



Australian Government

Australian Government Jurisdictional Action Plan

2024-2028

Creating opportunities through
Vocational Education and Training





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The document must be attributed as the *Australian Government Jurisdictional Action Plan*.

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, water, and community. We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and the elders, past present and emerging. We acknowledge First Nations custodianship of 65,000 years of knowledge, skills and learning systems.

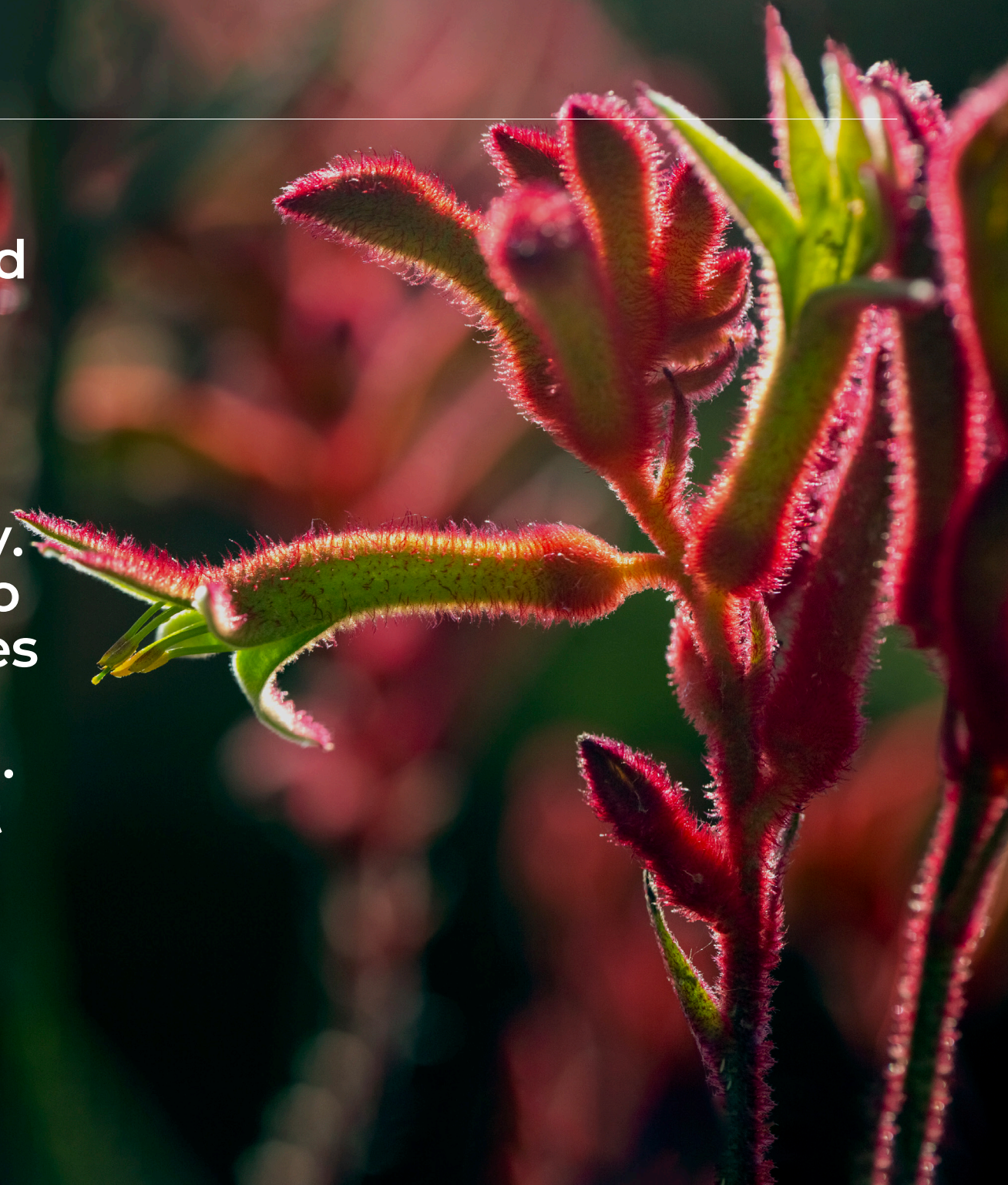


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Minister's Foreword

I am pleased to release the Australian Government Jurisdictional Action Plan, which sets out the Government's strategy to deliver on the shared objectives, outcomes and national priorities of the National Skills Agreement and the National Skills Plan.

Vocational education and training (VET) has provided life-changing opportunities for Australians and contributed to Australia's economic prosperity for over 40 years. It helps people to obtain meaningful, secure and well-paid jobs, and provides opportunities to skill, reskill and upskill, building pathways for lifelong learning.

Since coming to government in 2022 we have worked hard to ensure that no Australian and no community is left behind as the economy evolves in response to national and global trends – the net zero transition, an ageing population, rapid digital and technological transformation, and geopolitical uncertainty – and to support Australians facing current challenges, such as cost of living pressures.

VET plays an essential role in addressing the workforce challenges associated with these long-term trends. Its practical, skills-based learning models are more important than ever as technology continues to drive changes in the way we work, increasing demand for greater connections between the classroom and the workplace.

Through initiatives such as Fee-Free TAFE, the redesign of the Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) Program, which provides help with foundational reading, writing, numeracy and digital skills, and the Remote

“

As a key pillar of Australia's education and training and landscape, VET plays an essential role in addressing critical workforce shortages in priority sectors across the whole economy.

01

Minister's Foreword

Training Hub network we're removing barriers and supporting access to VET for all Australians. We have introduced legislation to make Free TAFE an enduring feature of the national VET system. We're also making changes to strengthen the apprenticeships system and increase the number of Australians completing apprenticeships, particularly in priority sectors like clean energy, construction and manufacturing.

Our government is committed to embedding and delivering on our commitments in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. We are partnering with the Coalition of Peaks to co-design actions that will help improve priority reform outcomes and achieve Closing the Gap targets for First Nations students within the VET system. We will listen to and be guided by our First Nations partners on skills and training matters that affect them.

We are investing \$12.6 billion under the landmark National Skills Agreement to

expand and strengthen Australia's VET system and deliver the skills Australia needs to drive economic growth and ensure every Australian can benefit. The Agreement, along with our ongoing commitment to Free TAFE, returns TAFE to the heart of the VET system. It recognises the central role TAFEs play in a sustainable VET system and the benefits they provide to communities, beyond skills and training, as trusted public institutions.

The National Skills Agreement marks an important shift in how governments work together by embedding national cooperation and collaborative stewardship. A new cycle of planning, evaluation and evidence-based reform will drive continuous improvement of the VET system. This inaugural Jurisdictional Action Plan is the beginning of the cycle and the starting point for further engagement.

The Hon Andrew Giles MP
Minister for Skills and Training

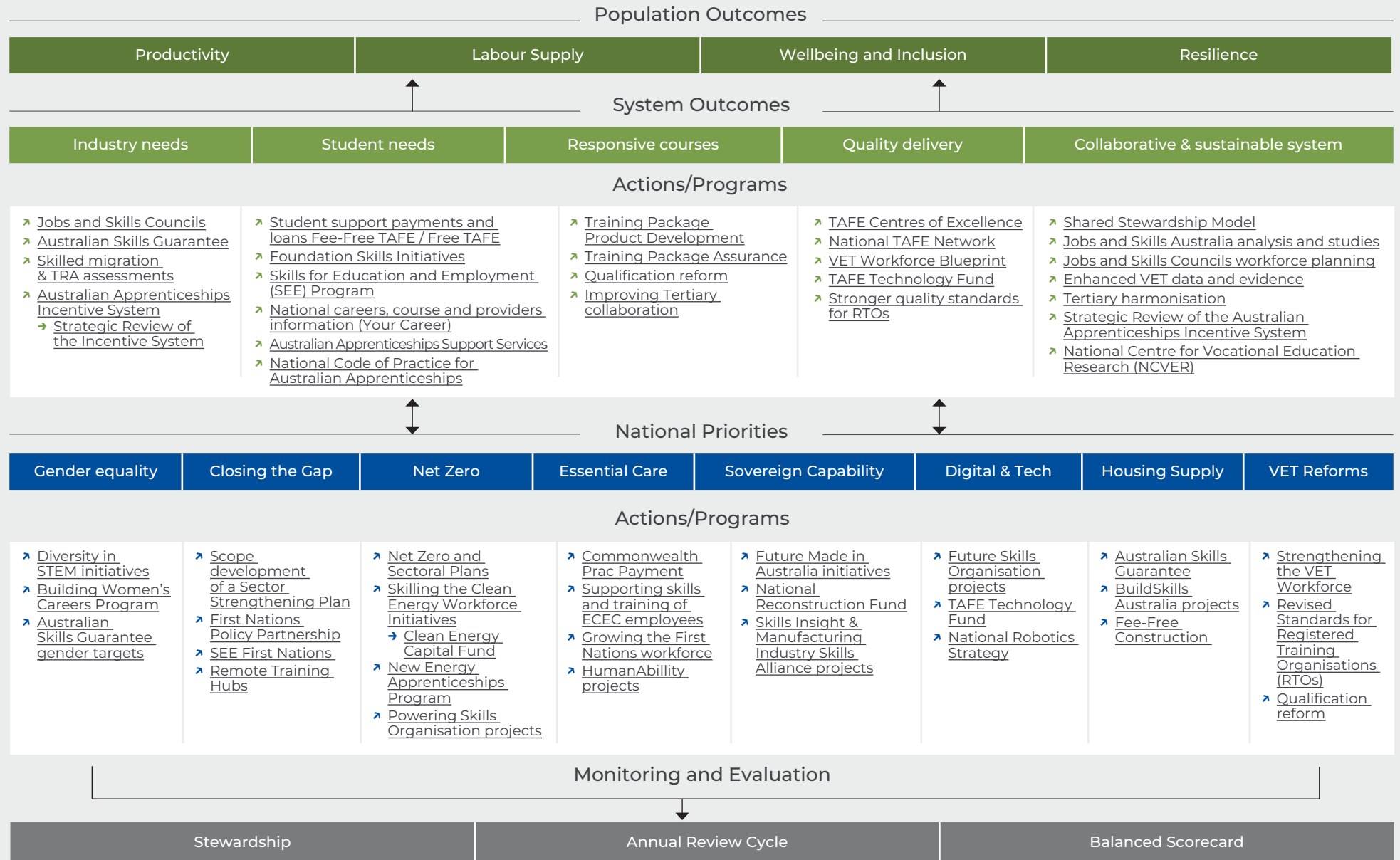


02

The Australian Government's role in the national skills system

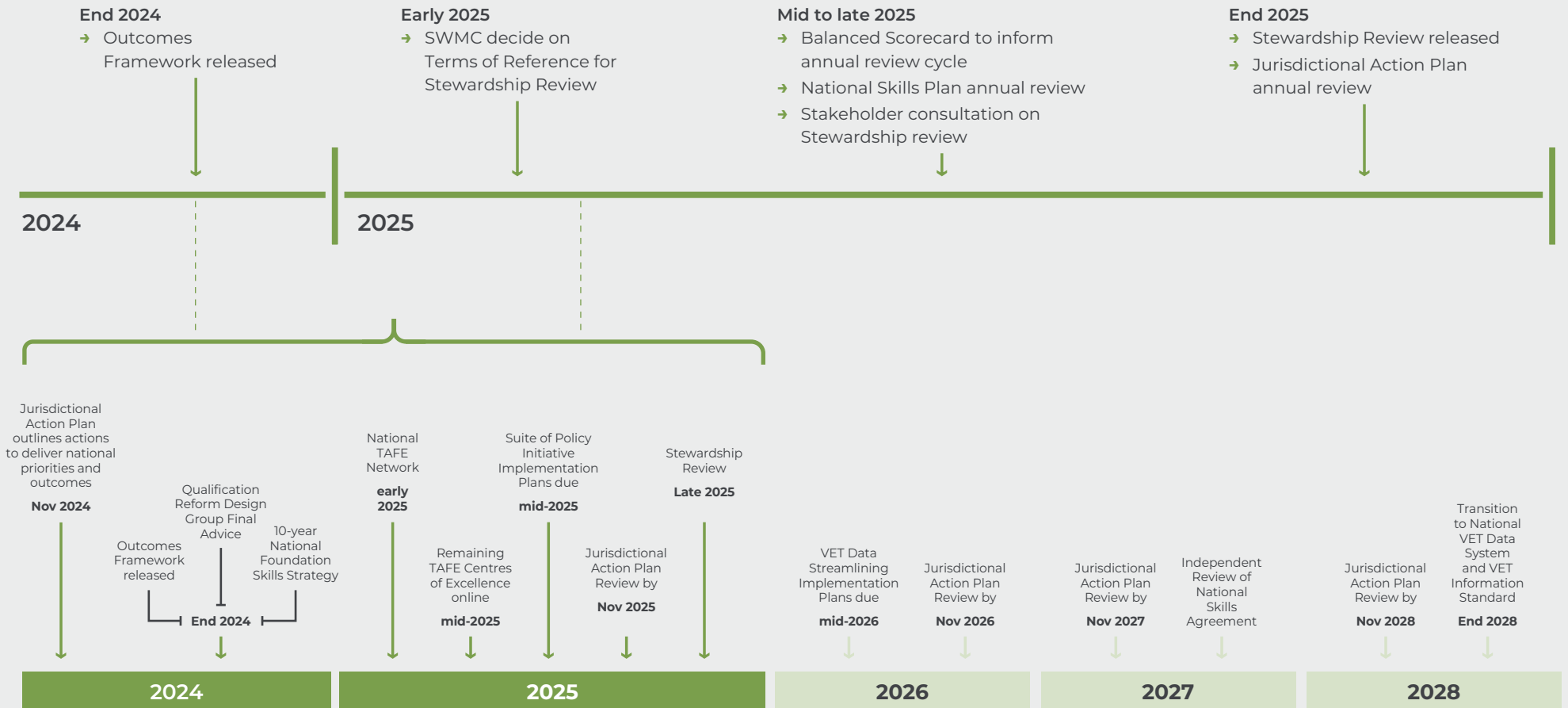


Jurisdictional Action Plan - Overview of Actions



Timeline

The next 12 months for our Action Plan



National Skills Agreement Timeline

The Australian Government's first jurisdictional action plan provides a roadmap to a stronger VET system and a starting point for engagement

High quality VET is essential for meeting Australia's economic, employment and social needs, benefitting industry, individuals and the community. The Australian Government is working with states and territories to ensure the VET system is delivering the skills we need in a changing economic, social and geopolitical environment.

The National Skills Agreement represents all governments' commitment to revitalise the national VET system and provides a foundation for achieving other major reforms that depend on a highly skilled workforce, including our Net Zero ambitions, a Future Made in Australia and the National Housing Accord.

We are achieving this through strategic reform, increased investment and a new model of shared stewardship of the VET system.

This Jurisdictional Action Plan maps the steps the Australian Government is taking to deliver on the shared outcomes and priorities articulated in the National Skills Agreement. It provides clarity for industry, students, workers, TAFEs and other training providers, and First Nations people about the initiatives that will affect them. It is also the starting point for conversations and shared effort to drive improvement through a new annual cycle of evaluation and planning.

We want this Plan to kickstart a continuous cycle of learning and improvement that offers stakeholders opportunities to inform our approaches in building a stronger, more sustainable VET system.





Setting a vision

This Plan describes how the Australian Government will achieve the goals of the National Skills Agreement through increased and better targeted investment in the VET system. It explains how we will work with partners to deliver on these goals through a new model of shared stewardship involving genuine collaboration, evaluation and evidence-driven reform.

→ See section 2



Delivering on outcomes and national priorities

The Plan details our ambitions and action to deliver on the population and system outcomes and national priorities in the National Skills Agreement.

→ See sections 3 and 4



Ensuring transparency and accountability

This Plan, together with the National Skills Plan and state and territory jurisdictional plans, provides a clear picture of the individual and shared action being taken to deliver on the goals of the National Skills Agreement. This will help VET stakeholders engage with initiatives and prioritise their own efforts to ensure we're all driving in the same direction. Assessments of progress in later Plans will support genuine and informed engagement and provide accountability for the effectiveness of actions to deliver on outcomes and priorities.

→ See sections 3, 4 and 5



Shaping the future

This Plan is part of the start of the planning process under the National Skills Agreement. It will be updated annually through a process of engagement, evaluation and review.

Future Plans will:

- reflect the progress made
- identify gaps and set out new actions
- respond to the updated National Skills Plan and changes to national priorities and
- be informed by evidence and advice from Jobs and Skills Australia, the Jobs and Skills Councils, the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), through our partnership arrangements with First Nations organisations, and engagement with stakeholders.

→ See section 5

The Australian Government is a steward of the national VET system

STEWARDSHIP

The National Skills Agreement introduced a fundamental shift in the way the Australian, state and territory governments work together, and with our partners and stakeholders, to address shared challenges and opportunities. A new model of shared stewardship will support collaborative and purposeful action towards national outcomes and priorities. This approach acknowledges the complexity of delivering on our desired outcomes and recognises that by working together we can achieve something greater than the sum of the individual parts.

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

To achieve our ambitious agenda for the VET system, partnerships and engagement with a diverse range of stakeholders, including Jobs and Skills Councils, employer and union peak bodies, TAFEs, private and not for profit training providers, First Nations people and community representatives, will be crucial.

TRIPARTISM

We've embedded tripartism into how we do business, through the establishment of Jobs and Skills Australia - including its tripartite Ministerial Advisory Board - and the Jobs and Skills Councils, to ensure real codesign of policies and programs between industry, unions and government. We have also established tripartite expert groups, such as the Qualification Reform Design Group, to drive reform in complex areas.

EVIDENCE DRIVEN

We ensure policy development and program implementation is informed by industry expertise, accurate and relevant data and ongoing monitoring and evaluation.



Working in partnership to improve First Nations VET outcomes

Forming and establishing foundational partnerships with First Nations peoples and organisations in the skills sector is key to delivering successful Closing the Gap outcomes under the National Skills Agreement. The Agreement includes dedicated investment to progress specific policy initiatives aligned to the four Priority Reforms in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. The Australian Government is working in partnership with the Coalition of Peaks and states and territories to design and establish nationally networked VET policy partnership arrangements, commencing with an Interim Partnership Committee.

Following two broader roundtable events co-hosted with the Coalition of Peaks, the First Nations VET Interim Partnership Committee was established in October 2024 with membership from across the Peaks and the Australian and state and territory governments. The Interim Committee will steer immediate work on the Australian Government's key priorities and deliverables under the National Skills Agreement and co-design the nationally networked VET policy partnership. The Committee will also play a role in guiding the development of projects and pilots to advance national First Nations skills priorities.

Through the Interim Committee and by working directly with the Coalition of Peaks, the Australian Government will engage with First Nations partners in the annual cycle of evaluation, review and development on the National Skills Plan, the National Skills Agreement Outcomes Framework and the Australian Government Jurisdictional Action Plan.

WHAT WE'VE HEARD

“ We need the space and the time to work through what's best for the sector and for community ”

“ Walking together, working together ”

“ We need to be mindful not to just fall back into default relationships and be conscious of how we can work differently ”



How the Australian Government contributes to the VET system

Directly funding parts of the national training system and **providing funding** to states and territories to operate their training systems

Supporting an industry led **National Training System** through **Jobs and Skills Councils** and the development of **Training Packages**

Providing **national data collection, labour market and VET intelligence and analysis** through the National Centre for Vocational Education Research and Jobs and Skills Australia.

Promoting access to evidence based and learner-centred information aimed at growing aspiration and increasing attainment through **Your Career**.



Providing a **national regulatory framework** through the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*, Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015 and the Australian Skills Quality Authority.

Providing a **skills assessment service**, through Trades Recognition Australia, to support access to migrants' skills.

Maintaining the national training register, **training.gov.au**, the central source of truth on registered training organisations and nationally recognised training.

Leading **stewardship** of the national VET system as Chair of the Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council

The Australian Government is targeting investments in ways that keep barriers to participation low and choices high



FEE-FREE TAFE AND ONGOING FREE TAFE

The Australian Government has partnered with states and territories to deliver over \$1.5 billion funding for 500,000 Fee-Free TAFE and VET places across Australia over 2023 to 2026 and committed to supporting 100,000 Free TAFE places annually from 2027.



AUSTRALIAN APPRENTICESHIPS

We fund a range of initiatives to reduce the financial impost on employers and students, increase apprenticeships' attractiveness, and improve the experience and overall outcome.



FOUNDATION SKILLS

In addition to funding provided through the National Skills Agreement, we deliver the Skills for Education and Employment Program, which provides free and flexible training for adults to build their language, literacy, numeracy and digital literacy skills and the Adult Migrant English Program, which supports people to learn English language skills and helps prepare them for vocational education and training.



VET STUDENT LOANS

We offer VET Student Loans to eligible students in approved diploma and above courses, deferring the cost of training to when the student's earning capacity has exceeded a reasonable threshold.



PRAC PAYMENT

From July 2025, we will provide direct cost of living relief to eligible students studying a Diploma of Nursing to help offset costs incurred through mandatory practicum placements.

Australian Government funding of VET

Beginning on 1 January 2024, **the National Skills Agreement will deliver up to \$12.6 billion in Australian Government investment over 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 long-term funding commitment includes flexible funding for states and territories to manage and operate their skills systems, and targeted funding to support the implementation of agreed reforms. It represents an additional \$3.7 billion on previous funding levels.

In 2024-25, the Australian Government's expenditure on VET is projected to be **\$5.1 billion***. Some of the measures within this expenditure include:



\$2.4B

under the National Skills Agreement

\$1.44B

to support Australian Apprenticeships

Supporting students to access VET through:

- VET Student Loans
- Australian Apprenticeship Support Loans

\$44.5M

for Fee-Free TAFE

\$129M

for the Skills for Education and Employment Program

\$30M

for TAFE Technology Fund

\$114M

for Jobs and Skills Councils

\$500M

Fee Free TAFE over 3 years, 2024-26

\$8M

supporting Women to Achieve Higher Paying Careers through VET

* As at 2024-25 budget

TAFE is at the heart of a high quality and sustainable VET system

The Australian Government is rebuilding and embedding TAFE's place at the centre of Australia's diverse skills and training sector.

The National Skills Agreement and complementary initiatives and reforms will ensure TAFE is a valued community asset that:

- provides access to education and training to Australians from all backgrounds
- drives quality improvements across the VET sector
- innovates in teaching and learning practice
- is a centre of innovation that is responsive to industry
- supports students to succeed and
- provides opportunities for Australians to upskill and retrain.

Complementing TAFE is a diverse sector of independent private and community providers, including First Nations Owned and Community Controlled Training Organisations. These training providers are operational across all of Australia, including in regional and remote settings.

The Aboriginal Community Controlled RTO sector plays an important role in meeting complex student needs and delivering appropriate workforce development for Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. Delivery partnerships between the First Nations RTO sectors and TAFE and private providers also ensure learners are supported and can thrive in diverse educational settings.

The Australian Government is also partnering with states and territories under the National Skills Agreement to establish up to 20 TAFE Centres of Excellence and a new National TAFE Network.

In addition to these initiatives under the National Skills Agreement, the Government is investing in:

- Fee-Free TAFE to remove financial barriers to training
- the TAFE Technology Fund to support TAFEs to upgrade and expand facilities
- pilots for self-accreditation for TAFEs to facilitate increased innovation and responsiveness
- a minimum of 100,000 Free TAFE places every year from 1 January 2027, to be underpinned by legislation.

Investment and reforms to strengthen the TAFE sector will play an important role in driving achievement of each of the outcomes identified for the VET system.

/// The National Skills Agreement directs at least **70% of Australian Government funding** for VET delivery by states and territories to TAFE and public training providers, including dual-sector universities.

A person wearing safety glasses and gloves is operating a drill press in a workshop. The person is focused on the task, and the machine is drilling into a metal block. The background is slightly blurred, showing other parts of the workshop.

Actions to achieve National Skills Agreement outcomes

03

Delivering on outcomes under the National Skills Agreement

Through the National Skills Agreement, governments have articulated a suite of shared ambitions for the VET system in an outcomes framework. The framework includes:

- High-level ambitions for the Australian economy, community and individuals reflected in four **population-level outcomes**
- Ambitions for aspects of the VET system that will contribute to achieving the population outcomes, reflected in five **system-level outcomes**.

The Australian Government’s action, investment and reforms in this Plan, together with the state and territory jurisdictional plans, the National Skills Plan and the National Skills Agreement are all directed to delivering on these outcomes.

Population Outcomes

<p>Productivity</p> <p>Productivity growth is improved by a better skilled workforce well matched to labour demand</p>	<p>Labour Supply</p> <p>Industries, including critical and emerging areas, can access and develop the skilled workforce they need.</p>	<p>Wellbeing and Inclusion</p> <p>All Australians, including priority groups, are able to build the skills needed for well paid, secure work aligned to their interests.</p>	<p>Resilience</p> <p>All Australians, including priority groups, have skills that allow them to be adaptable in their work and life now and in the future</p>
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System Outcomes

<p>Industry needs</p> <p>VET activity is aligned to workforce demand</p>	<p>Student needs</p> <p>VET learning supports and pathways are accessible and effective, and meet the diversity of learner needs and objectives, including for priority groups</p>	<p>Responsive courses</p> <p>VET courses are trusted, relevant and available at the right time</p>	<p>Quality delivery</p> <p>VET delivery is of a consistently high-quality and provides a positive learner experience, including for priority groups</p>	<p>Collaborative & sustainable system</p> <p>VET system governance advances stewardship of an effective and efficient national VET system, strengthens partner participation, and ensures system sustainability.</p>
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National Priorities

Gender equality	Closing the Gap	Net Zero	Essential Care	Sovereign Capability	Digital & Tech	Housing Supply	VET Reforms
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Delivering on population outcomes under the National Skills Agreement

High-level ambitions for the Australian economy, community and individuals are encapsulated in four population-level outcomes. These outcomes reflect the Government's overarching ambitions for employment and the economy detailed in *Working Future: The Australian Government's White Paper on Jobs and Opportunities* and additionally for First Nations people, in the objective of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

A more skilled population will create better life-long employment and social outcomes

for individuals and provide skills more closely matched to the changing needs of our economy and community. The skills system is just one factor contributing to the achievement of these population-level outcomes. Alongside the National Skills Agreement, key elements of the Government's broad strategic reform agenda - including a Future Made in Australia, development of a Net Zero Plan, the Migration Strategy, and initiatives to support the care and support economy – are directed to the achievement of these overarching ambitions.



Population Outcomes

Productivity	Labour Supply	Wellbeing and Inclusion	Resilience
Productivity growth is improved by a better skilled workforce well matched to labour demand	Industries, including critical and emerging areas, can access and develop the skilled workforce they need	All Australians, including priority groups, are able to build the skills needed for well paid, secure work aligned to their interests	All Australians, including priority groups, have skills that allow them to be adaptable in their work and life now and in the future

PRODUCTIVITY

Productivity growth is increased by a better skilled workforce. VET is integral to achieving our ambitions for labour market performance.

Education and training, including VET, is equipping workers with the critical skills and knowledge required for a productive economy, building Australia's workforce participation and contributing to its sustained economic prosperity. Education and training, including VET:

- Builds human capital
- Boosts labour force participation
- Contributes to higher employment rates and wage growth
- Develops the skills and knowledge needed by industry.



WELLBEING AND INCLUSION

All Australians, including priority groups, are supported to develop the skills needed for well-paid, secure work aligned to their interests. The VET system promotes opportunity and reduces barriers for all Australians.

For many Australians, particularly disadvantaged cohorts, VET provides an entry point to the education sector and helps overcome entrenched barriers to education, training and work, allowing Australians from all backgrounds to successfully participate in the workforce.

TAFE institutes play a unique role in delivering life-changing training to students from priority cohorts, helping break down barriers these cohorts face in accessing the workforce.

Delivery partnerships between the First Nations sector, TAFEs and private providers ensure learners are supported and can thrive in diverse educational settings

Aboriginal Community Controlled and First Nations Owned RTOs are a critical enabler of wellbeing and inclusion for First Nations students

LABOUR SUPPLY

Industries, including in critical and emerging areas, can access and develop the skilled workforce they need. Growing demand for skilled workers is driving our increased investment in the VET system.

The education system, including VET, is critical to lifting skills and building our future workforce. Jobs and Skills Australia is providing expertise to understand and plan for our skill needs:

- Almost 60% of recent employment growth has been in occupations with a VET pathway
- More than 9 out of 10 new jobs over the next 10 years are forecast to require tertiary qualifications, with almost half having a VET pathway.

Funding to expand the VET system and support to make it more accessible for all students will help grow our skilled workforce.



RESILIENCE

All Australians, including priority groups, have the skills that allow them to adapt in their work and life now and in the future. Demographic and global forces are driving demand for new and different skills and informing how we target our investment to ensure a resilient workforce.

- Ageing population
- Rising demand for care and support services
- Climate change and shift to clean energy
- Rising geopolitical risk and fragmentation

Our efforts and investment are targeted to national priority skills, industries and cohorts.

For individuals, VET offers crucial opportunities for skilling, upskilling and reskilling, with strong links with industry and study programs that provide training opportunities and delivery models to help students develop contemporary, relevant real-world skills.

Reforming VET qualifications and tertiary pathways will support workforce development and a more resilient economy.

Achieving VET system outcomes

Australian governments' ambitions for the operation and performance of the VET system itself are reflected in the five **system-level outcomes**. Addressing these outcomes will create a strong and sustainable VET system that meets the needs of students, workers and employers.

The Australian Government's actions to address system-level outcomes and deliver on the national priorities are designed to help drive progress in relation to the population-level outcomes and the economic, employment and social benefits they represent.

National targets for each of the system outcomes will be included in an outcomes framework to be finalised in late 2024.






Many of the reforms outlined on the following pages build on one another and will contribute to achieving multiple outcomes (see page 24) as well as to national priorities (see Section 4).










System Outcomes

Industry needs	Student needs	Responsive courses	Quality delivery	Collaborative & sustainable system
VET activity is aligned to workforce demand	VET learning supports and pathways are accessible and effective, and meet the diversity of learner needs and objectives, including for priority groups	VET courses are trusted, relevant and available at the right time	VET delivery is of a consistently high-quality and provides a positive learner experience, including for priority groups	VET system governance advances stewardship of an effective and efficient national VET system, strengthens partner participation, and ensures system sustainability

Actions to achieve National Skills Agreement outcomes

Action/program Initiative	STUDENT NEEDS 	QUALITY DELIVERY 	INDUSTRY NEEDS 	RESPONSIVE COURSES 	COLLABORATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE SYSTEM 
Apprentice Connect Australia Providers	Explored in detail under outcome		Also contributes to this outcome		
Building Women's Careers	Explored in detail under outcome		Also contributes to this outcome		
Fee-Free TAFE / Free TAFE	Explored in detail under outcome		Also contributes to this outcome		
Foundation Skills	Explored in detail under outcome	Also contributes to this outcome			Also contributes to this outcome
Improved Completions	Explored in detail under outcome		Also contributes to this outcome		
Training.gov.au	Explored in detail under outcome		Also contributes to this outcome		Also contributes to this outcome
Your Career website	Explored in detail under outcome		Also contributes to this outcome		
Remote Training Hubs	Explored in detail under outcome				
Skills for Education and Employment Program	Explored in detail under outcome				
Student support payments and loans	Explored in detail under outcome		Also contributes to this outcome		
National TAFE Network	Also contributes to this outcome	Explored in detail under outcome	Also contributes to this outcome	Also contributes to this outcome	Also contributes to this outcome
Revision to RTO Standards		Explored in detail under outcome		Also contributes to this outcome	
TAFE Centres of Excellence	Also contributes to this outcome	Explored in detail under outcome	Also contributes to this outcome	Also contributes to this outcome	Also contributes to this outcome
TAFE Technology Fund		Explored in detail under outcome	Also contributes to this outcome	Also contributes to this outcome	
VET Workforce Measures	Also contributes to this outcome	Explored in detail under outcome	Also contributes to this outcome		Also contributes to this outcome
Australian Apprenticeship Incentive System	Also contributes to this outcome		Explored in detail under outcome		

Actions to achieve National Skills Agreement outcomes

Action/program Initiative	STUDENT NEEDS	QUALITY DELIVERY	INDUSTRY NEEDS	RESPONSIVE COURSES	COLLABORATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE SYSTEM
 Explored in detail under outcome  Also contributes to this outcome					
Australian Skills Guarantee	Light blue	Light grey	Light teal	Light grey	Light grey
Skilled Migration	Light grey	Light grey	Light teal	Light grey	Light grey
Jobs and Skills Councils	Light blue	Light blue	Light teal	Light blue	Light teal
ASQA – Regulation and Course Accreditation	Light blue	Light teal	Light blue	Light teal	Light blue
Qualification Reform	Light blue	Light grey	Light blue	Light teal	Light grey
Tertiary Collaboration (TAFE self-accreditation)	Light grey	Light grey	Light grey	Light teal	Light grey
Training Package Assurance	Light blue	Light blue	Light blue	Light teal	Light blue
Closing the Gap	Light blue	Light blue	Light blue	Light grey	Light teal
Jobs and Skills Australia	Light grey	Light grey	Light grey	Light grey	Light teal
National Centre for Vocational Education Research	Light grey	Light grey	Light grey	Light grey	Light teal
Tertiary Harmonisation	Light blue	Light blue	Light blue	Light blue	Light teal
VET in Secondary Schools	Light blue	Light blue	Light blue	Light blue	Light teal
VET Data and Evidence	Light grey	Light grey	Light grey	Light blue	Light teal

Student needs

We are meeting student needs by ensuring VET learning supports and pathways are accessible and effective, and meet the diversity of learner needs and objectives, including for priority groups

BUILDING FOUNDATION SKILLS

The Australian Government is committed to supporting adults across Australia to increase their literacy, numeracy, digital literacy, and employability skills – known collectively as foundation skills – so they can participate in further education and training, employment and the broader community.

- We will deliver a ‘no wrong door’ experience for learners, including no or low-fee access to foundation skills training
- We are finalising a 10-year national foundation skills strategy to strengthen the sector, with \$53.26 million for actions to give it effect. All Australian governments have agreed to develop the strategy by the end of 2024.

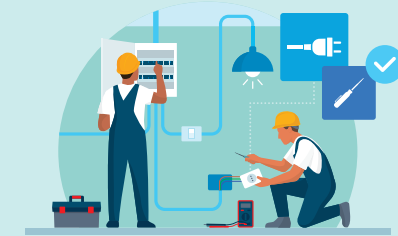
The Government is investing:

\$436.4 million over 4 years delivering the redesigned **Skills for Education and Employment Program** to provide ongoing foundation skills training that is accessible, flexible and delivers outcomes for participants across Australia, including \$46.8 million to support up to 2,200 First Nations people per year to access locally tailored, whole of community, skills training through place-based grants.

/// The **Adult Migrant English Program** is provided by the Australian Government to support eligible migrants to learn English language skills that can help prepare them for vocational education and training.



Student needs



Providing effective support to ensure all Australians can access VET and gain the skills they need to thrive

The Australian Government provides financial support to help students access VET, including:

- **Australian Apprenticeship incentive payments**
- **Australian Apprenticeship Support Loans**
- **VET Student Loans**
- **Youth Allowance, Language, Literacy and Numeracy Supplement, Austudy and ABSTUDY**
- **Commonwealth Prac Payment** (from 1 July 2025).

ENSURING AWARENESS OF VET OPTIONS AND PATHWAYS

The **Your Career** website is a trusted national source of evidence-based information on education, training, and career pathways. Your Career provides information to support target groups, including women returning to the workforce, First Nations People, young people, people in rural and regional areas and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The **National Training Register** enhancement project will build modern, responsive, transparent technology to underpin skills reform and support a modern VET sector by delivering:

- Enhancements to Training.gov.au
- Training Product Central
- Modernised webservices
- A new system to support the training product development process.

“
What we've heard
Over 200 stakeholders provided valuable feedback on the new training.gov.au website.
”

WE'RE ENSURING STUDENTS AND APPRENTICES ARE SET UP TO SUCCEED

Apprentice Connect Australia Providers work with apprentices and employers, tailoring supports to apprentices' specific needs and helping employers to better understand their roles and responsibilities in the workplace, ensuring they are prepared to take on an apprentice. This includes strengthened mentoring services for those apprentices most in need of support.

Through the **improved completions** initiative under the National Skills Agreement, the government will invest **\$250 million** to support a coordinated national effort to lift completion rates and improve outcomes for students and apprentices, focussing on students facing barriers and those historically underrepresented in the workforce such as First Nations people, women and those with disability.

As part of the improved completions initiative, all Skills Ministers have committed to jointly refreshing the **National Code of Good Practice for Australian Apprenticeships** and developing best practice guidance and resources for apprentices and employers of apprentices.



The government is establishing partnerships **to support national priority cohorts access training and work opportunities:**

- With the Northern Territory Government to establish a **Remote Training Hub Network** to help Central Australian First Nations people access on-Country VET that meets community needs and leads to local, sustainable jobs
- Under the **Building Women's Careers** Program, partnership projects will be funded to drive systemic structural and cultural change in key male-dominated training and work environments to improve women's access to flexible, safe, supportive and inclusive training and work opportunities. Partnerships will be between industry, employers, registered unions, training organisations and community organisations.

Fee-Free TAFE

Through the Fee-Free TAFE Skills Agreement, we are partnering with states and territories to invest over **\$1.5 billion** to deliver **500,000** Fee-Free TAFE and VET places from 2023-2026.

This includes Australian Government investment of:

- **\$493.3 million** for **180,000** Fee-Free TAFE places in 2023 (Tranche 1)
- **\$414.4 million** for **300,000** Fee-Free TAFE places over 2024-2026 (Tranche 2)
- **\$86.4 million** for **20,000** Fee-Free TAFE construction places over 2025-2026 (Fee-Free Construction).

Fee-Free TAFE supports student access in areas of high demand and skills need by removing financial barriers and providing access to priority groups, including the most disadvantaged.

The government has introduced the **Free TAFE Bill 2024** to lock-in ongoing support for a **minimum of 100,000 Free TAFE places each year** from 1 January 2027. The Bill will create an ongoing Commonwealth commitment to grant financial assistance to states and territories to deliver Free TAFE places, subject to terms and conditions being agreed between the Commonwealth and the states.

Increased completion of courses in these areas will support industries experiencing skills shortages and emerging growth to access the workforce they need.

Fee-Free TAFE is available to students from priority groups, including First Nations Australians, young people (17-24), people who are out of work or receiving income support payments, unpaid carers, women facing economic insecurity, women undertaking study in non-traditional fields, people with disability and certain categories of visa holders.

Through the provision of funding for wraparound support services to help learners access training best suited to their needs, Fee-Free TAFE ensures VET learning supports and pathways are accessible and effective, and meet the diversity of learner needs and objectives.

Priority sectors under Fee-Free TAFE include Agriculture, Care, Construction, Defence, Early Childhood Education and Care, Hospitality and Tourism, Manufacturing, Sovereign Capability, Technology and Digital, and VET workforce, helping to deliver on our national priorities.



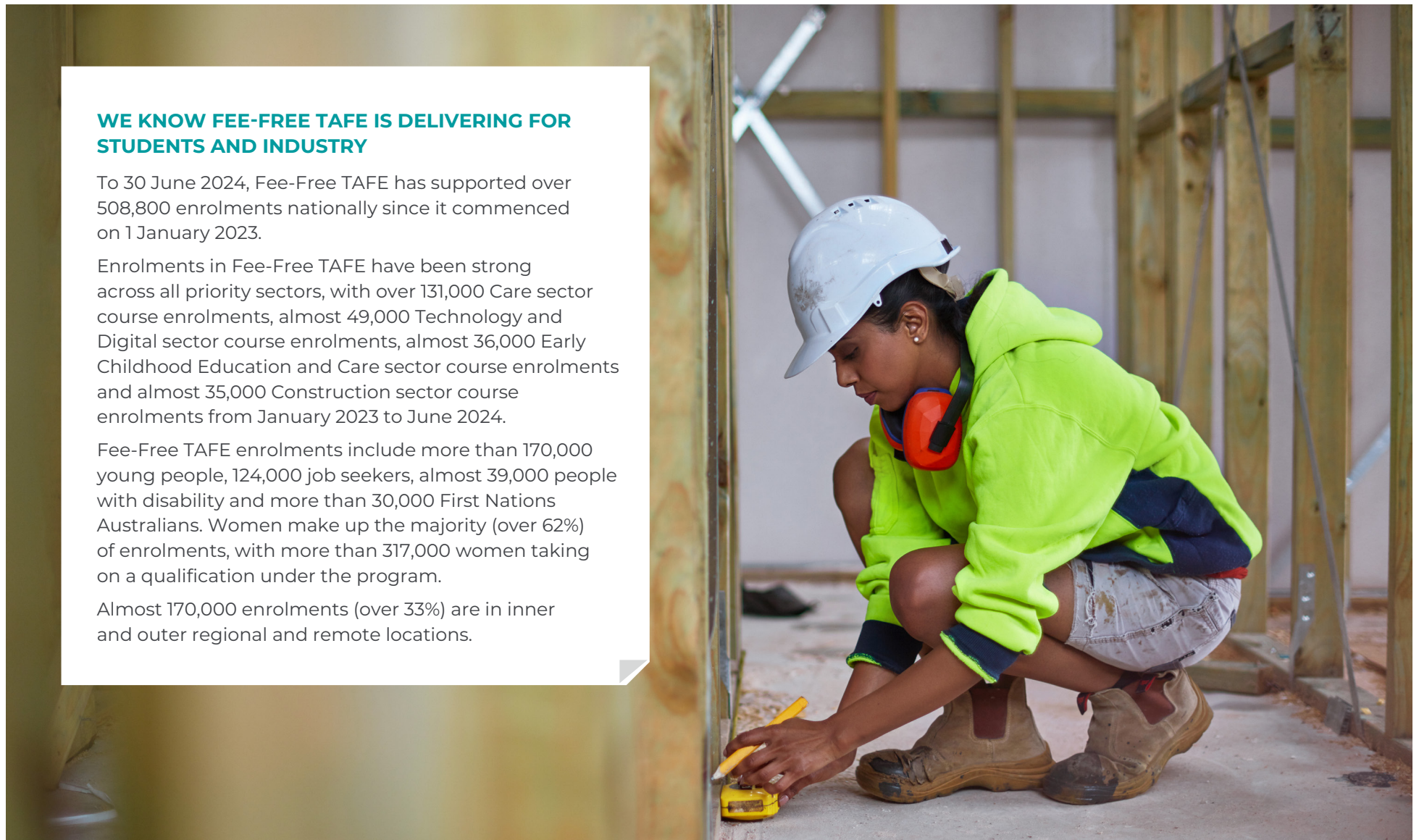
WE KNOW FEE-FREE TAFE IS DELIVERING FOR STUDENTS AND INDUSTRY

To 30 June 2024, Fee-Free TAFE has supported over 508,800 enrolments nationally since it commenced on 1 January 2023.

Enrolments in Fee-Free TAFE have been strong across all priority sectors, with over 131,000 Care sector course enrolments, almost 49,000 Technology and Digital sector course enrolments, almost 36,000 Early Childhood Education and Care sector course enrolments and almost 35,000 Construction sector course enrolments from January 2023 to June 2024.

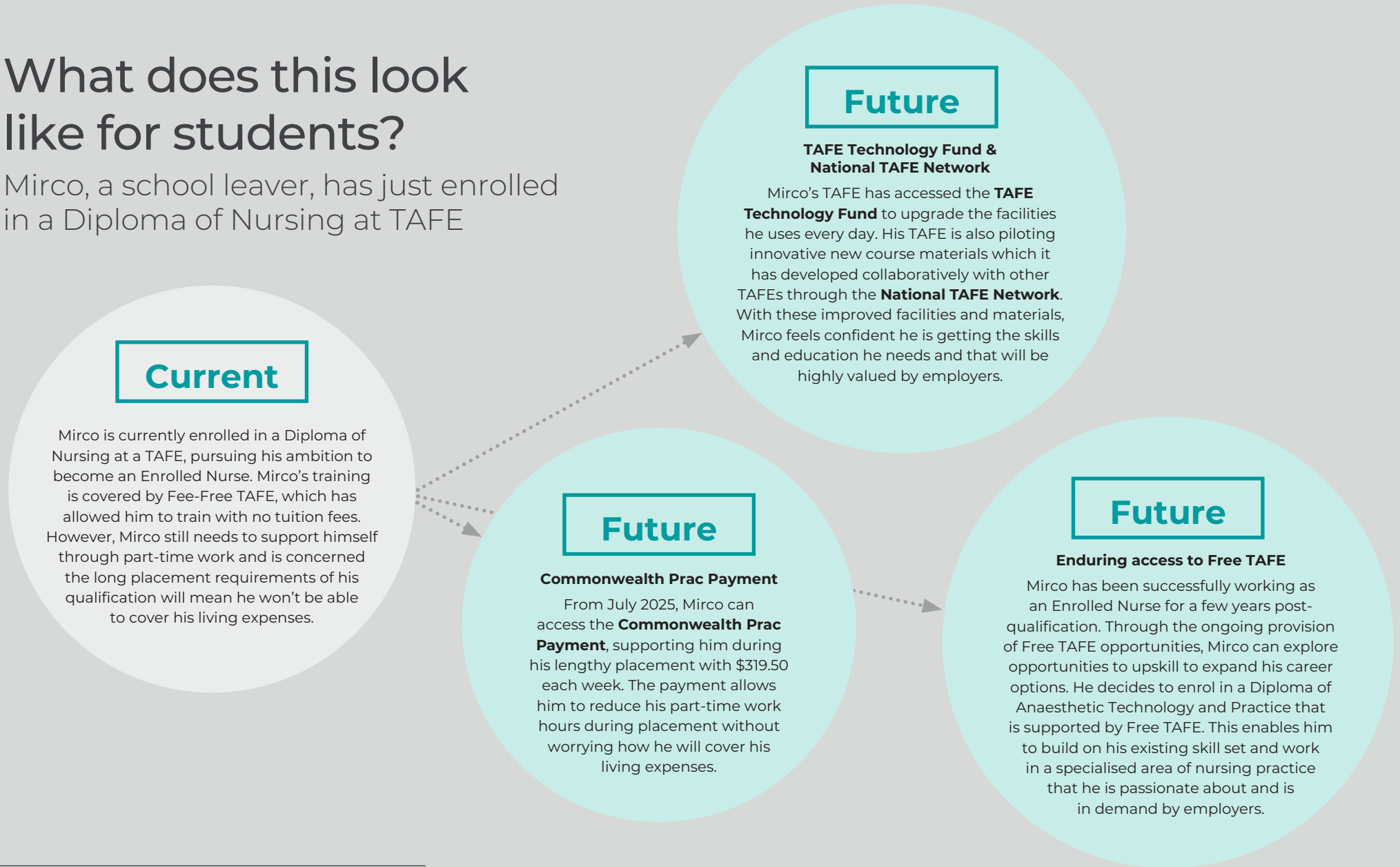
Fee-Free TAFE enrolments include more than 170,000 young people, 124,000 job seekers, almost 39,000 people with disability and more than 30,000 First Nations Australians. Women make up the majority (over 62%) of enrolments, with more than 317,000 women taking on a qualification under the program.

Almost 170,000 enrolments (over 33%) are in inner and outer regional and remote locations.



What does this look like for students?

Mirco, a school leaver, has just enrolled in a Diploma of Nursing at TAFE



Quality Delivery

We're improving collaboration, building capability, lifting standards, and improving the relevance of VET

STRONGER QUALITY STANDARDS FOR RTOS

Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) ensure nationally consistent, high-quality training and assessment across the VET system. Revised Standards, to be enacted from 1 January 2025 and come into full effect from 1 July 2025, will have a stronger focus on quality outcomes for learners and employers, provide greater clarity for RTOs and regulators, and allow for more flexibility and innovation in training delivery and support.

The changes will:

- better reflect the diversity of the VET sector and ensure the Standards are fit-for-purpose across different RTO settings and delivery contexts
- embed quality aspirations and
- clearly articulate characteristics required of RTOs to foster a shared understanding of high-quality delivery for all users of the VET system.

BUILDING A HIGH-QUALITY & SUSTAINABLE VET WORKFORCE

The **VET Workforce Blueprint**, released in October 2024, provides a **collaborative roadmap to a sustainable and capable VET workforce**. The Australian Government is investing up to \$100 million over five years through the National Skills Agreement to deliver on the Blueprint, including \$70 million for state and territory initiatives to respond to the Blueprint and \$30 million to support agreed areas of national action.

We're leading implementation of an initial suite of national actions:

- Occupational mapping for the VET workforce
- Developing a VET workforce data strategy
- Establishing an ongoing research program for key workforce issues
- Mapping and analysing compliance and administrative burden.



/// We're also providing \$12 million to Jobs and Skills Councils for initiatives to identify and respond to VET workforce challenges faced by relevant industries.

High-quality TAFE at the heart of VET

TAFEs are the heart of the VET system and the cornerstone a high performing and world class sector. The Australian Government's investments are empowering TAFEs to drive quality and innovation in VET delivery.

NATIONAL TAFE NETWORK

The Australian Government is driving quality through collaboration and connectedness. We are investing **\$155 million** in a **National TAFE Network** to provide a better way for TAFE teachers and administrators across Australia to work together and learn from each other.

The National TAFE Network will be established in early 2025 and unlock:

- **Collaboration** - developing and supporting the TAFE workforce and education practice, including through communities of practice
- **Learning resources** - developing and sharing high-quality curriculum and course materials
- **Innovation** - piloting new and innovative approaches in teaching and learning practice

- **Engagement** – making it easier for employers, unions, Jobs and Skills Councils and higher education institutions to connect, problem solve and innovate with TAFE
- **Workforce leadership** - embedding TAFE workforce leadership as a key activity to support TAFEs at the heart of the VET sector.

TAFE TECHNOLOGY FUND

We're investing **\$50 million** to support TAFEs across the country to upgrade and expand facilities including laboratories, workshops, and IT services.

The TAFE Technology Fund will ensure TAFEs are equipped to deliver training to the standards expected by industry and students.



/// The National Skills Agreement directs at least **70% of Australian Government funding** for VET delivery to **TAFEs** and public training providers.

TAFE Centres of Excellence

The Australian Government is providing up to **\$325 million** to establish nationally networked TAFE Centres of Excellence in partnership with states and territories.

TAFE Centres of Excellence will:

- provide national leadership in the delivery of education and training
- enrich students' learning experience, support industry needs, and enable applied research programs
- innovate in the delivery of tertiary education, such as developing higher apprenticeship pathways, and
- enable organisational innovation and teaching and training excellence.



The first seven Centres of Excellence have been announced:

- Canberra Institute of Technology
Electric Vehicle Centre of Excellence
- WA Clean Energy Skills
National Centre of Excellence
- TAFE SA Centre of Excellence in
Early Childhood Education and Care
- TAFE Queensland TAFE Centre of
Excellence - Health Care and Support
- TAFE NSW Western Sydney Advanced
Manufacturing Centre of Excellence
- TAFE Queensland Batteries
Centre of Excellence
- TAFE NSW Hunter Net Zero
Manufacturing Centre of Excellence

/// We're providing an additional **\$31.6 million** to fast-track up to six Centres of Excellence in priority areas and expand the use of higher apprenticeships.

Industry needs

We're aligning VET activity to **workforce demand**

The Australian Government is incentivising **industry uptake of apprenticeships** to build our workforce in areas of need.

The **Australian Skills Guarantee** came into effect on 1 July 2024, introducing national **targets** for apprentices, trainees and cadets working on eligible major projects in information and communication technology and construction. Industry will be supported to meet these targets through a range of initiatives, including a new Australian Apprenticeship Support Services delivery model.

The **Australian Apprenticeships Incentive System** aims to strengthen the apprenticeship system by improving completions and ensuring supports are targeted towards areas of skills need. From 1 July 2024, employers taking on apprentices in priority occupations are eligible to receive a **Priority Hiring Incentive** of up to **\$5,000** to help subsidise the costs associated with employing an apprentice. Apprentices training in priority occupations can access

the **Australian Apprentice Training Support Payment** valued up to **\$5,000** to assist them with the cost of living and provide an incentive to finish their training.

The **Disability Australian Apprentice Wage Support** is a weekly payment of **\$104.30** to employers who employ apprentices with disability. Eligible apprentices with disability and their employers may also access financial help through the **Employment Assistance Fund** to buy work-related modifications, equipment, Auslan services, and workplace assistance and support services.

The **Strategic Review of the Australian Apprenticeship Incentive System** was commissioned to better understand the effects of past and current policies and help inform long-term policy design of more effective and better targeted apprenticeship supports. The review consulted widely, engaging with over 600 people across 90 engagements and receiving 145 written submissions. It will report to Government in late 2024.

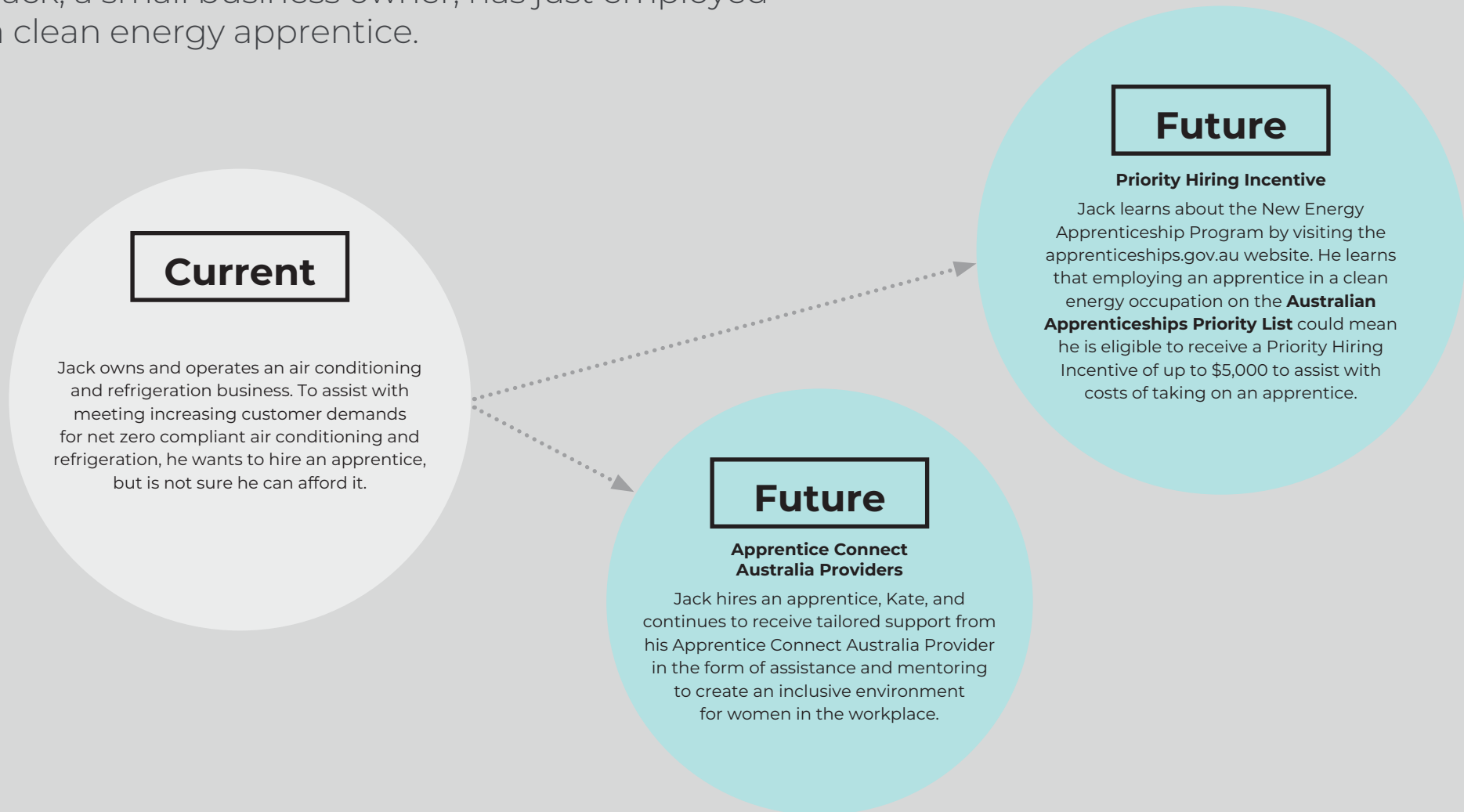
Migration Strategy

The Migration Strategy, released in December 2023, includes key action areas to reshape skilled migration to drive long-term prosperity. Measures include:

- improving temporary skilled migration with a new Skills in Demand visa more closely targeted to Australia's workforce needs and informed by advice from Jobs and Skills Australia, and
- improving skills assessment processes for migrants, ensuring a fairer and simpler process that supports workforce participation. These reforms include a requirement that skills assessment standards be set in consultation with industry to ensure the sectors' needs are met.

What does this look like for employers?

Jack, a small business owner, has just employed a clean energy apprentice.



Jobs and Skills Councils

The tripartite Jobs and Skills Council program provides industry with a stronger voice to ensure Australia's VET sector is responsive to change and delivers better outcomes for learners and employers.

Jobs and Skills Councils identify skills and workforce needs for their sectors, map career pathways across education sectors, develop contemporary VET training products, support collaboration between industry and training providers to improve training and assessment practice, and act as a source of intelligence on issues affecting their industries.

The JSC Program contributes to longer-term system-level outcomes through:

- greater confidence and trust in the VET sector with more learners and employers using nationally recognised training
- increased employment options and improved economic and social wellbeing for VET graduates through relevant, transferable skills
- increased responsiveness of the VET sector to current and emerging workforce challenges and skills gaps and employer and learner needs through quality training products
- improved partnerships between industry, TAFEs and other RTOs to support quality, inclusive training delivery.

The ten industry-owned and industry-led Jobs and Skills Councils established by the Australian Government are the key mechanism for engagement with industry and a central piece of the VET system architecture. Jobs and Skills Councils are well-placed to deliver on their four key functions:

Workforce planning

Workforce Planning is the centrepiece for Jobs and Skills Councils and informs the other functions. Workforce planning underpins intelligence-gathering for strategic priorities and will be a critical focus to guide strategic planning.

Training product development

Training product development requires Jobs and Skills Councils to develop training package products in line with standards set by Skills Ministers to improve their quality, speed to market and responsiveness.

Implementation planning and monitoring

Jobs and Skills Councils will partner with training providers and organisations to align workforce planning objectives and national training products with career advice and 'on the ground' training delivery.

Industry stewardship

Jobs and Skills Councils will act as a source of intelligence on workforce issues affecting their industries and provide advice on national training system policies.



We're investing **\$563.8 million** into Jobs and Skills Councils from 2023–24 to 2027–28.

Responsive Courses

/// **VET courses** are **trusted, relevant**
and **available** at the right time

The Australian Government is investing in a robust training product development and assurance lifecycle. This will ensure the national training system is high-quality and trusted by students, trainers and employers.

Nationally recognised training products developed by a Jobs and Skills Council, industry, community or training provider are assessed through an assurance or accreditation process to ensure they meet nationally consistent standards to ensure students, employers, governments and the community have confidence in the integrity of the national training system.

- For training package products, the **Training Package Assurance Body** assesses products against the standards, policies and procedures set by Skills Ministers through the Training Package Organising Framework.
- For non-training package courses, the **Australian Skills Quality Authority** (ASQA) - the national regulatory agency for Australia's VET sector – or one of the two state-based VET regulators (VRQA and WA TAC) – assesses and accredits the course to ensure it meets the *Standards for VET Accredited Courses*.



Driving flexibility in VET qualifications

Reforming qualification design

We recognise that the VET system needs to be more responsive and agile in meeting skill needs, including through a more flexible approach to the design of qualifications.

Qualification reform is being progressed by a tripartite Qualification Reform Design Group established by skills ministers with a focus on training to meet the demand for skills in the priority areas of net zero transformation, digital capability and essential care services.

The reforms being developed aim to ensure the VET sector can deliver an adaptable skilled workforce that is resilient to structural change through greater diversity in the design of qualifications. The approach is underpinned by Design Principles that put learner needs and aspirations at the centre, support lifelong learning, and enable individuals to adapt to changing job roles and transition across occupations and industries.

The Design Group's advice will be informed by insights from action learning projects led by Jobs and Skills Councils and consultation with governments, educators, regulators and training providers. Final advice, including in relation to implementation arrangements, is expected to be delivered to Skills Ministers in late 2024.



Collaborative and sustainable system

The Australian Government is investing in decision-making underpinned by tripartite collaboration and a strong skills evidence base

We're supporting system integrity through better understanding of skills and labour shortages

Jobs and Skills Australia was established by the Australian Government in 2022 to advise governments on current, emerging and future skills and workforce needs through:

- Analysis and advice using high-quality data
- In-depth studies into key areas of skills shortage and aspects of the skills system including:
 - Clean Energy Capacity
 - Early Childhood Education and Care Capacity
 - Food Supply Chain Capacity
 - Foundation Skills
- Independent advice on the effectiveness of the VET system in meeting future skills and workforce needs.

Ensuring VET system governance **advances stewardship** of an effective and efficient national VET system, **strengthens partner participation** and **ensures system sustainability**.



Investing in the skills evidence base

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) is an independent provider of VET data collections, serving as the National VET data custodian for the Commonwealth, states and territories.

NCVER undertakes vital research, including the:

- National Apprentice and Trainee Collection
- National VET in Schools Collection
- National VET Provider Collection (including Student Courses and Total VET Activity (TVA)), and
- National VET Funding Collection.

These collections are highly valued for providing insights on the performance of the VET system to inform decisions on skills policy and programs.

The Australian Government invests approximately **\$23 million** per year in NCVER.

The Australian Government is contributing up to **\$116 million** to improve VET evidence and data, including implementing the VET Data Streamlining Program and transition to a new VET Information Standard.

VET data reforms under the Streamlining program will include improvements to the cyber security of the sector, collaboration with states, territories and NCVER on the new VET Information Standard, National ICT capability for sharing VET data and information, and a new legislation and policy framework to support data collection.

CLOSING THE GAP

The Australian Government is investing up to

\$7.5M

to support shared access to data and information at a regional level (PR 4)

\$36M

to progress a national partnership framework to ensure active engagement on VET policy with First Nations people, organisations, and communities.

Creating a cohesive education system

School education, higher education and VET are complementary systems, with the Commonwealth, states and territories all playing key roles in their funding and administration.

The Australian Government is investing in integrated pathways, offering interconnected choices at all stages of education. By enhancing connections between school and VET, and VET and higher education, the government is making available options for students at every stage.

VET IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The Australian Government is working in partnership with state and territory education and skills officials to progress priorities to support the delivery of high quality, industry-relevant VET for Secondary Students.

OF THE 5 MILLION STUDENTS WHO ENGAGE WITH VET EACH YEAR



1 in 20

are studying VET in Secondary Schools



1 in 5

hold a Bachelor's degree (or higher)

TERTIARY HARMONISATION

Over the next 10 years, 9 out of 10 new jobs are expected to require tertiary qualifications. We're responding to the Australian Universities Accord through reforms across the tertiary education sector and have committed \$27.7 million, including \$15.9 million specifically for VET, across the next four years to improve tertiary collaboration. The Australian Government will work to:

- facilitate better student pathways between VET and higher education
- develop a standard approach to credit recognition arrangements
- build better data by aligning VET and higher education data sets to better understand student pathways between the sectors
- commence work to develop a National Skills Taxonomy to make it easier to design higher education and VET qualifications
- improve the regulatory approach for dual-sector providers, and
- consider applications from TAFEs to become self-accrediting organisations in higher education, and exploring delegation of VET course accreditation to selected TAFEs.

The Australian Tertiary Education Commission being established by the government will steward the tertiary education sector towards a cohesive, dynamic, and effective integrated system. The ATEC will facilitate collaboration between the Commonwealth, states and territories on all tertiary education matters.

04+

Delivering on National Priorities



Skills Ministers have agreed on eight national priorities that require collective effort to address skills needs and workforce challenges across the country. These priorities relate to workforces, priority groups, areas of skills and capability need and broad VET system reforms.

The National Skills Agreement requires all governments to demonstrate how they are contributing to each priority at both a local level and through national collaboration. National priorities will be reviewed annually to assess the progress made and to consider emerging evidence on skills needs and workforce challenges.

Some of the national priorities and many of the actions the Australian Government is taking to address them are cross-cutting and designed to deliver benefits across the VET system.



National Priorities

Gender equality	Closing the Gap	Net Zero	Essential Care	Sovereign Capability	Digital & Tech	Housing Supply	VET Reforms
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Gender Equality

AMBITION

- Reduce gender imbalanced workplaces, which exacerbate both skills shortages and gender inequality.
- Support flexible education and training delivery that allows students to balance their care and employment responsibilities with their learning goals at every stage of their career.
- Build a VET sector that is inclusive, safe and supportive for people of all genders, free from gender-based discrimination, and recognises the additional barriers that may be faced by specific cohorts of women including those with a disability, different cultural background or socioeconomic status.

The Australian government's *Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality* sets a focus on five priority areas for progress over the next 10 years:

- **gender-based violence**
- **unpaid and paid care**
- **economic equality and security**
- **health**
- **leadership, representation and decision-making.**

THE CHALLENGE

This priority reflects the need to ensure an inclusive VET system for women that promotes flexible education and training delivery. The student training experience differs for men and women, with many women juggling training with caring and domestic duties compared to men. Enrolments in some VET qualifications are strongly

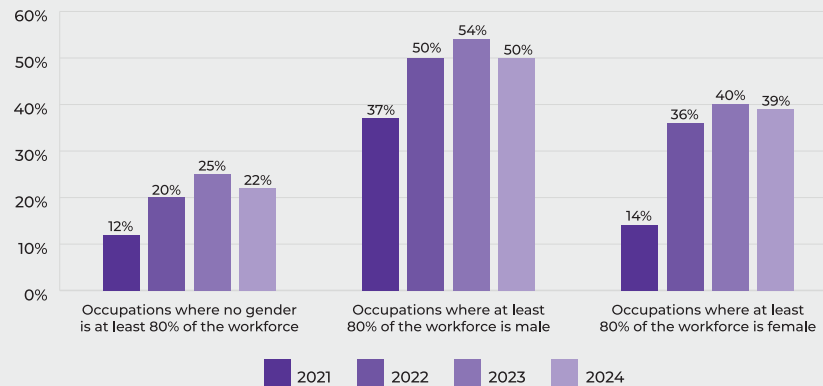
skewed towards one gender: enrolments that feed into low paid occupations, such as aged care, nursing and early childhood education, are dominated by women; conversely, most enrolments in VET qualifications that lead to high paid occupations, such as electricians, carpenters and construction workers, skew heavily towards men.

This imbalance flows through to the workforces for these occupations.

Even when women complete relevant VET training and enter a male dominated workforce, many do not remain for long. This can be due to cultural issues such as inflexible working arrangements, gender discrimination and harassment, and structural barriers such as access to appropriate amenities. Female dominated workforces, including in the care sector, can also struggle to attract and retain qualified men. Feminised work has been historically under-valued and tends to offer lower wages and status. Gender imbalanced workplaces limit potential career pathways and opportunities and exacerbate wider workforce shortages.

Improving gender equality across the VET system is key to addressing skills shortages and increasing the productivity and resilience of the Australian economy.

Figure 1: Percentage of gender-imbalanced occupations that were in shortage (%)



Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, Occupation Shortage List, 2021–2024.

Our programs and actions

We wanted to understand what's most effective in attracting and retaining women in VET-based occupations with low levels of women's participation

- Discussions with over 160 stakeholders and 50 written submissions identified the importance of:
 - Workplace culture and conditions, including appropriate role models
 - Flexible learning options
 - Partnerships with industry and employers
 - Harnessing opportunities from industry transformation

AUSTRALIAN SKILLS GUARANTEE

The Australian Skills Guarantee will increase the proportion of women working on major Australian Government-funded projects through two targets:

- 6% of apprentice/trainee labour hours and 4% of all trade apprentice/trainee labour hours to be undertaken by women in 2024-25.
- To drive sustainable change, the targets will increase by one percentage point each financial year until 2030.

The Government is investing \$19.1 million (until 30 June 2028) to implement the Australian Skills Guarantee, including to develop and sustain a new reporting solution.



BUILDING WOMEN'S CAREERS PROGRAM

The Building Women's Careers program supports women's access to skilled and well-paid careers and helps to address critical skills shortages across four priority industries – the construction, clean energy, advanced manufacturing, and technology and digital sectors.

Funded under the 2024–25 Future Made in Australia budget measure, it will deliver both large-scale projects and smaller, place-based partnerships, to improve women's access to flexible, safe and inclusive training and work opportunities.

The program provides \$60.6 million over four years. Grant Opportunity Guidelines are now available, and applications opened on 14 November 2024, with successful project partnerships in operation until 2028.

DIVERSITY IN STEM

The Department of Industry, Science and Resources is leading action on behalf of the Australian Government to improve opportunities for women and girls, and other under-represented cohorts, to access and benefit from well-paid jobs in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). This includes helping to meet the growing demand for STEM workers by attracting and retaining more people from diverse backgrounds in STEM education and careers, and growing industries in line with the government's vision for a Future Made in Australia.

Science in Australia Gender Equity will receive an additional \$7.1 million over 5 years from 2024-25 to deliver an expanded diversity in science accreditation framework.

STEM Equity Monitor will receive \$3.4 million over 6 years from 2024-25 to develop data on additional underrepresented groups in STEM education and organisations.

FEE-FREE TAFE

Priority cohorts for Fee-Free TAFE include:

- unpaid carers
- women facing economic insecurity
- women undertaking study in non-traditional fields.

From 1 January 2023 to 30 June 2024, over 317,000 women enrolled in Fee-Free TAFE, over 62% of all enrolments.

From 2027, Free TAFE will support a minimum of 100,000 Free TAFE places annually, underpinned by legislation, with places prioritised to those who benefit most from equitable access to education and training.

Closing the Gap

AMBITION

To deliver on Closing the Gap commitments, we will:

- Focus efforts on embedding the priority reforms and achieving Closing the Gap targets for First Nations students within the VET system.
- Listen to and be guided by our First Nations partners on skills and training matters that affect them through our partnership arrangements.
- Take action to ensure training is culturally safe and appropriate for First Nations students.
- Recognise and value the cultural expertise of First Nations people, communities and organisations and ensure this informs VET delivery to First Nations students.



Skills and Training Closing the Gap targets

- **Target 5:** By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (age 20-24) attaining year 12 or equivalent qualification to 96%.
- **Target 6:** By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-34 years who have completed a tertiary qualification (Certificate III and above) to 70%.
- **Target 7:** By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (15-24 years) who are in employment, education or training to 67%

WORKING DIFFERENTLY

The National Skills Agreement provides for a step-change in governments' approach to delivering on Closing the Gap commitments for skills, with dedicated investment and concrete action to ensure that the design and delivery of VET to First Nations students is in full and genuine partnership.

The Australian Government is helping to embed the four Priority Reforms in the VET system and is directing investment to First Nations communities and organisations to build genuine partnerships that deliver better outcomes and shift the way we work together to close the gap.

The Closing the Gap targets related to the VET sector (Targets 5-7), whilst showing signs of progress, are not on track to be met by 2031.

The Australian Government's Closing the Gap investment is intended to establish and fund key projects that will lay the foundations for ensuring future Closing the Gap investment is informed by a strong evidence base, to be developed with our First Nations partners. We recognise the importance of ongoing partnership and engagement with First Nations organisations and community at all stages of the design, delivery and evaluation of VET policies and programs.

Building the Aboriginal Community controlled and First Nations owned training sector will support a more culturally responsive VET system, which delivers better outcomes for First Nations students.

Our programs and actions

Aligning programs and actions with the four Priority Reforms will enable transformation in the VET system to support better outcomes for First Nations peoples

FIRST NATIONS POLICY PARTNERSHIP (PRIORITY REFORM (PR)1)

- The Australian Government is investing \$36 million to progress a national partnership framework to ensure active engagement on VET policy with First Nations people, organisations, and communities.
- In 2025, we will work in partnership to steer immediate priorities and deliverables under the National Skills Agreement and co-design a nationally networked First Nations VET Policy Partnership over the longer-term.

SHARED ACCESS TO IMPROVED DATA (PR4)

- The Australian Government will invest up to \$7.5 million over five years to support shared access to data and information at a regional level.
- This work will help build the capability of the Aboriginal Community Controlled and First Nations Owned RTO sectors over the longer-term.

REMOTE TRAINING HUBS NETWORK (PR1,2,3,4)

- The Remote Training Hubs Network is a \$30.2 million initiative under the A Better, Safer Future for Central Australia plan.
- By establishing up to seven remote training hubs throughout Central Australia, the Australian Government is seeking to effect real change in how First Nations people in remote communities access Vocational Education and Training and pathways to meaningful employment.

SECTOR STRENGTHENING (PR2)

- The Australian Government is working closely with the Coalition of Peaks on scoping the development of an Aboriginal Community Controlled and First Nations Owned RTO sector strengthening plan, commencing with a sector analysis and government funding review.
- The sector analysis and government funding review of the ACC and FNO RTO sectors will inform longer-term options to sustain and grow these sectors within the VET system.

SKILLS FOR EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT FIRST NATIONS STREAM (PR1&2)

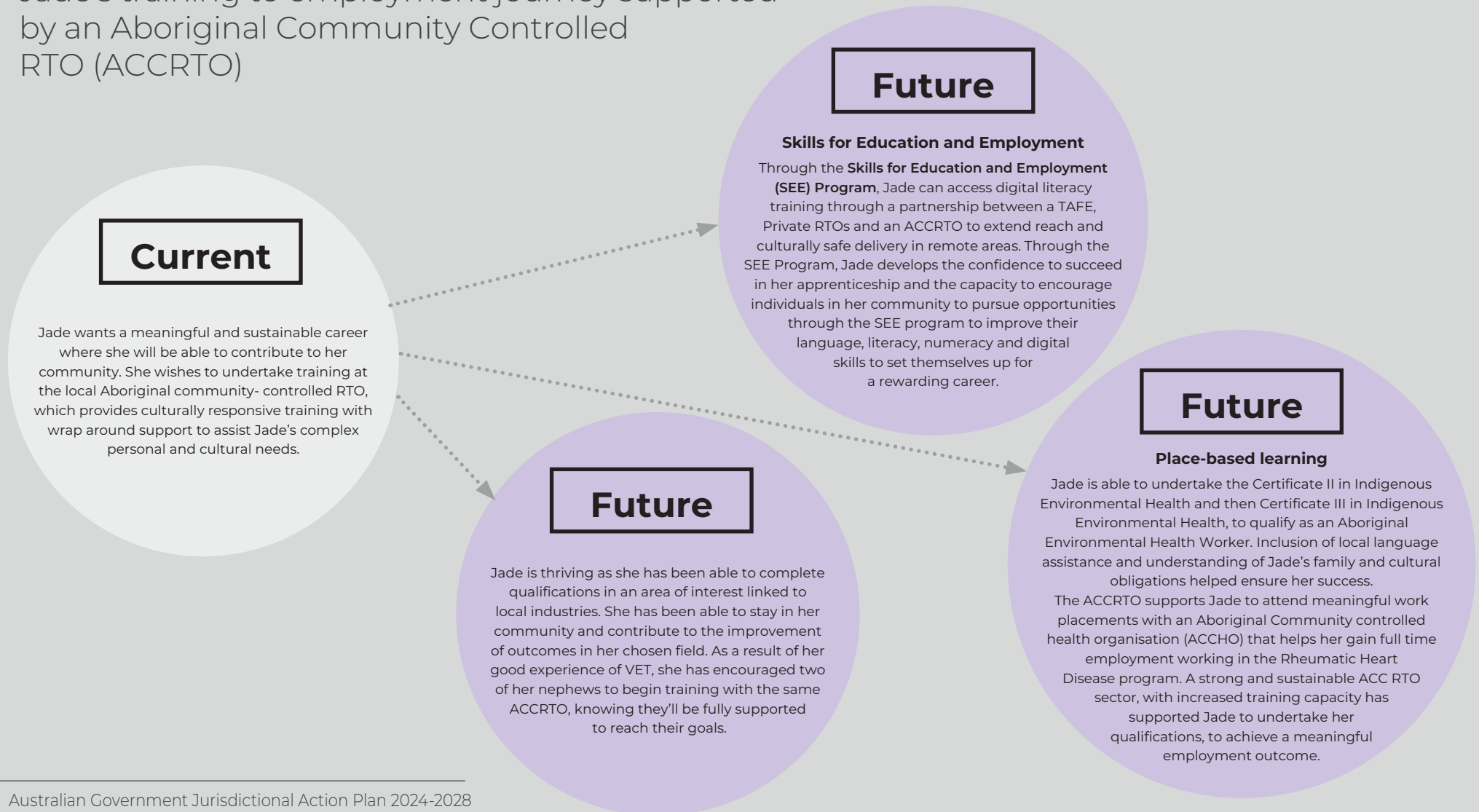
- The First Nations Stream will provide funding for place-based whole of community projects designed to meet the community's English language, literacy, numeracy and digital literacy training needs.

SUPPORTING FIRST NATIONS-LED PROJECTS, PILOTS AND INITIATIVES (PR2)

- Under the National Skills Agreement, the Australian Government has provided the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) with \$1.2 million to deliver a Trainer and Assessor Demonstration project.
- This funding will support capability building of Aboriginal Community Controlled RTOs to deliver more place-based training across Australia.

What does this look like for a First Nations student?

Jade's training to employment journey supported by an Aboriginal Community Controlled RTO (ACCRTO)



Supporting the Net Zero transformation

AMBITION

The Australian Government aims to support programs and actions to:

- Build a skilled and experienced VET workforce to ensure the VET sector has the capacity and capability to address emerging skills needs.
- Increase uptake of training in clean energy skills and qualifications to support the Net Zero transformation, particularly in regional and remote areas to allow those areas to maximise the benefits harnessed from the transition.
- Reduce gender segregation and increase First Nations participation in clean energy VET subjects and programs.

The Australian Government's emissions reduction targets are 43% by 2030 and net zero by 2050.

Skills and training initiatives will play an important role in supporting the net zero transition, with important connections to the work of Jobs and Skills Australia and the industry-owned and led Jobs and Skills Councils.

THE CHALLENGE

The path to net zero will require innovation and investment across all sectors. The Australian Government is continuing to take major steps to realise the opportunities presented by an efficient and productive net zero economy.

Australian Government agencies, including the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations,

the Net Zero Economy Agency and the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, are working together to ensure safe and secure jobs are available, particularly in regional areas. This includes adopting a people-centred approach to understanding the needs of industries and regional communities, supporting existing workforces in regions that might be facing a more acute

energy transition and working to make the skills and training system fit-for-purpose and responsive to new technologies.

There are measures underway to address workforce needs, support apprenticeships and build the capacity and capability of the VET system we need to ensure Australia achieves net zero emissions by 2050.



Jobs and Skills Australia's Clean Energy Generation report found that we will need close to 2 million workers in building and engineering trades by 2050, an increase of around 40%. This includes a need for up to 32,000 more electricians by 2030.

Our programs and actions

TAFE Centres of Excellence

- \$9.66 million for the ACT's TAFE Electric Vehicle Centre of Excellence and a further \$4.8 million to accelerate creation of the Centre.
- \$32.75 million for the WA TAFE Clean Energy Skills National Centre of Excellence and a further \$5 million to accelerate creation of the Centre.
- \$10 million for the Queensland TAFE Batteries Centre of Excellence
- \$28.105 million for the TAFE NSW Hunter Net Zero Manufacturing Centre of Excellence and a further \$5.27 million to fast-track establishment

FUTURE MADE IN AUSTRALIA - SKILLING THE CLEAN ENERGY WORKFORCE

As part of the 2024-25 Budget, The Australian Government is investing \$91 million over 5 years to help skill the clean energy workforce. This will include:

- Clean Energy capital and equipment investment fund for facility upgrades to expand clean energy training capacity - \$50m
- Group Training Organisation subsidies to support small and medium businesses taking on apprentices - \$1.8m
- Turbocharging the VET teacher, trainer and assessor workforce for clean energy - \$30m
- Promoting clean energy careers - \$3.1m.

FIRST NATIONS ENGAGEMENT IN THE TRANSITION TO NET ZERO

- This project, delivered by First Nations organisation, Ninti One, aims to gather evidence to determine organisational practices in decarbonisation sectors that provide cultural safety measures to support First Nations peoples' participation in decarbonisation.

- The first deliverable under the project, *The Net Zero Current State Report*, provides an overview of First Nations employment in decarbonisation, the opportunities and barriers to participation, and the role that cultural safety plays in both training and employment.
- This project is expected to be complete by June 2025, with a final report to inform future policy.

INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT

- Powering Skills Organisation is the Jobs and Skills Council responsible for the energy, gas and renewables sector.
- It will have a central role in driving the clean energy transition through collaboration with industry to build the green energy workforce.
 - Powering Skills Organisation is reviewing training pathways to ensure they meet the needs of industry and that clear career pathways into clean energy jobs are established.
 - Its work includes review and rationalisation of a suite of Certificate II Qualifications in the UEE Electrotechnology Training Package to create a fit for purpose Career Start qualification to enable better learner pathways that focus on the energy sector more broadly.

WE ARE SUPPORTING APPRENTICESHIP PATHWAYS THROUGH:

- *New Energy Apprenticeships* – more apprentices will be eligible to receive up to \$10,000 to help with cost of living pressures
- *New Energy Apprentices Mentoring Program* – to provide career guidance, peer support and networking opportunities to apprentices.
- *Australian Apprenticeship Support Services* – Apprentice Connect Australia Providers support employers and apprentices through their journey.

NET ZERO PLAN AND SECTORAL PLANS

- The Net Zero Plan and Sectoral Plans – covering the electricity and energy, transport, industry, agriculture and land, resources, and the built environment sectors - have been in development since July 2023, including initial consultation with governments, employers, unions, communities and experts.
- The plans will support the Australian Government's Future Made in Australia agenda, including shaping and helping to deliver the workforce required to support clean energy investment and infrastructure.

- The six sectoral emissions plans will support the Net Zero Plan by providing more granular analysis of emissions reduction pathways. The sectoral plans will complement the national picture by outlining the role of specific industry sectors in supporting the net zero transition, including examining how each sector can manage trade-offs and opportunities.

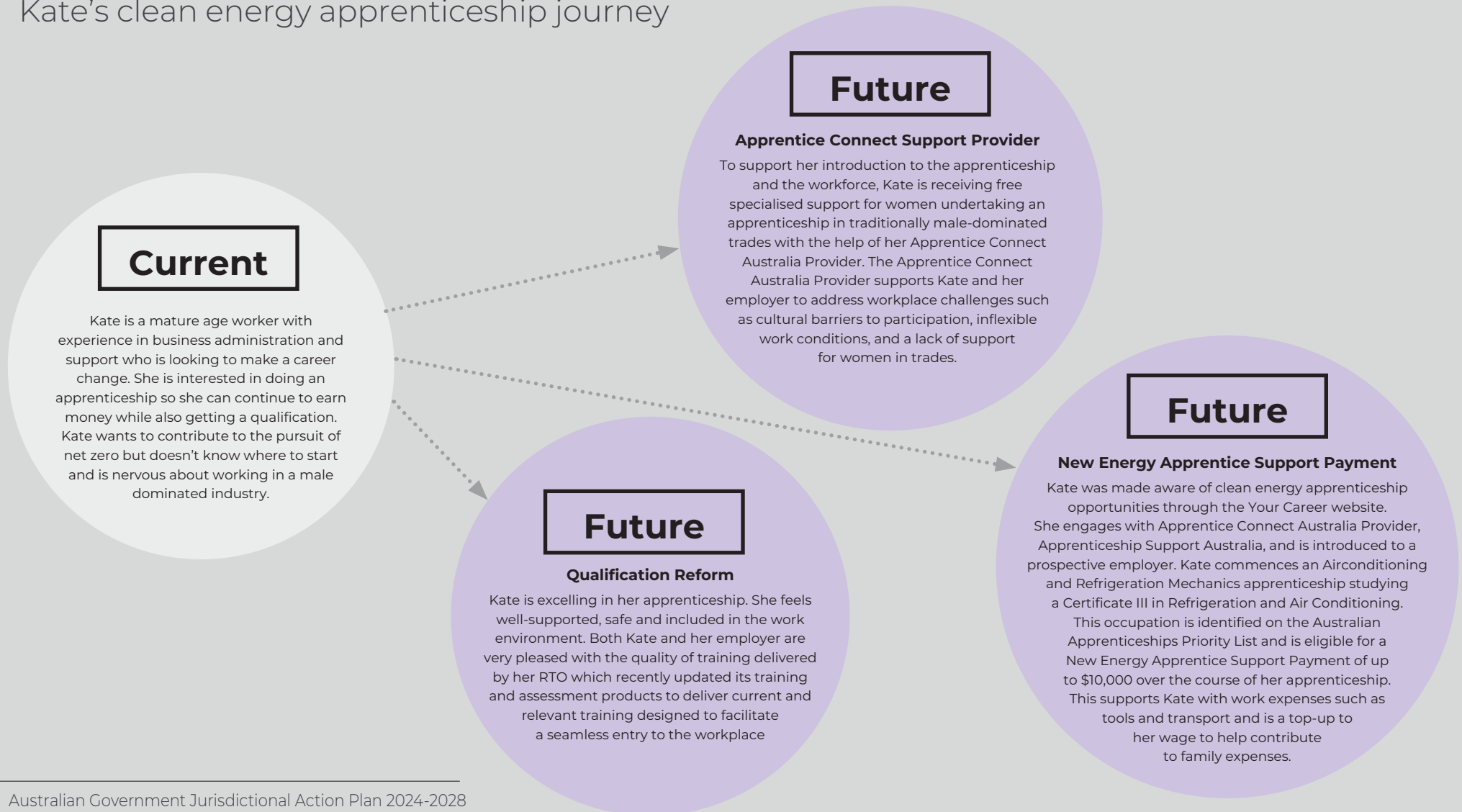
NATIONAL ENERGY WORKFORCE STRATEGY

- A National Energy Workforce Strategy will be presented to Energy Ministers by the end of 2024, providing a national framework to coordinate existing and planned workforce initiatives across all governments.
- The strategy will consider the workforce and skills needed to design, build, operate and maintain new and existing energy infrastructure and provide opportunities for Australians to build meaningful careers in the energy sector, including people living in regional areas, women, and First Nations people.



What does this look like for an apprentice?

Kate's clean energy apprenticeship journey



Sustaining Essential Care Services

AMBITION

The Australian Government aims to support programs and actions to:

- Grow the VET pipeline of skilled workers to keep pace with demand for care and support services.
- Attract and retain more diverse cohorts to care and support related programs, including First Nations people, men, people of diverse ages, people with disability and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Ensure education and training provided is high quality, responsive to current and emerging skills needs, widely available including in areas with thin markets, supports entry into the sector, and provides clear pathways for career progression and improved upskilling, re-skilling, and mobility

The Australian Government's vision for the care and support economy:

- **Goal 1: Quality care and support**
Person-centred care and support that recognise those accessing it as individuals and deliver quality outcomes.
- **Goal 2: Quality jobs**
Secure, safe jobs with fair wages, conditions and opportunities for career development.
- **Goal 3: Productive and sustainable**
Systems of care and support are effective and sustainable and harness innovation to generate efficiency gains that do not compromise quality of services.

THE CHALLENGE

The care and support economy is one of the fastest growing sectors in the Australian economy.

Making sure this sector works well represents an important opportunity to drive economic prosperity and productivity, ensure government investment is effective, and improve the quality of life of Australians who need care and support.

To meet increased demand for quality care and support services, the Australian Government is progressing a significant reform agenda for the care and support economy.

Objectives include ensuring that there are enough workers with the right skills and training to deliver quality care and support, that jobs are well paid, professionalised, and that there are pathways to facilitate career progression, further training and mobility. Growing the First Nations care and support workforce and meeting the needs of rural, regional and remote communities are key areas of focus.

A strong and effective national VET system will be key to delivering this reform agenda's workforce objectives.

Jobs and Skills Australia's Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Workforce Capacity Study found that, to meet the policies already committed to by Commonwealth, State and Territory governments, the ECEC workforce will likely need to increase by an annual average growth rate of 1.9% per year overall and by 3.2% per year overall for Early Childhood Teachers.

**GROWING THE FIRST NATIONS
WORKFORCE AND SERVING RURAL,
REGIONAL AND REMOTE COMMUNITIES**

- \$54.3 million for the *First Nations Health Worker Traineeship Program*, which is supporting up to 500 First Nations students undertake training to become Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Health Practitioners.
- \$21.6 million to extend the Home Care Workforce Program with a focus on regional, rural and remote areas. An extra 4,000 home care workers will be added over 3 years to locations facing acute workforce shortages.
- \$62.5 million over 2024–25 and 2025–26 for the Indigenous Employment Initiative Program which provides grants to aged care service providers to create entry level employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers in non-clinical aged care roles.



Our programs and actions

We're investing in wide-ranging action to build a high-quality care and support workforce

BUILDING THE PIPELINE OF SKILLED WORKERS

Australian Apprenticeship Incentives System

- Increasing incentives for apprentices and employers in priority occupations, including aged carer, carer of people with disabilities, early educator and enrolled nurse.

Australian Apprenticeship Support Loans

- Supporting apprentices and trainees to meet everyday costs while completing their training. The *Trade Support Loans Amendment Act 2023* expanded access to more apprentices and trainees working in high-priority occupations of skills need.

Fee Free TAFE

- Supporting significant enrolments in the care sector. From 1 January 2023 to 30 June 2024, there were over 131,000 enrolments in

care sector courses and over 35,000 in early childhood and care sector, together making up 32.8% of all Fee-Free TAFE enrolments.

Y Careers agency

- \$15.2 million (GST exclusive) to support the setup and operation of the Y Careers Agency to provide up to 15,000 young people (over five years from 2022-23) with employment opportunities in the care economy, including the ECEC, disability and aged care sectors.

Commonwealth Prac Payment

- \$427.4 million to introduce financial support for eligible teaching, nursing and midwifery, and social work students to complete mandatory practicum placements. Over 5,000 Diploma of Nursing students are expected to benefit each year from July 2025.

Supporting skills and training of early childhood education and care employees

- \$72.4 million to support the skills and training of ECEC employees, including a paid practicum subsidy to support ECEC providers to give paid leave to employees undertaking practicums, such as for the Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care. Over 75,000 eligible staff will benefit over 4 years from July 2023 to June 2027.

JSA Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Capacity Study

- Providing critical evidence and insights to support the development of national actions for addressing current and future workforce planning priorities and skills and training needs in ECEC.

ENSURING TRAINING IS RESPONSIVE TO CURRENT AND EMERGING SKILLS NEEDS

TAFE Centres of Excellence

- \$15 million for the TAFE Queensland Centre for Excellence in Health Care and Support and a further \$5 million to fast-track establishment
- \$11.51 million for the TAFE SA Centre of Excellence in Early Childhood Education and Care and a further \$5 million to fast-track establishment.

TAFE Technology Fund

- \$2.5 million was provided for the Gunnedah campus of TAFE NSW to upgrade early childhood education and care training facilities, including capability to share training with other locations.

HumanAbility projects

- HumanAbility, the relevant Jobs and Skills Council, is progressing training package development projects in care and support, including for mental health, outside school hours care, health services assistance, and the Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care.
- HumanAbility is also undertaking strategic workforce development activities involving an implementation review of two key aged care and disability support qualifications and a project to identify and showcase care and support job roles and their career pathways.
- Project outcomes will inform future actions to ensure VET aligns with current and emerging workforce priorities and skill needs in care and support.

Developing Australia's sovereign capability and food security

AMBITION

We're working to:

- Equip the VET sector to provide innovative, cutting-edge training to support modern infrastructure, new industries, and advanced manufacturing
- Establish a sustainable defence industry workforce with sustainment capabilities, including transferrable qualifications.
- Improve the attractiveness of STEM-related training, including apprenticeships, to women and First Nations people to help grow this workforce

Future Made in Australia

In the 2024–25 Budget, the Australian Government committed \$22.7 billion over the next decade to build a Future Made in Australia.

The Future Made in Australia agenda aims to:

- **maximise opportunities as we move towards net zero**
- **secure Australia's place in a changing global environment.**

The 24-25 Budget includes funding for:

- **clean energy manufacturing, including battery manufacturing and supply chains**
- **green metals**
- **critical minerals processing.**

The agenda will encourage and facilitate significant private sector investment and help Australia build a stronger and more resilient economy.

THE CHALLENGE

This priority includes the range of capabilities needed to deliver on areas of national interest in the advanced manufacturing, defence industry, critical minerals extraction and processing, energy transport and logistics, and food production sectors.

Australia has the lowest level of manufacturing self-sufficiency of OECD nations with a high dependency on manufactured imports. This makes the Australian economy particularly vulnerable to external supply chain stresses, including geo-political conflict and events like the COVID-19 pandemic.

There are emerging skills and workforce needs in these sectors and critical workforce shortages in transport and logistics affecting all sectors, including the food supply chain. The VET system is a key pillar in addressing these shortages, with investments in training that support a highly skilled workforce and unlock good quality jobs in areas of national priority.

It is estimated the workforce requirements for the AUKUS Nuclear-Powered Submarine Program will include 20,000 skilled jobs.

NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION FUND

The Australian government is investing \$15 billion to support 7 priority areas to diversify and transform Australia's industry and economy. The 7 priority areas include key aspects of our sovereign capability and include:

- renewables and low emissions technologies
- medical science
- transport
- value-add in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors
- value-add in resources
- defence capability
- enabling capabilities.

Investments by the fund will support the creation of secure jobs and a skilled and adaptable workforce.

Our programs and actions

TAFE Centres of Excellence

- \$26.98 million for the TAFE NSW Western Sydney Advanced Manufacturing Centre of Excellence
- \$28.105 million for the TAFE NSW Hunter Net Zero Manufacturing Centre of Excellence and a further \$5.27 million to fast-track establishment.
- \$10.00 million for the TAFE Qld Clean Energy (Batteries) Centre of Excellence

Jobs and Skills Councils and Jobs and Skills Australia are delivering a range of projects to identify and address skills and workforce needs:

The **Manufacturing Industry Skills Alliance**, the Jobs and Skills Council for the manufacturing sector, is delivering:

- The **Building a Defence Manufacturing Workforce** project which will provide valuable information on how the VET and higher education systems can support government initiatives to build the pipeline of skilled workers needed for Australia's sovereign capability in defence manufacturing.
- The **Aviation Maintenance Skills Pathways** project, an initiative of the Aviation White paper, will improve the alignment between new Civil Aviation Safety Authority licensing requirements for aviation maintenance organisations and VET qualifications and support greater uptake of Aircraft Maintenance Engineers licences to build Australia's aviation maintenance workforce.

Skills Insight, the Jobs and Skills Council for the agribusiness, fibre, furnishing, food, animal and environment care industries, is:

- Investigating a potential **Agricultural Trade Apprenticeship** pathway to help attract new entrants and promote career pathways in agriculture.

- Developing a **Meat Worker Induction Safety Pilot** for the meat processing industry to provide foundational capabilities in safety for workers entering the industry and support national consistency in safety skills across the industry. This will also support the transferability of skills across the sector for these key workers.
- Exploring the factors and challenges impacting the visibility of demand and the delivery and uptake of **VET training in rural and remote locations** to understand how to increase training visibility and access.

JOBS AND SKILLS AUSTRALIA'S FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN CAPACITY STUDY

- This project will provide evidence, insights, and recommendations to support workforce planning, policy development and program design for the core components of the food supply chain workforce.



AUKUS SKILLS TASKFORCE

- The Taskforce has been established in the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations to provide advice on utilising Australia's skills and training system to support the workforce requirements of our sovereign industrial base and support the delivery of Australia's Nuclear-Powered Submarine Program.
- The Taskforce will work in partnership with industry, agencies across government, relevant state and territory governments and Jobs and Skills Councils, to better understand how the skills and training system can support this workforce and identify potential gaps.

CAREER PATHWAYS FOR AUSTRALIA'S DEFENCE INDUSTRY

- The Australian Government is working in partnership with states to provide access to new training and employment pathways for careers in Australia's defence industry. In South Australia the Defence Industry Pathways Program and the Ship Building Employment Pathways pilot initiative will grow the pipeline of trainees and apprentices needed to deliver the nation's conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered and major surface combatant vessels.

THE NATIONAL BATTERY STRATEGY

- This strategy aims to build a successful local battery manufacturing industry and position Australia as a global leader in renewable energy. The strategy aims to build battery manufacturing capabilities in ways that strengthen economic resilience, leverage Australia's comparative advantages and add value to our economy.
- Building the knowledge and skills to create secure Australian-made jobs in the industry will be supported by diverse initiatives like the New Energy Apprenticeships Program and the Building Women's Careers Program.

Ensuring Australia's Digital and Technology Capability

AMBITION

The Australian Government aims to support programs and actions to:

- Ensure that all Australians have the digital capability needed to fully participate in the modern economy and society.
- Increase the share of women and First Nations digital and tech students and workers.
- Ensure that digital and tech VET keeps pace with technological change, meeting the needs of students and industry and increasing the standing of VET pathways in the industry.
- Support the VET workforce to deliver strong, high-quality digital and technology training, including in rapidly evolving areas such as AI.

The Australian Government has a commitment to achieve 1.2 million tech related jobs by 2030.

THE CHALLENGE

Digital and tech skills are increasingly important to the Australian economy with tech-related tasks now embedded in most jobs, across all industries, in both ICT and non-ICT occupations.

As the digital transformation continues, demand for skills associated with building and engaging in the digital economy will continue to grow. The Australian government is working to increase the flow of

prospective students into relevant VET training and ensure training is relevant and high quality, including through state-of-the-art facilities; supporting students to complete their training and transition to the workforce; and preparing learners, workers, workplaces and education and training providers to respond to the impact of AI.

Projections produced by Victoria University for Jobs and Skills Australia

show that employment in technology occupations is projected to grow by 21.6% (or 169,400 workers) over the 10 years to May 2034 (above the projected employment growth for all occupations of 13.7 per cent). This reflects a continuation of strong employment growth in these roles recorded over the last 5 years (rising by 26.7 per cent over the five years to August 2024 to 781,600).

Harnessing data and digital technology is one of the five pillars of the Australian Government's productivity agenda outlined in Working Future: The Australian Government's White Paper on Jobs and Opportunities

KEY DIGITAL AND TECH STRATEGIES

National Robotics Strategy

Designed to help build a stronger, more unified robotics industry and harness the benefits of robotics and automation across the Australian economy.

National Quantum Strategy

This strategy sets out a long-term vision for how Australia will take advantage of the opportunities of quantum technologies.

2023-2030 Australian Cyber Security Strategy

A strategy to improve our national resilience to cyber threats and help realise the Australian Government's vision of becoming a world leader in cyber security by 2030.

Our programs and actions

FUTURE SKILLS ORGANISATION, THE JOBS AND SKILLS COUNCIL FOR THE FINANCE, TECHNOLOGY AND BUSINESS SECTORS

Future Skills Organisation is leading projects to ensure training packages are relevant, flexible, and meet industry needs, including:

- testing a new approach to qualification design to build digital capability (including generalist cyber and Gen AI skills) and develop a common description of digital skills
- progressing findings of the Digital and Tech Skills Working Group to support 'earn while you learn' training pathways
- establishing a mechanism to share knowledge and lessons across the states and territories on the development and trialling of skills and entry level pathways initiatives to address the digital skills shortage
- undertaking research on adoption of AI in the finance, technology and business sectors

- undertaking a needs and gaps analysis of the ICT Training Package to inform more relevant, adaptable, and comprehensive training, particularly in urgent skills areas such as cyber and Gen AI skills.

AUSTRALIAN SKILLS GUARANTEE

The ASG will leverage the Government's significant purchasing power in ICT to drive the demand for apprentices, trainees and cadets.

- Targets apply from 1 July 2024 to major construction and ICT projects with a total contract value of \$10 million or more.
- Targets in the ICT sector will be negotiated with suppliers on a project-by-project basis. This will support the collection of data on entry-level pathways in the sector and enable the development of targets for all major ICT projects.

MILLION MICROSILLS

In partnership with the Institute of Applied Technology, the National AI Centre is delivering a free 'Introduction to Artificial Intelligence' Microskill course to one million Australians.

JOBS AND SKILLS AUSTRALIA FOUNDATION SKILLS STUDY

Jobs and Skills Australia is leading development of a new national study of adult literacy, numeracy and digital skills. The Foundation Skills Study will consist of four elements:

- a survey of Australian adult literacy and numeracy skills

- Murru Yayingiliyn - a feasibility study into how best to collect data on the literacy, numeracy and digital literacy skills of First Nations people
- analysis of Australian Government administrative and other data to gain insights into the skill levels for priority groups
- scoping a project to define digital literacy.

TAFE TECHNOLOGY FUND

In partnership with states and territories, the Fund supports improved ICT facilities, workshops, laboratories and tele-health simulators across the country. Examples of funding allocated to date include:

- \$3.2 million is allocated for the design, procurement and installation of a LED wall for portable use at TAFE NSW's St Leonard's campus
- \$2 million allocated for the Holmesglen TAFE in Victoria for a Cyber Security Operations Centre

FEE-FREE TAFE

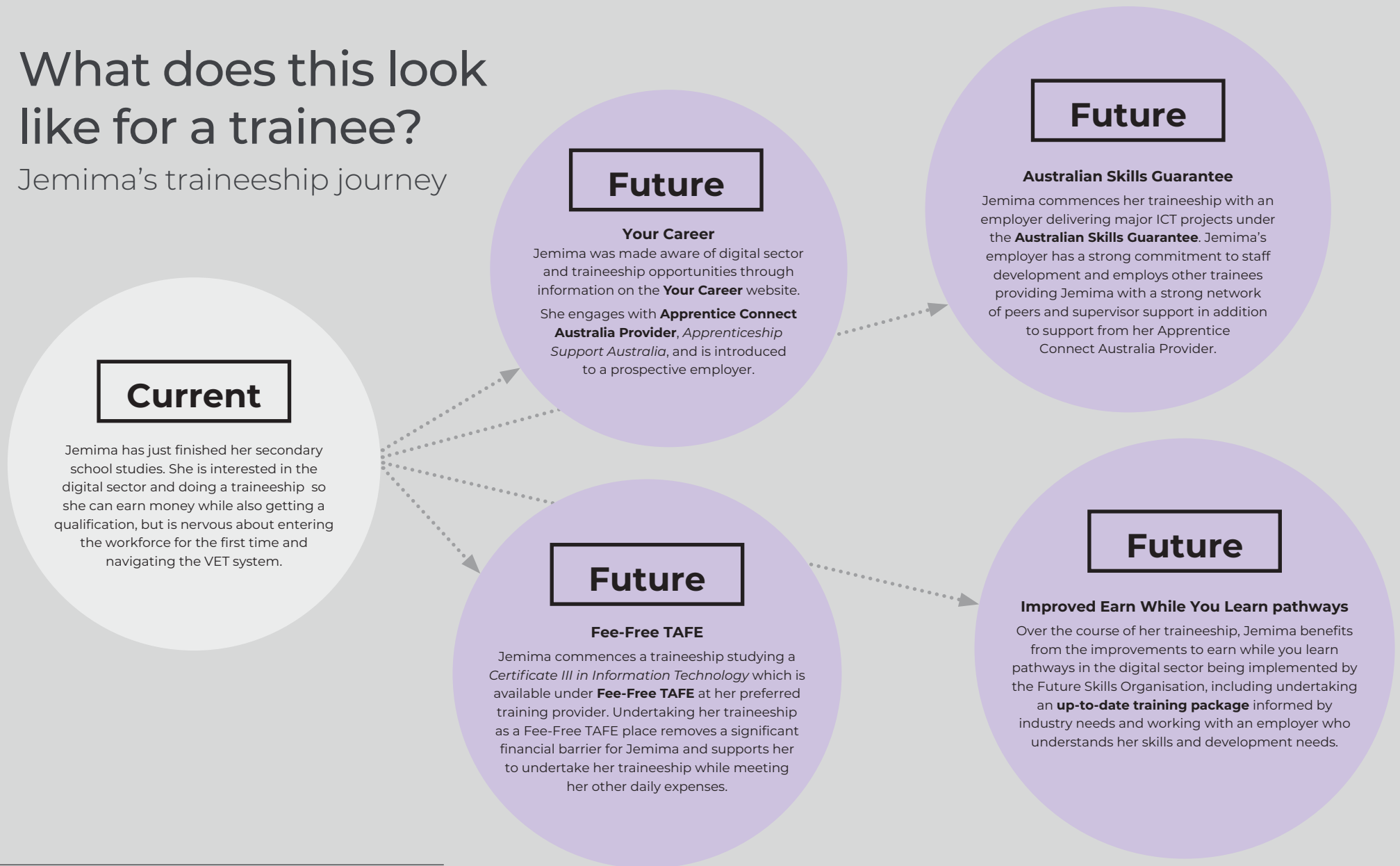
Prioritises training places in areas of national skills priority and demand, including digital and technology.

- As at 30 June 2024, there were almost 49,000 technology and digital sector course enrolments.

From 2027, **Free TAFE** will support a minimum of 100,000 Free TAFE places annually, with places targeted to priority industries experiencing shortages, underpinned by legislation.

What does this look like for a trainee?

Jemima's traineeship journey



Delivering Housing Supply

AMBITION

The Australian Government aims to support programs and actions that:

- Increase the number of construction workers to build capacity in the residential construction sector, improve quality housing supply and affordability and meet the targets of the National Housing Accord.
- Drive productivity and innovation in the construction industry through a future-focussed VET sector.
- Unlock workforce supply by increasing the attractiveness and adaptability of trades and other construction-related qualifications in VET for a broader pool of workers, particularly women, people from diverse backgrounds, and regional and remote residents.

Under the National Housing Accord, all jurisdictions have committed to a target of 1.2 million new well-located homes over 5 years from mid 2024.

THE CHALLENGE : INCREASES OVER TIME WITH A GROWING AUSTRALIAN POPULATION

Increases in Australia’s population coupled with labour and material supply issues have contributed to housing shortages across the country. This has in turn created acute housing affordability issues with prices

for purchasing and renting residential dwellings increasing in most Australian markets.

The Jobs and Skills Council for the construction sector, BuildSkills Australia, is playing a key role in addressing this priority from the VET system perspective. BuildSkills is working with stakeholders to identify the skills and workforce needs of construction industry,

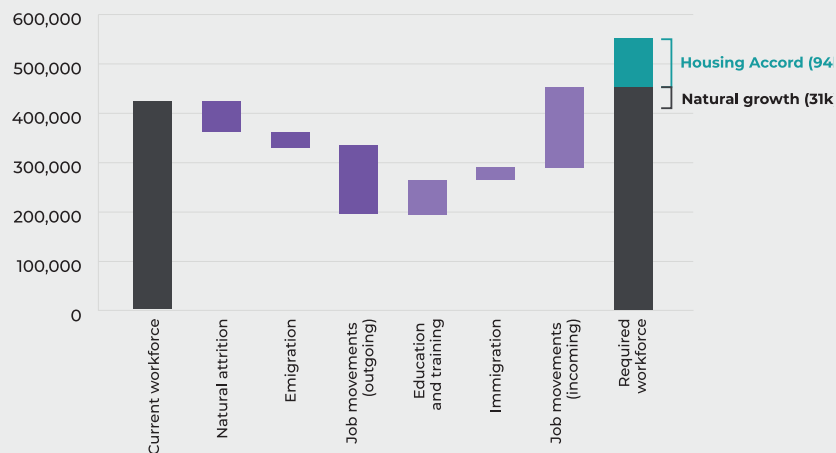
map career pathways across education sectors, develop contemporary VET training products, support collaboration between industry and training providers, and act as a source of intelligence on issues affecting the sector.

All governments have committed to improving housing supply and affordability, including through the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement and the National Housing Accord. Under the National Housing Accord, all jurisdictions have committed to a target of an additional 1.2 million new well-located homes to be built from July 2024.

To meet this target, BuildSkills estimates that approximately 94,000 additional skilled residential construction workers will be needed over the next 5 years.

A 21% increase in the residential construction workforce is required to meet Housing Accord targets over 5 years.

Figure 2: Residential construction employment flows, 2023–2029



Source: BuildSkills 2024 Workforce Plan p.59

Our programs and actions

PROJECTS BY BUILDSKILLS AUSTRALIA, THE JOBS AND SKILLS COUNCIL FOR THE BUILDING, CONSTRUCTION, PROPERTY AND WATER SERVICES INDUSTRIES

BuildSkills Australia is undertaking a range of projects to support the national priority of housing supply, including:

- Minimum Australian Context Gap training for migrant plumbers to provide a pathway for migrant plumbers holding an Offshore Technical Skills Record (OTSR) to obtain an Australian certification and plumbing occupational licence.
- a Future Readiness Project to analyse the extent to which training products are producing ‘future-proof’ workers and evaluate the gaps and opportunities for transferring productivity-enabling knowledge and skills to the workforce.
- a Housing Workforce Capacity Study to:
 - understand the scale of the labour market adjustment needed to realise the Housing Accord ambition, and

- identify and inform the future strategies and degree of effort required in the VET system to achieve the required workforce adjustment.

FEE-FREE CONSTRUCTION

The 2024–25 Budget provides \$86.4 million to states and territories for 20,000 additional Fee-Free TAFE Construction places, including around 5,000 pre-apprenticeship places, to increase the pipeline of workers for construction and housing.

- The additional fee-free places will help provide critical skills needed in the construction sector by providing students or apprentices with access to the right skills and experience, and by providing Australians with some relief from cost-of-living pressures.
- The pre-apprenticeship places will support more people to move into a construction apprenticeship and succeed in training by providing students with a taste of working in the industry.

From 1 January 2023 to 30 June 2024, there were almost 35,000 Fee-Free TAFE enrolments in the Construction priority sector.

MIGRATION SETTINGS

Under the Migration Strategy, the Government will help the construction industry to secure people with the skills needed to expand our housing supply. The new Skills in Demand visa will provide clear, fast service standards for temporary skilled workers with a median service standard of 21 days.

The Government is also committed to improving skills assessment processes for migrants through enhanced assurance, standards, and reporting. Reducing complexity in the skills assessment process can help facilitate greater workforce participation for prospective skilled migrants, including in the housing sector.

Supported by streamlined and prioritised skills assessments offered by Trades Recognition Australia, the construction industry, trades workers and international VET students with relevant trade skills can benefit from these migration settings.

- In the 2024–25 budget, the Government invested \$1.8 million over 2 years to streamline skills assessments for around 1,900 potential migrants from countries with comparable qualifications who want to work in Australia’s housing and construction industry, and to prioritise processing of around 5,200 Trades Recognition Australia skills assessments in targeted construction occupations.

AUSTRALIAN SKILLS GUARANTEE

The Australian Skills Guarantee leverages the Australian Government’s significant purchasing power to help address skills shortages and gender segregation in the construction and ICT sectors.

These targets will increase the number of skilled workers, especially women, entering the construction sector and increase its capacity to deliver greater housing supply.

Delivering reforms to improve the regulation of VET qualifications and quality

AMBITION

The Australian Government aims to support programs and actions to:

- Improve the VET qualifications system so that it is high-performing, easy to navigate, and meets the needs of employers and learners, especially priority cohorts.
- Have the VET sector support excellence in training delivery and assessment, accessibility for priority cohorts, and quality in training outcomes, with TAFE at the heart of VET.
- Ensure the VET sector supports more employers to use nationally recognised training and delivers an adaptable skilled workforce resilient to structural change.

The tertiary harmonisation project will undertake work to support the design of qualifications and pathways across the VET and higher education sectors.

THE CHALLENGE

High quality VET is vital to producing the knowledge and skills Australia needs. The quality of training depends on both the standard of the provider delivering the training and the relevance of the training itself. With most

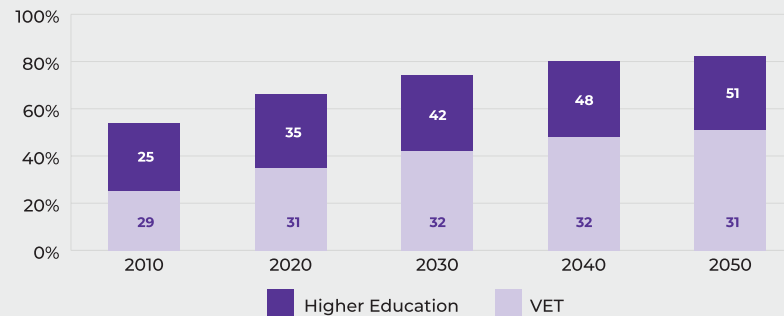
employers and students satisfied with the quality of the training provided, we can shift our focus to driving excellence as well as ensuring effective regulation where standards are not being met.

As Australia's economy continues to change,

a more flexible approach to the design of qualifications will enable the VET system to be more responsive to and agile in meeting labour needs. Qualification reform is focused on ensuring the VET system is high performing and meets the needs of its diverse users, supporting more employers and learners to use nationally recognised training to meet the demand for skills in priority skills areas of net zero transformation, digital capability and essential care services.

Our quality and regulatory reforms will ensure the VET system is trusted and can deliver a growing skilled workforce that is resilient to structural change.

Figure 3: VET and higher education graduates share of total employment (%), current figures and projected future demand, 2010 to 2050.



Source: Oxford Economics Australia, *Tertiary Education Qualification Demand: Preliminary Report*, produced for the Department of Education [unpublished report], OE, Sydney, November 2023.

THERE IS A GROWING DEMAND FOR HIGHER SKILLS

Projections for the Australian Universities Accord report found the share of employment that requires a tertiary education is expected to grow from 66% in 2020 to an estimated 82% in 2050.

Our programs and actions

THE ROLE OF THE AUSTRALIAN SKILLS QUALITY AUTHORITY

Through regulation and partnerships with stakeholders, ASQA ensures quality VET so that students, employers, the community and governments have confidence in the integrity of national qualifications issued by registered training organisations. We are working with ASQA to:

- Implement revised Standards for RTOs to support high-quality training delivery
- Enforce stronger Fit and Proper Person Requirements to support ASQA to respond to and remove non-genuine operators
- Build ASQA's capability and capacity, including an uplift in its digital and data systems

In the 2024-25 Budget, ASQA was allocated approximately \$66 million. For the same period, ASQA estimates that it will cost recover approximately \$47 million.

QUALIFICATION REFORM DESIGN GROUP

The tripartite Qualification Reform Design Group has been working with Jobs and Skills Councils to test a new, purpose-led model of qualification design. The Design Group is expected to deliver its final advice to Skills Ministers in late 2024, including advice on implementation arrangements.

The new purpose-led approach offers greater diversity in the design of qualifications, from qualifications that require a high level of specificity for safety and licensing requirements including the trades, to qualifications that prepare learners for multiple, related occupations, and qualifications designed to support pathways and applied learning.

- Training package products developed by Jobs and Skills Councils in the new purpose-led model will also be assessed by the Training Package Assurance Body against the newly agreed Training Package Organising Framework.

REVISIONS TO THE STANDARDS FOR RTOS

The focus of quality reforms is to ensure high quality training delivery and support quality outcomes for students.

The Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015 are being revised to strengthen the focus on quality outcomes for learners and employers, provide greater clarity for RTOs and regulators, and allow for more flexibility and innovation in training delivery. The revised Standards aim to provide a clearer and more direct link between the requirements RTOs are expected to meet and the outcomes they are expected to deliver.

We are moving from old standards that have:

- A mix of macro and micro, quality-oriented and compliance and input focused requirements
- 8 Standards with 59 clauses
- A lack of clarity
- A compliance focused audit approach

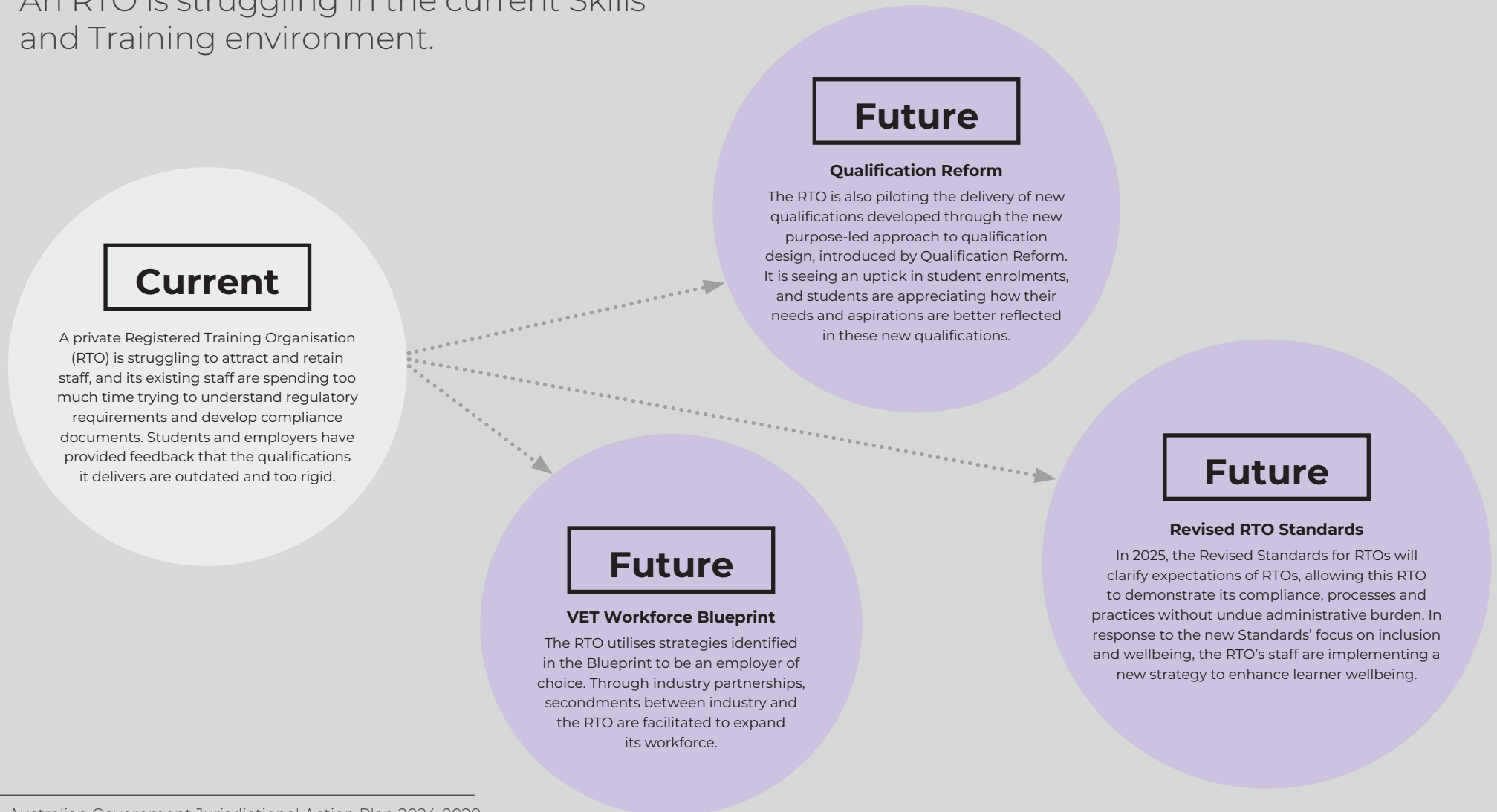
To revised standards that have:

- Outcomes-focused Standards
- 4 Quality Areas with 23 Standards
- Clear outcome statements
- A flexible audit approach focused on RTO governance, systems and processes

It is anticipated that the revised Standards will be enacted from 1 January 2025 and come into full regulatory effect from 1 July 2025.

What does this look like for VET providers?

An RTO is struggling in the current Skills and Training environment.



What comes next?

05

Establishing an Outcomes Framework

THE OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK WILL DEFINE AND MEASURE SUCCESS

The Australian Government is leading the development of an outcomes framework that will describe what success looks like through a balanced scorecard of national indicators and targets.

The framework will set out governments' shared ambitions for the population and system outcomes and allow progress to be tracked and gaps identified for further action.

The outcomes framework will be finalised in late 2024 and will be supported by jurisdiction level targets and ambitions from 2025. Further work will also be undertaken to ensure the views of First Nations peoples are appropriately reflected.

A BALANCED SCORECARD INFORMS ANNUAL REVIEW CYCLES TO DRIVE IMPROVEMENT

The balanced scorecard will allow us to identify which elements of the system are working to deliver economic and social improvements and better understand the experiences of the main beneficiaries of VET – students and industry.



The balanced scorecard will be reported on an annual basis with the first report expected to be made available mid-2025.

An annual reporting cycle based on financial years will provide evidence to inform subsequent iterations of the National Skills Plan and jurisdictional action plans over the life of the National Skills Agreement.

STEWARDSHIP REVIEW

An independent review of the stewardship model will be undertaken in mid-2025. This review will assess the implementation of the stewardship model and its success in meeting its stated objective of collaboratively and purposefully addressing shared challenges and opportunities, including in relation to co-ordinated action and delivery of national priorities and a new cycle of planning

and review. The Australian Government will commission the review on behalf of all jurisdictions through the Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council.

UPDATED JURISDICTION PLANS AND ACTIVE PLANNING

This is the first of what will become an annual plan from the Australian Government on action to deliver on the outcomes and priorities outlined in the NSA. As our initiatives mature, and access to data and intelligence from stakeholders increases, our annual plans will move beyond a report on what actions we are taking, towards an approach of tracking and reporting measurable progress, including on our agreed targets.