205 First Nations apprentices and trainees (5.4% of all apprentices and trainees).
- From 2022 to 2023, there has been a decrease in the number of First Nations students that is in line with the overall reduction in apprentice and trainee numbers, however, there has been an increase in the proportion of First Nations apprentices and trainees from 5.4% to 5.9%.
- The proportion of First Nations in Trades at 54.7% is lower than the proportion of non-First Nations in Trades at 63.5%.



Sources:
 1. NCVET 2023, *Total VET students and courses 2022*, NCVET, Adelaide.
 2. Australian Bureau of Statistics (June 2021), *Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians*.
 3. Productivity Commission Closing the Gap information repository.
 4. NCVET 2023, *Australian VET statistics: apprentices and trainees 2023 — June quarter*, NCVET, Adelaide.

1. Estimated VET students First Nations students

First Nations students: **161,655 (3.6%** of all students)^a

1.1 Students over time

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Number ('000s)	138.4	148.6	143.8	155.9	161.7
% of all students	3.4%	3.5%	3.6%	3.6%	3.6%

1.2 Estimated students by training location

Delivery location	Number ('000s)	% of state who are First Nations	pp diff. from national
New South Wales	61.4	4.3%	+0.8 pp
Victoria	17.7	1.5%	2.0 pp
Queensland	50.0	4.2%	+0.6 pp
South Australia	6.8	2.5%	1.1 pp
Western Australia	16.9	3.6%	+0.0 pp
Tasmania	3.7	4.3%	+0.7 pp
Northern Territory	9.0	18.8%	+15.2 pp
Australian Capital Territory	2.5	2.8%	0.8 pp
Total	161.7	3.6%	-

1.3 Estimated students by RTO type

Provider type	Number ('000s)	% of RTO type who are First Nations	pp diff. from national
TAFE	45.1	6.3%	+2.7 pp
Private training provider	103.5	3.0%	0.6 pp
Community education provider	17.7	3.6%	+0.0 pp
School	6.9	6.7%	+3.1 pp
Enterprise provider	5.3	5.0%	+1.4 pp
University	4.4	6.4%	+2.9 pp
Total	161.7	3.6%	-

1.4 VET participation rate (% of cohort aged 15-64)

All Australians	25.0%
First Nations	26.2%

1.5 Estimated students by age

Age	Number ('000s)	% of age group who are First Nations	pp diff. from national
14 years and under	1.3	5.5%	+1.9 pp
15 to 24 years	66.1	4.8%	+1.2 pp
25 to 34 years	40.4	3.6%	+0.0 pp
35 to 44 years	25.8	3.1%	0.5 pp
45 to 54 years	18.0	2.8%	-0.8 pp
55 to 64 years	8.6	2.2%	1.4 pp
65 years and over	1.5	1.5%	-2.1 pp
Not known	0.1	1.1%	2.5 pp
Total	161.7	3.6%	-

1.6 Estimated students by selected characteristics

Category	Number ('000s)	% of students who are First Nations ^b	pp diff. from national
Studying part-time	147.0	3.6%	+0.1 pp
Employed ^a	97.2	3.2%	0.3 pp
Living outside major cities	89.6	7.0%	+3.4 pp
Female	81.0	3.8%	+0.3 pp
Living in most socio-economically disadvantaged areas	52.8	7.1%	+3.5 pp
Apprentice/trainee off job training	21.7	5.4%	+1.8 pp
Identified as person with a disability ^a	14.5	8.1%	+4.5 pp
Total	161.7	3.6%	-

2. Training activity First Nations students

First Nations: **138,865** program enrolments (**5.0%** of all enrolments), **31,000** program completions (**3.9%** of all completions)

2.1 Top 3 qualifications by program enrolments^c

Course code	Qualification name	First Nations enrolments	% in course who are First Nations
BSB30120	Certificate III in Business	5,105	6.7%
CHC30121	Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care	4,325	6.1%
CHC33021	Certificate III in Individual Support	3,895	4.5%

2.2 Top 3 fields of education (FoE) by program enrolments

Field of education	First Nations enrolments	First Nations rank	VET rank ^d	% of FoE who are First Nations
Society and culture	25,505	1	2	5.4%
Engineering and related technologies	22,475	2	3	5.1%
Management and commerce	21,650	3	1	4.2%

First Nations students' greatest proportion of enrolments by FoE is in Agriculture (8.8%, VET rank 10). Their lowest proportion is in Natural Sciences (2.7%, VET rank 12).

2.3 Qualification completion rates (%)

Demographic	Observed		Projected	
	2017	2018	2019	2020
First Nations	33.6%	34.5%	33.8%	35.8%
National	46.1%	47.6%	48.4%	50.5%

2.4 Program completions by level of education (LoE)

Level	2021	2022 [*]
Diploma and above	2,380	2,755
Certificate IV	3,320	3,410
Certificate III	10,100	9,770
Certificate II	11,205	9,355
Certificate I	3,500	2,485
Accredited courses	1,060	970
Training package skill sets	2,285	2,255
Total	33,845	31,000

* Additional 2022 completions will be reported in the 2023 collection.

2.5 Students in subject-only training

	National	First Nations
Proportion (%) of students undertaking training outside of a program	66.7%	55.5%

2.6 Top 3 subject-only units of competency

Provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation	45.1%
Provide first aid	30.5%
Provide basic emergency life support	20.8%

3. Outcomes and satisfaction - First Nations students

3.1 Satisfaction outcomes for 2022 qualification completers (%)

Outcome	First Nations	National	pp diff. from national
Satisfied with overall quality of training	91.2%	89.0%	+2.2 pp
Achieved main reason for doing the training	88.3%	88.1%	+0.2 pp
Recommend their training provider	87.9%	84.6%	+3.3 pp

3.2 Employment outcomes for 2022 qualification completers (%)

Outcome	First Nations	National	pp diff. from national
Employed before training	63.4%	69.7%	-6.4 pp
Employed after training	75.0%	79.5%	-4.5 pp
Improved employment status after training	65.3%	67.6%	-2.4 pp
Of those not employed before training: employed after training	46.4%	50.6%	-4.2 pp

• Rounded components may not sum to rounded totals.

a. Understated with high numbers of students whose status is unknown.

b. tic characteristic

c. Enrolments include all courses that have been superseded by the qualification.

d. Ranking is by count of overall program enrolments in the field of education.

Contact Officer: Haley Jones (02) 6240 9159

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations - Released under FOI

ources: ections 1 2: NCVET 2023, *Total VET students and courses 2022*, NCVET, Adelaide; Australian Bureau of Statistics (2022) *Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians*; NCVET 2023, *VET qualification completion rates 2022*, NCVET, Adelaide; Section 3: NCVET 2023, *VET student outcomes 2023*, NCVET, Adelaide.

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Last Updated 14/12/2023

Commonwealth Funding for Skills and NSA

Key Points

- The National Skills Agreement (NSA) provides states and territories with access to additional Commonwealth funds of up to \$3.7 billion over 5 years from 1 January 2024. This takes total Commonwealth funding under the NSA to \$12.6 billion over 5 years.
- Of the \$3.7 billion in additional funding, \$2.4 billion will be provided in flexible funding to support state and territory skills sectors. A further \$1.3 billion is also provided in Commonwealth funding to implement agreed reforms including:
 - \$325 million to establish nationally networked TAFE Centres of Excellence and strengthen collaboration between TAFEs, universities and industry. This funding will require a matched contribution from states.
 - \$100 million to support, grow and retain a quality Vocational Education and Training (VET) workforce. This funding will require a matched contribution from states.
 - \$155 million to establish a National TAFE Network to foster collaboration among TAFE teachers and administrators and enhance teaching and learning. This funding will require a matched contribution from states.
 - \$214 million for Closing the Gap initiatives to be designed in partnership with First Nations peoples and led by them. This funding will require a matched contribution from states.
 - \$250 million to improve VET completions including women and others who face completion challenges. This funding will require a matched contribution from states.
 - \$142 million to improve foundation skills training capacity, quality, and accessibility. This funding will not be required to be matched by states.
 - \$116 million to improve VET evidence and data. This funding will not be required to be matched by states.
- Expected 2023-24 Commonwealth expenditure is \$1.1 billion higher as at Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements (PAES) 2023-24 than at the 2023-24 Budget primarily due to the signing of the NSA, additional Fee-Free TAFE (FFT) funding as well as increases in demand driven apprenticeship program costs.

Estimated Commonwealth Expenditure on VET (\$m) – 2023-24

Item	2023-24 Budget	2023-24 MYEFO	2023-24 PAES	Difference (PAES-Budget)
Transfers to states and territories	1,900.1	2,367.9	2,367.9	+467.8
Commonwealth own programs	2,033.3	2,213.2	2,690.8	+657.5
Loans (VSL and TSL)*	565.3	536.7	513.9	-51.3
Total	4,498.6	5,117.9	5,572.7	+1,074.1

*Loan outlays, not program expenses

Note: Rounded figures mean totals may not add up exactly.

Outlook over the Forward Estimates

- As at PAES 2023-24, the Government expects to spend \$19.67 billion on VET across the forward estimates (2023-24 to 2026-27).
 - Commonwealth expected expenditure at PAES 2023-24 across the forward estimates is \$3.1 billion higher than at the 2023-24 Budget primarily due to the signing of the NSA as well as additional Fee-Free TAFE (FFT) funding.

Related Questions received on notice

PDR Link	Submitted By	Subject	Answer Summary
SQ23-000236	Kerrynne Liddle	Funding of VET Placements in the Previous 3 Years	Commonwealth VET funding increased during the COVID-19 pandemic due to emergency response measures that are no longer required.
SQ23-000347	Matt O'Sullivan	VET Places (q. 1-2)	VET is a shared system and decisions around how many places are subsidised generally rest with the states and territories, outside of specific agreements.

Last Cleared By	s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
Date Last Cleared	13 February 2024

In 2023-24, the Commonwealth expenditure on VET is a projected \$5.6 billion (Source: 2023-24 PAES)

\$2.4 billion to states & territories

National Skills and Workforce Development Specific Purpose Payment plus additional NSA funding:
\$2.0 billion

NASWD
From Jul '23 to Dec '23
\$0.8 billion

NSA
From Jan '24 to Jun '24
\$1.2 billion

Fee-Free TAFE
\$316 million

TAFE Tech Fund
\$39 million

\$2.7 billion in Commonwealth own programs

Australian Apprenticeship Incentives Program	\$1.3 billion
Australian Apprenticeships Incentives System	\$634 million
Australian Apprenticeship Support Network	\$246 million
Jobs and Skills Councils (formerly known as Industry Clusters)	\$109 million
Skills for Education and Employment Program	\$104 million
National Training System COPE	\$49 million
ASQA	\$48 million
Trades Recognition Australia - Outsourced services administration fee	\$43 million
VET Data Streamlining	\$29 million
NSA COPE	\$19 million
Jobs and Skills Australia	\$16 million
Skills Checkpoint for Older Workers Program	\$8 million
Migrant Skills Incentive	\$7 million
Industry Workforce Training	\$7 million
Skills Communication Campaign	\$7 million
Student Identifiers Special Account	\$6 million
Foundation Skills for Your Future Program	\$5 million
Remote Training Hubs Network	\$5 million
National Careers Institute and Ambassador	\$4 million
Other Programs	\$9 million

\$514 million in income contingent loans
^ nominal value of loans

VET Student Loans (and VET FEE-HELP)
\$237 million
(unpublished)

Trade Support Loans
\$277 million
(unpublished)

Not included in Commonwealth figure

In 2022, states & territories also contributed **\$ 4.0 billion** to VET
Source: NCVET Government Funding of VET 2022

Other funding sources include:

- Training purchased by other portfolios
- Self-education tax deductions
- Income support payments

Sources:

- 2023-24 PAES.
- VET-FEE HELP, VET Student Loans and Trade Support Loans nominal loan values are unpublished departmental estimates current as at February 2024.

Standing Committees on Education and Employment

QUESTION ON NOTICE Supplementary Budget Estimates 2022 - 2023

Outcome: Skills and Training

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations Question No. SQ23-000347

Senator Matt O'Sullivan provided in writing.

VET Places

Question

1. Please provide data on how many VET placements the Commonwealth is funding for the financial year 2022-23.
2. Please provide data on the number of VET placements the Commonwealth funded in the financial years 2021-22, 2020-21 and 2019-20.
3. On an electorate-by-electorate basis please provide data on the number of apprentice currently in training.
 - a) Please also provide data on an electorate-by-electorate basis on the number of apprentices in training for the financial years 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22.
 - b) Please include data as to how many of those places are with public versus private providers.

Answer

1 and 2.

Vocational education and training (VET) is a shared responsibility between the Commonwealth and state and territory governments. The Commonwealth provides funding to states to support their VET systems. The majority of Commonwealth funding is provided through the National Skills and Workforce Development Specific Purpose Payment (NASWD SPP). States and territories have discretion over how the NASWD SPP is allocated across their training systems.

Government-funded training is largely delivered through state VET systems, using a combination of Commonwealth and state funding. The Commonwealth does not hold data regarding the number of students (or 'VET placements') supported by Commonwealth funding only, noting the role of the state and territories in resource allocation.

The Commonwealth also provides funding to states under time-limited National Partnership Agreements, some of which contain components specifically related to training delivery. Currently, the 12-Month Skills Agreement is providing funding for 180,000 fee-free TAFE and vocational education and training places in high skills need areas. The Commonwealth has also announced funding for 300,000 fee-free places to become available from January 2024.

3. The following tables provide the number of Australian Apprentices (which includes apprentices and trainees) in training as at 30 June each year.

Table 1: Apprentices and Trainees in training by Electorate.

In-training by Electorate as at	30/06/2020	30/06/2021	30/06/2022
Adelaide	3,980	5,280	7,900
Aston	1,730	2,025	2,225
Ballarat	1,950	2,445	3,070
Banks	1,410	1,690	1,690
Barker	2,320	3,025	3,835
Barton	1,180	1,370	1,425
Bass	1,710	2,115	2,510
Bean	1,625	1,925	1,935
Bendigo	1,920	2,400	2,770
Bennelong	1,490	1,370	1,525
Berowra	1,155	1,360	1,345
Blair	1,480	1,930	2,465
Blaxland	1,975	2,350	2,485
Bonner	1,550	2,120	2,925
Boothby	1,150	1,620	2,240
Bowman	1,325	1,730	2,205
Braddon	2,205	2,685	3,295
Bradfield	840	1,090	1,140
Brand	1,175	1,615	2,075
Brisbane	2,975	3,980	6,285
Bruce	1,865	2,290	2,585
Burt	1,140	1,760	2,360
Calare	2,415	3,070	3,375
Calwell	2,585	3,000	3,535
Canberra	3,035	3,225	3,345
Canning	1,175	1,760	2,175
Capricornia	3,280	3,965	4,970
Casey	1,840	2,120	2,315
Chifley	1,805	2,360	2,860
Chisholm	880	1,255	1,655
Clark	2,195	2,625	3,125
Cook	1,715	2,285	2,435
Cooper	1,190	1,805	2,185
Corangamite	1,470	1,885	2,385
Corio	2,260	2,910	3,615
Cowan	1,700	2,455	3,450
Cowper	2,130	2,925	3,610
Cunningham	2,430	3,060	3,305
Curtin	675	1,205	1,600
Dawson	2,420	2,850	3,265
Deakin	1,645	1,900	2,255
Dickson	1,870	2,405	2,960

In-training by Electorate as at	30/06/2020	30/06/2021	30/06/2022
Dobell	1,805	2,370	2,795
Dunkley	1,580	1,885	2,150
Durack	4,330	5,405	6,125
Eden-Monaro	2,000	2,460	2,655
Fadden	1,695	2,375	3,220
Fairfax	1,660	2,570	3,570
Farrer	2,380	3,140	3,460
Fenner	1,695	1,910	1,825
Fisher	1,575	2,360	3,240
Flinders	3,325	3,665	3,700
Flynn	2,725	3,060	3,535
Forde	2,465	2,845	3,945
Forrest	1,695	2,535	3,305
Fowler	1,030	1,405	1,500
Franklin	1,535	1,830	2,145
Fraser	1,030	1,260	1,415
Fremantle	2,205	2,860	3,805
Gellibrand	1,980	2,360	2,805
Gilmore	1,890	2,600	2,800
Gippsland	1,965	2,205	2,420
Goldstein	575	785	955
Gorton	1,325	1,440	1,625
Grayndler	935	1,080	1,085
Greenway	1,505	1,690	1,945
Grey	2,390	3,065	3,730
Griffith	1,525	2,030	3,115
Groom	2,615	3,180	4,315
Hasluck	1,800	2,230	2,875
Herbert	2,150	2,735	3,425
Higgins	550	825	1,145
Hindmarsh	2,290	2,725	3,370
Hinkler	1,275	1,770	2,215
Holt	810	1,010	1,345
Hotham	1,300	1,900	2,260
Hughes	1,260	1,805	1,885
Hume	2,125	2,685	3,030
Hunter	2,640	3,095	4,050
Indi	2,850	3,520	4,035
Isaacs	2,390	2,860	3,170
Jagajaga	1,340	1,375	1,625
Kennedy	2,130	2,655	2,890
Kingsford Smith	1,610	1,750	1,980
Kingston	970	1,385	1,925
Kooyong	935	1,245	1,470

In-training by Electorate as at	30/06/2020	30/06/2021	30/06/2022
La Trobe	1,465	1,790	2,165
Lalor	1,080	1,315	2,180
Leichhardt	2,265	2,945	3,425
Lilley	1,885	2,810	3,985
Lindsay	2,285	2,845	3,100
Lingiari	1,690	1,865	1,895
Longman	1,345	1,785	2,445
Lyne	1,485	2,045	2,495
Lyons	1,105	1,365	1,910
Macarthur	1,690	2,160	2,450
Mackellar	1,805	2,145	2,125
Macnamara	1,650	1,980	2,795
Macquarie	1,560	2,010	2,135
Makin	1,035	1,430	1,915
Mallee	2,115	2,610	3,040
Maranoa	2,315	2,950	3,500
Maribyrnong	1,085	1,465	1,730
Mayo	1,025	1,575	1,920
McEwen	1,265	1,585	1,755
McMahon	2,760	3,210	3,555
McPherson	1,710	2,580	3,420
Melbourne	2,755	3,375	4,255
Menzies	785	985	1,110
Mitchell	1,650	2,080	2,405
Monash	1,610	2,035	2,345
Moncrieff	2,120	3,265	4,450
Moore	780	1,095	1,435
Moreton	2,085	3,100	4,445
New England	2,110	2,970	3,075
Newcastle	2,375	3,180	3,765
Nicholls	2,120	2,635	3,085
North Sydney	1,160	1,505	1,780
O'Connor	3,180	4,175	5,200
Oxley	1,915	2,455	3,325
Page	1,855	2,390	2,370
Parkes	2,160	2,850	3,105
Parramatta	1,605	2,025	2,305
Paterson	2,535	3,515	4,045
Pearce	795	1,315	1,845
Perth	1,915	2,735	3,870
Petrie	1,040	1,560	2,030
Rankin	1,560	2,265	3,110
Reid	1,475	1,680	1,960
Richmond	1,405	2,100	2,510

In-training by Electorate as at	30/06/2020	30/06/2021	30/06/2022
Riverina	2,920	3,690	4,270
Robertson	1,740	2,190	2,525
Ryan	950	1,090	1,525
Scullin	1,175	1,470	1,855
Shortland	1,800	2,325	2,610
Solomon	1,320	1,705	1,850
Spence	1,150	1,370	1,860
Stirling	1,780	2,415	3,340
Sturt	1,540	2,105	2,960
Swan	3,035	3,815	4,810
Sydney	2,200	3,425	4,860
Tangney	835	940	1,110
Wannon	2,540	3,190	3,585
Warringah	1,265	1,620	1,695
Watson	1,000	1,215	1,205
Wentworth	685	975	1,235
Werriwa	1,145	1,450	1,600
Whitlam	1,715	2,325	2,500
Wide Bay	1,465	1,980	2,470
Wills	880	1,040	1,130
Wright	1,440	1,755	2,225
Unallocated, unknown, invalid and overseas codes	2,095	2,585	3,675
Total	267,010	341,595	415,240

Source: *Australian vocational education and training statistics: apprentices and trainees 2022 — June quarter*, NCVET, Adelaide.

Notes: Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 5.

Table 2: Apprentices and Trainees in training by RTO Type.

In-training by RTO type as at	30/06/2020	30/06/2021	30/06/2022
Public provider	149,795	173,135	185,025
Private Provider	116,765	167,955	229,345
Unknown	450	510	870
Total	267,010	341,595	415,240

Source: *Australian vocational education and training statistics: apprentices and trainees 2022 — June quarter*, NCVET, Adelaide.

Notes: Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 5.

Standing Committees on Education and Employment

QUESTION ON NOTICE Supplementary Budget Estimates 2022 - 2023

Outcome: Skills and Training

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations Question No. SQ23-000236

Senator Kerryne Liddle on 16 February 2023, Proof Hansard page 27

Funding of VET Placements in the Previous 3 Years

Question

Senator LIDDLE: What I'm trying to understand is the difference between Commonwealth funding going to the states and actually delivering the outcomes. That's what I'm wanting to understand. Ms N Williams: That certainly make sense. Maybe a good way of thinking about it is to look at this financial year, 2022-23, and the breakdown of where the Commonwealth's funding is allocated or distributed. If you look at 2022-23, there is approximately \$6.3 billion in Commonwealth funding for VET that's available. \$2.3 billion of that is transferred to the states and territories. That goes through a range of mechanisms. One is the National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development specific purpose payment. That's around \$1.6 billion a year. It includes things such as the 12-month Skills Agreement, which we've run through. There are other funding flows, such as the JobTrainer MPA that we talked about. So \$2.3 billion flows through to the states. The majority of that, the \$1.6 billion, is untied, so it's unconditional. The states have the ability to distribute that within the system and buy places and allocate it to other forms of training support and delivery. Things such as the 12-month Skills Agreement do actually tie that funding to the delivery of a specific number of places. Around \$3.4 billion of that \$6.3 billion is allocated to Commonwealth-owned programs. They are programs that we run ourselves. The biggest component of that is the apprenticeships incentive program. There are also a range of other programs where we directly procure training, such as the Skills for Education and Employment program, the SEE program, which I mentioned, which is the foundation skills program that we run for job seekers. There are a range of other programs that we would run in that space as well. That \$3.4 billion then goes also into what I would describe as the national architecture. That includes things such as running ASQA, running the national training system and ensuring that Jobs and Skills Australia is funded. So \$3.4 billion is allocated to that purpose. Then the Commonwealth has a role in providing income contingent loans directly to students. In the 2022-23 year, around \$673 million is provisioned for income contingent loans. That's the VET Student Loan, the Trade Support Loan et cetera. There is some other funding that sits in the Commonwealth space which goes to training or other measures. I am thinking of things such as foundation skills for migrants, for example. That runs out of the Home Affairs portfolio. There is other training within the Commonwealth, but those are the really big buckets of funding that are allocated to training. That \$6.3 billion is the Commonwealth's contribution. Separate to that, the states and territories also make their own contributions to the training system. In 2021, for example, that was in the vicinity of \$4.2 billion. When we say VET is a shared system, that's essentially what we mean: that the Commonwealth and the states and territories contribute funding to that system, but the Commonwealth's role tends to sit predominately at the national level. A lot of the delivery does get operationalised by the state and territory governments.

Senator LIDDLE: I am also wondering if you have the same data for, say, the last three years, if you can provide that on notice? You don't have to provide it all now.

Ms N Williams: I am happy to do that breakdown over the last three years. The important thing to remember, of course, is that during the pandemic the funding for VET was very different from perhaps what you would see as status quo funding. We can provide you with the last couple of years, but it is important to put that filter over it. The pandemic was a unique situation when it comes to the funding flows.

Answer

Breakdown of Commonwealth VET funding (\$m):

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Transfers to States and Territories (National Skills and Workforce Development SPP and National Partnership payments)	1,732.8	1,665.6	1,721.5	2,176.8	2,077.0
Commonwealth own programs	960.4	983.2	1,104.1	2,244.6	4,404.0
Income contingent loans	567.3	501.9	515.3	464.8	475.4
Total	3,260.5	3,150.7	3,340.8	4,886.2	6,956.4

Sources: Final Budget Outcomes, internal departmental data. Totals may not reconcile with published figures due to methodological and scope differences.

Attachment D: Summary of 2023-24 MYEFO measures for Skills

- The Government has successfully negotiated and secured a new five-year National Skills Agreement with the states and territories to commence from 1 January 2024. The 2023-24 MYEFO papers reflect the final terms of the NSA, representing a Government investment of up to \$12.6 billion to lift productivity and deliver a national VET system that is high quality, responsive and accessible.
- As part of the Employment White Paper, the Government will provide \$29.3 million over four years from 2023-24 to turbocharge TAFE Centres of Excellence to drive uptake of higher apprenticeships and undertake consultation to develop degree-level higher apprenticeships in the priority areas of net zero, care and advanced digitalisation.
- The Government will provide \$5.4 million over two years from 2023-24 to undertake a strategic review of Australian Apprenticeships.
- To support Australia's participation in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies Survey, the Government will provide \$11.2 million over four years from 2023-24.
- The Government will achieve savings of \$16.2 million over four years by ceasing the Skills Checkpoint for Older Workers Program from 1 July 2024 and closing the Foundation Skills for your Future Program from 22 December 2023.
- As part of the Migration System Integrity measure, funding of \$33.3 million will be provided to the Australian Skills Quality Authority from 2023-24 over four years to improve the integrity of the vocational education and training sector, with \$4.5 million also provided to the department to support this work.

In 2023-24, the Commonwealth expenditure on VET is a projected \$5.1 billion (Source: 2023-24 MYEFO)

\$2.4 billion to states & territories

\$2.2 billion in Commonwealth own programs

\$537 million in income contingent loans
^ nominal value of loans

National Skills and Workforce Development Specific Purpose Payment plus additional NSA funding:
\$2.0 billion

NASWD
From Jul '23 to Dec '23
\$0.8 billion

NSA
From Jan '24 to Jun '24
\$1.2 billion

Fee-Free TAFE
\$316 million

TAFE Tech Fund
\$39 million

Australian Apprenticeship Incentives Program	\$860 million
Australian Apprenticeships Incentives System	\$634 million
Australian Apprenticeship Support Network	\$246 million
Jobs and Skills Council (formerly known as Industry Clusters)	\$109 million
Skills for Education and Employment Program	\$104 million
ASQA	\$48 million
National Training System COPE	\$49 million
Trades Recognition Australia - Outsourced services administration fee	\$43 million
VET Data Streamlining	\$29 million
NSA COPE	\$19 million
Jobs and Skills Australia	\$16 million
Enhanced VET Data and Evidence	\$12 million
Skills Checkpoint for Older Workers Program	\$8 million
Migrant Skills Incentive	\$7 million
Industry Workforce Training	\$7 million
Skills Communication Campaign	\$7 million
Student Identifiers Special Account	\$6 million
Foundation Skills for Your Future Program	\$5 million
Remote Training Hubs Network	\$5 million
Other Programs	\$13 million

VET Student Loans (and VET FEE-HELP)
\$247 million
(unpublished)

Trade Support Loans
\$290 million
(unpublished)

Not included in Commonwealth figure

In 2022, states & territories also contributed **\$ 4.0 billion** to VET
Source: NCVET Government Funding of VET 2022

Other funding sources include:

- Training purchased by other portfolios
- Self-education tax deductions
- Income support payments

Sources:

- 2023-24 MYEFO.
- VET-FEE HELP, VET Student Loans and Trade Support Loans nominal loan values are unpublished departmental estimates current as at December 2023.

Notes: 1. The expense component of VET Student Loans and Trade Support Loan is excluded from these figures given the nominal loan value is counted in the next column. 2. Individual numbers in this sheet are rounded. Component figures may not add up to headline figures.

In 2023-24, the Commonwealth is budgeting \$4.5 billion for VET*

*The Government has provisioned an additional \$3.7 billion over five calendar years to support the National Skills Agreement

\$1.9 billion to states & territories

\$2.0 billion in Commonwealth own programs

\$565 million in income contingent loans

[^] nominal value of loans

National Skills and Workforce Development Specific Purpose Payment
\$1.7 billion

Australian Apprenticeship Incentives System	\$682 million
Australian Apprenticeship Incentives Program	\$678 million
Australian Apprenticeships Support Network	\$246 million
<i>Note AAIP and AASN include components of:</i>	
- Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements (BAC)	\$150 million
- Completing Apprenticeship Commencements (CAC)	\$388 million
Industry Clusters	\$105 million
Skills for Education and Employment Program	\$104 million
National Training System COPE	\$45 million
ASQA	\$43 million
Trades Recognition Australia	\$43 million
VET Data Streamlining	\$20 million
Jobs and Skills Australia	\$15 million
Foundation Skills for Your Future	\$9 million
Skills Checkpoint for Older Workers	\$8 million
Migrant Skills Incentive	\$7 million
Industry Workforce Training	\$7 million
Student Identifiers Special Account	\$6 million
National Careers Institute and Ambassador	\$4 million
Foundation Skills for Your Future – Remote Community Pilots	\$3 million
Other Program 2.1	\$7 million

VET Student Loans
\$275 million
(unpublished)

12-Month Skills Agreement
\$163 million

Trade Support Loans
\$290 million
(unpublished)

Fee-Free TAFE from 2024
\$67 million

Not included in Commonwealth figure

In 2021, states & territories also contributed **\$4.2 billion** to VET
Source: NCVET Government Funding of VET 2021

Sources:
2023-24 Budget

Other funding sources include:

- Training purchased by other portfolios
- Self-education tax deductions
- Income support payments

Note: The expense component of VET Student Loans and Trade Support Loans is excluded from these figures given the nominal loan value is counted in the next column.

Sources:

- 2023-24 Budget
- VET Student Loans and Trade Support Loans nominal loan values are unpublished departmental estimates current as at May 2023.

Five-year National Skills Agreement

Key Points

Purpose

- The National Skills Agreement (the Agreement) commenced on 1 January 2024.
- The Agreement is a 5-year joint agreement between the Commonwealth, states, and territories to strengthen the vocational education and training (VET) sector.
- It will provide new capacity to respond to current critical issues requiring urgent action and deliver a longer-term strategic vision for the sector.
- The Agreement identifies priorities for focused national effort that reflect the current and future needs of the economy as well as the importance of addressing barriers to education, training and employment faced by some Australians, including First Nations people.
 - The priorities in the Agreement will help ensure we have the skills and workforce needed to deliver whole of government efforts to support the net zero transformation, sustain essential care services, develop Australia's sovereign capability and food security, and ensure Australia's digital and technological capability.

Funding

- Under the NSA the Commonwealth will invest of up to \$12.6 billion over the next 5 years to expand and transform access to the VET sector, support training providers to deliver quality education and training, and implement reforms to address critical skills needs.
 - This figure includes an additional \$3.7 billion over 5 years (above the funding that would have been available under the projected national specific purpose payments for skills and workforce development over the same period), comprising:
 - up to \$2.4 billion in flexible funding to increase the capacity of state and territory skills sectors and deliver skills for critical and emerging industries and
 - up to \$1.3 billion to support the delivery of agreed reforms.
- The Agreement is designed to deliver an uplift in funding across all states and territories. State and territory governments will need to contribute \$21.6 billion of their own funding to access the maximum available Commonwealth funding.

Implementation

- The department is working closely with jurisdictions to develop and implement a new approach that will see strategic investment in skills across the economy, and support delivery of skills needed in national priority areas, as well as providing states and territories with flexibility to meet local needs.
- Significant work is underway with states and territories to develop Bilateral Implementation Plans for policy initiatives under the Agreement.
- A priority for the Government is to agree arrangements to establish TAFE Centres of Excellence in the priority areas of supporting the Net Zero transformation, sustaining essential care services, and ensuring Australia's digital and technological capability.
- While supporting responsive action, the Agreement is a long-term partnership and outlines a joint stewardship model for a new way of working together to solve complex problems that embraces active and meaningful collaboration and partnerships and data and evidence driven reform. It is not a set and forget Agreement but a commitment to a way of working to ensure the VET system is well placed to meet the challenges ahead.
- For the first time, a longer term vision for the VET sector and its contribution to key economic and social outcomes will be set out in a National Skills Plan, to be published by June 2024. The Plan will include an outcomes framework with new national targets reflecting shared ambitions for the sector.

- All jurisdictions including the Commonwealth will publish jurisdictional action plans by November detailing the actions they will take to deliver on the National Skills Plan and national priorities.
- All jurisdictions are committed to an annual cycle of review to ensure jurisdictional action plans and associated reforms are informed by the most recent data and evidence and are delivering progress towards national targets and priorities.

Background

- The Agreement was endorsed by National Cabinet on 16 October 2023, and has been co-signed by Skills Ministers from all jurisdictions.

Multilateral	All states signed
Bilateral (published on Federal Financial Relations website)	NSW, Victoria, SA (16 October 2023), Queensland (17 October 2023), WA (20 October 2023), ACT (15 November 2023), NT (17 November 2023), Tasmania (9 December 2023)

- Agreed reforms / policy initiatives include:
 - \$325 million to establish nationally networked TAFE Centres of Excellence and strengthen collaboration between TAFEs, universities and industry. This funding will require a matched contribution from states.
 - \$100 million to support, grow and retain a quality VET workforce. This funding will require a matched contribution from states.
 - \$155 million to establish a National TAFE Network to foster collaboration among TAFE teachers and administrators and enhance teaching and learning. This funding will require a matched contribution from states.
 - \$214 million for Closing the Gap initiatives to be designed in partnership with First Nations peoples and led by them. This funding will require a matched contribution from states.
 - \$250 million to improve VET completions including women and others who face completion challenges. This funding will require a matched contribution from states.
 - \$142 million to improve foundation skills training capacity, quality, and accessibility. This funding will not be required to be matched by states.
 - \$116 million to improve VET evidence and data. This funding will not be required to be matched by states.
- The Agreement will be the first agreement to embed a new National Stewardship model to coordinate investment and action to deliver on agreed national priorities.
- Inaugural national priorities are:
 - Gender equality
 - Closing the Gap
 - Supporting the Net Zero transformation
 - Sustaining essential care services
 - Developing Australia's sovereign capability and food security
 - Ensuring Australia's digital and technology capability, and
 - Delivering reforms to improve the regulation of VET qualifications and quality.

Current status

- The NSA commenced on 1 January 2024.
- Implementation of the Agreement will continue throughout 2024.

Consultation

- A number of stakeholder briefings have been held. These include a briefing to key stakeholders on 17 October 2023, and one to the Foundation Skills Advisory Group on 6 December 2023.

- The Agreement was developed in partnership with states and territories. Between June 2022 and December 2023, 51 multilateral meetings and 87 bilateral meetings have been held with states and territories (EC24-000241 refers).
- The Agreement draws on extensive consultations that fed into the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. The Coalition of Peaks was also consulted on the drafting of the Agreement. Under the Agreement, all governments have committed to ongoing and meaningful engagement with First Nations organisations and communities.
- Stakeholders, including industry and VET sector representatives, will be consulted in developing the National Skills Plan.

Next steps, including consideration by Government where expected

- The department will continue to work closely with states and territories and stakeholders on the implementation of the Agreement.
- The National Skills Plan is being developed and will be agreed by all jurisdictions by June 2024.
- Bilateral Implementation Plans for the policy initiatives will be agreed with states and territories.

Expenditure/Budget

- The Commonwealth Government will invest up to \$12.6 billion over 5 years from January 2024.
- States and territories will need to contribute \$21.6 billion of their own funding to access the maximum available Commonwealth funding.

What has been announced

New Five-year National Skills Agreement timeline

- **20 July 2022:** all Skills and Training Ministers agreed to **reset negotiations on the Agreement.**
- **31 August 2022:** First Ministers agreed to **commence work on a new long-term Agreement.**
- **27 April 2023:** the Minister for Skills and Training, the Hon Brendan O'Connor MP announced an **additional offer of \$3.7 billion** to negotiate and agree upon a 5-year Agreement.
- **13 October 2023:** Agreement signed by Minister O'Connor for the Commonwealth and offered to states and territories.
- **16 October 2023:** Agreement endorsed by National Cabinet and signed by skills ministers from NSW, Victoria, SA, NT, and ACT.
- **17 October 2023,** Minister O'Connor, and the Prime Minister, the Hon Anthony Albanese MP, announced that National Cabinet had endorsed the Agreement.

Key Government statements

Minister for Skills and Training, Jobs, and Skills Summit: The Minister for Skills and Training announced that National Cabinet agreed to 6 guiding principles that will underpin the 5-year NSA from 2024.

Minister O'Connor media centre	2 September 2022
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Minister for Skills and Training, Media Release: The Albanese Government is prepared to invest an additional \$3.7 billion for a 5-year NSA to be negotiated with states and territories, in addition to \$400 million to support another 300,000 TAFE and VET fee-free places.

Minister O'Connor media centre	27 April 2023
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Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council Communique: Skills and Training Ministers met to progress negotiations towards a new NSA to support a modern and responsive skills sector.

Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council Communiques	19 May and 30 June 2023
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Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council Communique: Skills and Training Ministers met on Friday, 25 August 2023 to further progress the development of a new NSA and associated reforms and continue important discussions on the VET sector's role in meeting governments' commitments in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council Communique	25 August 2023
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Ministers' Media Centre: the Minister for Skills and Training, the Hon Brendan O'Connor MP, and the Prime Minister, the Hon Anthony Albanese MP, announced that National Cabinet had agreed the NSA.

Ministers' Media Centre	16 October 2023
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Ministers' Media Centre: Up to \$30 billion in funding unlocked from today in National Skills Agreement | Ministers' Media Centre (dewr.gov.au)

Ministers' Media Centre	1 January 2024
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Related Questions received on notice

PDR Link	Submitted By	Subject	Answer Summary
SQ23-000610	Grogan, Karen	Vision and Guiding Principles	Details of vision and guiding principles – publicly available
SQ23-001169	O'Sullivan, Matt	Skills Reform Taskforce	Skills Reform Taskforce details and actions

Understanding the VET market – Relative Performance of Sectors

Topic / Issue / Question	Snapshot of Issue / Background	Response Facts / Figures
ITECA representation of the VET system	ITECA has made a series of reports using data to argue that independent providers are more important than public providers and disadvantaged by government.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TAFE and independent providers play complementary roles in the VET system. • Through National Cabinet, all governments have recognised the critical role of TAFE providing stability to the VET system. • The different roles can be understood against a range of factors (set out below)
Type of delivery	<p>TAFEs and private RTOs focus on different types of training delivery – with TAFEs more likely to be delivering full qualifications.</p> <p>Many independent RTOs deliver short, high-volume training, such as first aid and responsible service of alcohol on an exclusively fee-for-service basis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TAFEs: 9 in 10 students undertake a program of study compared with one in 10 doing only subject-only training. • Privates: 4 in 10 students undertake a program of study, compared with 6 in 10 doing only subject-only training. (2022)
Cohorts served	<p>Both TAFEs and private providers play an important role in servicing vulnerable cohorts.</p> <p>However analysis of NCVER 2022 student data shows that a higher proportion of students at TAFEs identify as belonging to disadvantaged cohorts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8% of students at TAFEs identified as having a disability compared to 3% at private RTOs. • 6% of students at TAFEs identified as Indigenous compared to 3% at private RTOs. • 19% of students at TAFEs belonged to the most disadvantaged socio-economic quintile compared to 16% at private RTOs. • 0.9% of students at TAFEs were from very remote areas compared to 0.6% at private RTOs (2022)
Government-funded student volume	TAFEs have a higher share of government-funded program enrolments than independent providers.	<p>There were 1,517,000 government-funded program enrolments in 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 46.9% (711,110) at TAFE • 41.2% (624,455) at independent providers

<p>Government-funded student satisfaction</p>	<p>There is a mixed picture in student satisfaction</p>	<p>2020 Qualification completers: Private RTOs had better outcomes than TAFEs across 11 areas of student satisfaction, with TAFEs having better outcomes than private RTOs in 12.</p> <p>2021 Qualification completers: Private RTOs had better outcomes than TAFEs across 14 areas of student satisfaction, with TAFEs having better outcomes than private RTOs in 7.</p> <p>2022 Qualification completers: Private RTOs had better outcomes than TAFEs across 14 areas of student satisfaction, with TAFEs having better outcomes than private RTOs in 8.</p>
<p>Completions</p>	<p>Completion rates are higher at independent RTOs than TAFEs.</p>	<p>While data shows that most or all other RTO types have higher completion rates than TAFEs at each qualification level, there are a range of factors which drive non-completion, including student characteristics and assessment, which mean that a more nuanced analysis is needed than assessing by provider type.</p>
<p>Expenditure</p>	<p>As has been recognised in government policy and national cabinet decisions, TAFE serves a critical role in providing stability and certainty to the training system.</p> <p>Government funding is focused on TAFE, recognising its central role in the VET system. In addition, TAFE has a particular role in the VET system in serving thin markets and vulnerable cohorts.</p> <p>TAFE often also focuses on programs which are higher cost or more capital intensive.</p>	<p>1,724 of 3,589 RTOs delivered government-funded, nationally recognised training.</p> <p>In 2022, 74.7% of VET Delivery and Capital expenditure was provided to TAFEs and universities. This varied from 63.8% for Queensland to 84.5% for the ACT.</p>
<p>Employer satisfaction</p>	<p>Employers' overall satisfaction has tended to be higher for Private RTOs.</p>	<p>Historically the <i>NCVER's survey of Employers' use and views of VET</i> reported higher employer satisfaction with private RTOs. However, the 2023 survey shows no significant difference between TAFE and private RTOs on overall satisfaction with training.</p> <p><i>Professional or Industry Associations</i> have the highest overall satisfaction rating.</p>

TAFE and Independent RTOs in the National Skills Agreement

- The Australian Government acknowledges and appreciates the crucial work performed by Private Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). In the National Skills Agreement (NSA), all governments have acknowledged the importance of a diverse VET system.
- Under the NSA, the Australian Government is investing up to \$12.4 billion over 5 years (an average of \$2.1 billion each year) to states and territories. This provides significant opportunities for private RTOs.
- While the NSA ensures 70% of Australian Government funding for VET delivery and capital is directed to TAFE and public training providers, initiatives such as TAFE Centres of Excellence and strengthening the VET workforce aim to transform the quality, capability and reputation of VET more broadly.

Program enrolments in TAFE and independent RTOs

- There were 2,765,485 VET program enrolments in 2022. Of these, 808,540 (29%) were at TAFEs and 1,751,310 (63%) were at independent¹ training providers.
- Of the enrolments in independent RTOs:
 - 51% are domestic fee-for-service training
 - 36% are government funded training
 - 14% are international fee-for-service training.
- Of the enrolments in TAFEs:
 - 8% are domestic fee-for-service training
 - 88% are government funded training
 - 4% are international fee-for-service training.

NB: in addition to program enrolments there were 240,120 enrolments in non-AQF courses (training package skill sets and accredited courses) and 7,313,710 subject only enrolments, of which only 350,480 were government-funded.

Government funded student numbers

- There were 4,527,230 VET students in 2022. Of these, 1,288,800 (28.5%) received some level of government funding (see Table 1).
- In 2022, 30,003 of the government-funded students accessed a VET Student Loan.
- Of government-funded students in 2022 (note students may study multiple types of training at different providers in the same year):
 - 1,204,540 (93.5%) studied a nationally-recognised program.
 - 84,260 (6.5%) did not study a nationally-recognised program.
 - 122,055 (9.5%) studied a subject delivered outside of a nationally-recognised program in 2022.
 - 597,895 (46.4%) studied at independent RTOs.
 - 602,615 (46.8%) studied at TAFEs.

Table 1: Government-funded students over time, 2019-2022

	2019	2020	2021	2022
Government-funded students	1,246,450	1,300,630	1,358,800	1,288,800
Change from previous year	+4.2%	+4.3%	+4.5%	-5.2%

Source: NCVER 2023, *Total VET students and courses 2022*, NCVER, Adelaide

¹ Independent providers include private training providers, enterprise providers and community education providers, as reported in the NCVER DataBuilder tool. Some of these providers are actually public entities, but DataBuilder does not allow for this granularity.

Table 1a: Fee-free TAFE 2023 enrolments by RTO type, as at 30 September 2023

RTO Type	Enrolments	Percentage of enrolments
Community-based adult education provider	4,503	1.5%
Dual	19,883	6.7%
Private	33,572	11.3%
TAFE	238,149	80.4%
TOTALS	296,107	

Student outcomes (2022 qualification completers, surveyed in 2023)

Table 2a: Outcomes where TAFEs fared better than Private training providers (%)

#	Outcomes	TAFE institutes	Private training providers	Difference TAFE - private
1	Of those employed before training: employed at a higher skill level after training	22.6	15.3	7.3
2	Of those employed before training: better job after training	42.2	35.9	6.3
3	Commenced further study at a higher level after training	24.9	19.0	5.9
4	Commenced further study after training	36.6	31.2	5.4
5	Improved numerical skills	52.8	48.4	4.4
6	Received at least one personal benefit	95.0	92.3	2.7
7	Recommend training provider	86.1	84.6	1.5
8	Developed problem-solving skills	80.6	79.9	0.7

Table 2b: Outcomes where Private training providers fared better than TAFEs (%)

#	Outcomes	TAFE institutes	Private training providers	Difference TAFE - private
1	Employed in different occupation to training course and training is relevant	24.6	31.3	-6.7
2	Employed after training	77.7	81.5	-3.8
3	Satisfied with support services	76.9	80.7	-3.8
4	Satisfied with the learning resources	81.8	84.6	-2.8
5	Of those not employed before training: employed after training	50.1	52.8	-2.7
6	Achieved main reason for doing the training	86.6	89.1	-2.5
7	Improved employment status after training	67.0	69.5	-2.5
8	Improved writing skills	53.4	55.6	-2.2
9	Satisfied with assessment	88.6	89.7	-1.1
10	Of those employed after training: found the training relevant to their current job	76.8	77.7	-0.9
11	Satisfied with teaching	86.7	87.5	-0.8

Table 2c: Outcomes where TAFEs and Private training providers fared similarly (%)

#	Outcomes	TAFE institutes	Private training providers
1	Of those employed in the same job as before training: improved skills	50.5 (1.2)	52.5 (0.8)
2	Satisfied with the training overall	89.0 (0.3)	89.3 (0.2)
3	Satisfied with the facilities	84.1 (0.3)	84.0 (0.3)
4	Employed or in further study after training	87.7 (0.3)	87.4 (0.2)
5	Satisfied with the location of the training provider	84.8 (0.3)	84.4 (0.3)
6	Of those employed after training: received at least one job-related benefit	82.7 (0.4)	82.0 (0.3)

Source: NCVET 2023, *VET student outcomes 2023*, NCVET, Adelaide

2021 Qualification completers, surveyed in 2022.

Table 2d: Outcomes where TAFEs fared better than Private training providers (%)

#	Outcomes	TAFE institutes	Private training providers	Difference TAFE - private
1	Of those employed before training: employed at a higher skill level after training	22.5	14.9	7.6
2	Of those employed before training: better job after training	42.0	35.1	6.9
3	Commenced further study at a higher level after training	24.7	18.6	6.1
4	Improved numerical skills	52.0	46.3	5.7
5	Commenced further study after training	36.1	30.7	5.4
6	Received at least one personal benefit	94.1	91.1	3.0
7	Recommend training provider	86.3	84.5	1.8
8	Developed problem-solving skills	80.0	78.5	1.5
9	Satisfied with the location of the training provider	85.4	83.9	1.5
10	Improved writing skills	54.3	53.0	1.3
11	Of those employed after training: received at least one job-related benefit	79.7	78.5	1.2

Table 2e: Outcomes where Private training providers fared better than TAFEs (%)

#	Outcomes	TAFE institutes	Private training providers	Difference TAFE - private
1	Employed in different occupation to training course and training is relevant	25.2	31.8	-6.6
2	Employed after training	75.6	80.5	-4.9
3	Of those employed in the same job as before training: improved skills	46.0	50.7	-4.7
4	Of those not employed before training: employed after training	49.4	52.8	-3.4
5	Improved employment status after training	64.4	67.6	-3.2
6	Satisfied with support services	77.2	80.2	-3.0
7	Satisfied with the learning resources	81.5	84.1	-2.6
8	Achieved main reason for doing the training	85.7	88.2	-2.5
9	Satisfied with assessment	88.7	89.8	-1.1
10	Of those employed after training: found the training relevant to their current job	74.2	75.1	-0.9

Table 2e: Outcomes where TAFEs and Private training providers fared similarly (%)

#	Outcomes	TAFE institutes	Private training providers
1	Employed or in further study after training	86.1 (0.3)	86.6 (0.2)
2	Satisfied with the training overall	88.8 (0.3)	89.3 (0.2)
3	Satisfied with teaching	87.1 (0.3)	87.4 (0.2)
4	Satisfied with the facilities	84.3 (0.3)	83.7 (0.3)

Source: NCVET 2022, *VET student outcomes 2022*, NCVET, Adelaide

Table 3: Survey of Employers' Use and Views of VET, 2023: comparison of employers' satisfaction with Private training providers and TAFEs

	TAFE institutes	Private providers	TAFE - Private providers percentage point difference
Overall satisfaction with training	74.7%	74.4%	0.3 p.p.
Relevance of skills taught	75.5%	76.3%	-0.8 p.p.
Condition of equipment and facilities	83.0%	77.0%	6.0 p.p.
Cost effectiveness of the training	76.3%	76.7%	-0.4 p.p.
Flexibility of the provider in meeting your needs	71.0%	78.2%	-7.2 p.p.
Trainers' knowledge and experience of your industry	80.1%	77.6%	2.5 p.p.
Standard of assessment	73.1%	72.3%	0.8 p.p.

Source: NCVET 2023, *Employers' use and views of the VET system 2023*, NCVET, Adelaide.

Table 4: Comparison of completion rates for government-funded students with private training providers and TAFEs, by level of education, 2018 (observed actual)

	All providers	TAFE institutes	Private training providers
Certificate I	34.4 %	22.5 %	38.5 %
Certificate II	42.4 %	33.8 %	50.8 %
Certificate III	53.7 %	51.9 %	57.9 %
Certificate IV	47.4 %	44.2 %	51.9 %
Diploma and above	53.1 %	51.9 %	53.3 %
Overall	47.5 %	43.0 %	54.2 %

Source: NCVET 2023, *VET qualification completion rates 2022*, NCVET, Adelaide.