



Australian Government

Department of Employment
and Workplace Relations

TAFE Technology Fund – Mobile TAFE Guidelines for Project Applications from States and Territories



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The document must be attributed as the TAFE Technology Fund – Mobile TAFE Project Guidelines for Applications from States and Territories.

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Context

On 2 August 2025 at the 25th Garma Festival, the Prime Minister, the Hon Anthony Albanese MP, announced the Commonwealth would provide \$31 million for a new Mobile TAFE initiative. Mobile TAFE will deliver up to 12 projects nationally. Projects will be developed by state and territory governments (states) in partnership with First Nations communities to help meet skills needs in outer regional and remote areas.

Mobile TAFE will be delivered as an additional round of the TAFE Technology Fund and projects will be selected through the process outlined in these Guidelines.

Overview

1. This document provides guidance for states to put forward project proposals for Mobile TAFE Funding (Funding) and the administration of those projects, once agreed. This includes guidance on:
 - a) submitting a project proposal
 - b) the content of state project proposal(s)
 - c) the assessment of a state's project proposal(s) by the Commonwealth, and
 - d) the conditions on project funding.
2. Applications will need to meet the following eligibility requirements:
 - a) Provide skills or training access to First Nations learners in outer regional and/or remote areas
 - b) Be completed by 30 June 2030
 - c) Have sufficient fraud and corruption policies
3. Applications will be assessed in terms of:
 - 1) (priority) partnership with local First Nations communities
 - 2) (priority) demonstrable training need identified for local communities and impact
 - 3) (priority) value for money
 - 4) outer regional or remote location and/or mobility, and
 - 5) delivery organisation

Submitting a project proposal

4. Proposals must be submitted by states to the following email box: TAFETechFund@dewr.gov.au, from the opening of the Mobile TAFE project application period.
5. The application period opens for each state upon it signing the TAFE Technology Fund – Mobile TAFE Schedule to the Federation Funding Agreement – Education and Skills.
6. Submissions close by 8:00 PM (AEST) 29 May 2026. Proposals submitted after this time will only be considered in the case of significant extenuating circumstances.
7. Projects will be assessed and selected on a rolling basis as they are received. Geographical distribution of projects will also be considered, and priority will be given to the first project proposal submitted by each state that is a signatory to the Schedule.

8. The Commonwealth may contact states and territories for additional information to aid assessment during the application period.
9. All project proposals should be made using the project application form that is published on the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (the department) website and must be accompanied by a letter of endorsement from the relevant state Minister.
10. Multiple project proposals each require a standalone project application form; however, multiple project proposals can be included in a single letter of application from the relevant State Minister.
11. The covering email should clearly set out what project proposals are attached and any order of preference the state government has for considering them.
12. Costings were based on an average cost of \$2.5 million per project, but states can apply for different funding amounts based on estimated project costs. States may use up to three per cent of the total Commonwealth contribution for project administration.

Requirements to apply for funding

13. Only states can submit a project application. States may submit a project application on behalf of TAFEs, other public providers of training, Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs), First Nations Owned/Led Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), other organisations, or joint proposals from these organisations.
14. States can submit joint project proposals, provided there is a lead state and contact for the purposes of communications and funding.
15. A project must address the training needs of First Nations learners in an outer regional or remote location and/or provide for local delivery of training. The application must outline the expected location of the project and/or areas the project will service including their remoteness classification in accordance with Edition 3 of the Australian Bureau of Statistics Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS).
16. Projects must be developed and implemented in partnership with First Nations organisations and/or communities.
17. The application must provide the total cost of the project, including:
 - a) funding contribution sought for the project and other capital funding sources (e.g. state, industry, etc), if applicable
 - b) an estimated budget for the project, and
 - c) commitment by the state to meet maintenance costs and ongoing training costs arising from the project.
18. All projects submitted must be completed, including submission of agreed completion evidence by 30 June 2030 or earlier. The application should detail proposed evidence of project completion (e.g. certificate of occupancy, certification of equipment operation).
19. The application should outline how the project will be managed, including adequacy of fraud prevention, detection and control policies and processes.
20. Project applications must also address the assessment criteria outlined below.

Assessment criteria

21. Applications must demonstrate the strength of a proposal against these assessment criteria.

Criterion one - Partnership with local First Nations communities

22. This priority criterion will assess evidence of partnership with local First Nations communities or organisations. Preference will be given to strong partnerships with Community Controlled Organisations, either Community Controlled RTOs or other local Community Controlled Organisations.
23. The application should outline how states have identified and will implement the project in partnership with local First Nations communities and organisations. Further, the application should:
- a) identify the key local First Nations organisation(s) or bodies that will be partners in the project and include how they are representative of their communities
 - b) include a support letter from the identified local First Nations organisation(s)
 - c) outline ongoing formal governance arrangements for the project by local First Nations community organisations or bodies
 - d) outline how partnership with local First Nations communities align with Closing the Gap Priority Reforms
24. In cases where formal partnership and governance arrangements cannot be fully determined within the application period, applications should clearly outline the steps that will be taken to meet these requirements in the project planning phase. Evidence of formal partnership arrangements will then be agreed by the Commonwealth as part of assessing the Project Plan.

Criterion two - Demonstrable training need for local communities and project impact

25. This priority criterion will assess whether the proposed project will meet a need identified in the region or community and the expected impact of the project for First Nations learners.
26. This criterion will consider the overall reach and impact of the project, including the impact on the regions and communities served—both socially and economically.
27. Applications should outline anticipated outcomes (including any evidence where available) of:
- a) how the project will provide new or expanded opportunities for training
 - b) outer regional or remote areas and communities that will be serviced by the project, including the number and demographics of learners expected to benefit from the project
 - c) the expected short and long-term benefits to the communities and areas the project will service (e.g. increased provision of locally trained and located health and trade professionals)
 - d) how well the training aligns with the specific skill needs of the community
 - e) whether the training provides clear pathways to local employment
 - f) the areas and the level of skills and training that will be provided through the project (i.e. sector and AQF levels). Projects supporting delivery of higher-level qualifications will be preferred.
 - g) description of current training infrastructure available in the relevant locations and how this project will enhance or supplement that infrastructure.
 - h) whether this is a mobile project or will enhance skills delivery in outer regional and remote areas in a different way, noting that mobile projects will be preferred.

28. Ideally, evidence would be submitted that demonstrates available workforce planning data for the region or community that confirms a currently identified skills need in the local community.
29. Alternatively, a statement from the local ACCO, RTO, community group, state Skills Minister or other relevant sources supporting the claim that the project will address a currently identified need in the local community can be provided.
30. Projects with mobile elements that reach a broader number of communities, First Nations learners or remote areas are preferred and will be given additional points in the assessment process. This section should also outline how utilisation of the project will be promoted to First Nations communities and learners.

Criterion three - Value for money

31. This priority criterion will assess how the project represents an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources to positively impact skills access for First Nations learners and local communities, including how the state is contributing to the project, if applicable.
32. The value for money of the project may be demonstrated through:
 - a) The number of students expected to benefit from the project, including in the long term
 - b) The number of communities expected to benefit from the project
 - c) The expected cost savings for students from being able to access skills locally
33. Consideration will be given to the impact criterion in assessing the value for money criterion, in recognition that there are higher costs for delivering training to remote locations, and fewer students in remote areas.
34. State contributions to the projects, while not required, will be viewed favourably in assessing this criterion. States can also submit evidence of recent investments in capital or training in these areas, that Mobile TAFE projects would enhance.

Criterion four – Outer regional or remote location and/or mobility

35. This criterion will assess project delivery of training to First Nations learners to outer regional or remote locations. Delivery to remote locations and projects that service multiple communities and/or locations will be preferred.
36. As part of the application, please detail how outer regional or remote First Nations learners will be able to access training. Please note that whilst the project should focus on delivery to First Nations learners, other residents in delivery areas can also access the projects.
37. Relevant context including available local infrastructure to support proposed projects should be included where available.

Criterion five - Delivery organisation

38. This criterion will assess whether the delivery organisation is an ACCO, TAFE, First Nations Owned/Led RTO, industry-led RTO, adult and community education provider or private RTO that has experience in delivering quality and culturally safe training.
39. The application should detail the expected delivery organisation(s) for the project.
 - a) The preferred delivery organisation for Mobile TAFE projects are ACCOs, ACCOs in partnership with an RTO and/or TAFEs.
 - b) Mobile TAFE may also be delivered in part or full by First Nations Owned/Led RTOs, industry-led RTOs, adult and community education providers and private RTOs in certain circumstances, to meet local conditions, industry or specific cohort needs.

- c) In all circumstances, delivery must be in partnership with First Nations communities and/or organisations. The provider should have experience in delivering high quality, culturally safe training.

Assessment of applications

- 40. The proposals will be assessed by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations as they are received. The department will provide advice to the Commonwealth Minister for Skills and Training who will be the decision maker as to which proposals are funded.
- 41. Projects that do not meet eligibility requirements will not be assessed.
- 42. Each criterion will be assessed using a rubric and given a rating of:
 - a) very good – exceeds the criterion requirements
 - b) satisfactory – meets the criterion, or
 - c) unsatisfactory – does not meet the criterion.
- 43. An overall rating for the project will be given. To be eligible for funding, projects must be assessed as satisfactory across all criteria.
 - a) project selection will also consider geographical distribution, across eligible states and territories.
 - b) Commonwealth officials may seek further project proposal information from states to inform their assessment.
- 44. The final list of successful projects will be limited by the size of the available funding pool .
- 45. Commonwealth officials will assess projects and make recommendations to the Commonwealth Minister for Skills and Training, based on clauses 7 to 12, for decision.
- 46. The decision of the Commonwealth Minister for Skills and Training will be final.

Advice on outcome of assessment

- 47. The relevant state Minister will be advised of the outcome of the project(s) in their jurisdiction following completion of the selection process.
- 48. The Commonwealth and State Ministers will be required to sign a bilateral appendix to the TAFE Technology Fund – Mobile TAFE Schedule to confirm their agreement to the project(s) proceeding, including the funding amounts and milestones to be paid.
- 49. States will then develop and submit a Project Plan to the Commonwealth, using the template issued by the Commonwealth. The Project Plan will need to include First Nations partnership arrangements.
- 50. Feedback on unsuccessful project proposals will be limited to broad statements against the criteria.

Payments and reporting

- 51. Unless otherwise agreed between the Commonwealth and a state, funding payments for successful proposals will be based on:
 - a) 70 per cent following signing of the Project Plan(s), and
 - b) 30 per cent following receipt of the agreed completion evidence as per the bilateral appendix for the Project.
- 52. Reporting obligations to the Commonwealth for projects supported by Mobile TAFE are:

- a) Biannual progress report against the individual Project Plan(s), which will be due by 31 March and 30 September each year until the cessation of the relevant Project Plan, or the final milestone is processed, and
 - b) a final acquittal report on completion of the project demonstrating project completion from the state.
53. Payments will be disbursed by the Commonwealth Treasury on advice from the Commonwealth Minister for Skills and Training or their delegate.

Variation to Project Plans

54. Minor variations to Project Plans, such as earlier than expected completion dates or additions to project deliverables within the existing budget can be requested and agreed at the senior official level. Additional information may be requested to aid consideration of the request.
55. Major variations to Project Plans, such as the extension of project completion dates beyond 30 June 2030, relocation of projects or significant changes to project deliverables will require an updated Project Plan agreed by the relevant Commonwealth and State Ministers.
56. States are required to notify the Commonwealth in writing as soon as possible, but no longer than 30 days, after becoming aware that a project is subject to significant delays or requires a major variation and propose next steps.
57. If the Commonwealth is concerned with delivery of a project, the Commonwealth will engage with the relevant state and determine a course of action. This may include amendment of the Project Plan or reallocation of funds.

Non-commencement of projects

58. If a project does not proceed and/or a state terminates their participation in the Schedule, the state will be required to repay any Commonwealth payments made, except where the Commonwealth agrees there are exceptional circumstances. The Commonwealth may reallocate these funds to another project(s).
59. States are required to notify the Commonwealth in writing as soon as possible, but no longer than 30 days, after becoming aware that a project cannot proceed and propose how funds will be repaid.

Media and events relating to Mobile TAFE projects

60. States and the Commonwealth will consult on the nature and content of any events, announcements, promotional activity or publicity, for projects funded through Mobile TAFE. States will provide the Commonwealth with the opportunity to open projects jointly.
61. Any media releases or other promotional material on individual projects will include reference to the Commonwealth funding for the project.

Timelines

TAFE Technology Fund Timelines¹

Step	Timeline
Applications open	From signature of the Mobile TAFE Schedule until 29 May 2026
Commonwealth assessment and selection of projects	From December 2026 to 30 June 2026 on a rolling basis as proposals are submitted and assessed
Bilateral agreement of individual Project Plans	Within 9 months of project milestones being agreed by Ministers
Treasury to make payments to States	From May 2026 to 30 June 2027 on a rolling basis as Project Plans are agreed

¹ Proposals that are considered under the clause 6) g) (urgency) may run on a different timeline.

Glossary

Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisation	As defined under Clause 44 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.
Capital funding	Capital funding is for the funding of such things as mobile training units (MTUs), buildings, laboratory fit-out, procurement of training equipment, ICT equipment, relevant industry equipment and technology, relevant software, etc.
Closing the Gap	Refers to the objectives of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.
First Nations Owned	Has the same meaning as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation as defined in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.
Mobile TAFE	A \$31 million Commonwealth initiative to support projects developed by states and territories (states) in partnership with First Nations communities that will help meet skills needs in outer regional and remote areas.
Need for the project	Includes, for example, providing access to skills with local demand, expanding geographical access to skills and training, increasing the variety of skills and training that can be accessed remotely, updating or upgrading local infrastructure to facilitate skills access, etc.
Project proposal	Details of the proposed project funded including project name, total cost, requested Commonwealth contribution, a description of the substantive works of the project and proposed timeline, etc.
Project administration	Includes tender processes, monitoring expenditure and progress, quality assurance, distribution of funds, etc.
Public Provider Campuses	Public TAFE campuses, campuses of VET provider arms of public dual sector higher education providers (e.g. CQ University, Charles Darwin University, Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education) and in some cases campuses of publicly funded Adult and Community Education Providers providing accredited VET courses. For the purposes of the Fund, Public Provider Campuses can include schools in circumstances where schools are best placed to deliver skills and training access to the local community.
Outer regional or remote	Areas classified as 'outer regional', 'remote' or 'very remote' in Edition 3 of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS). These consist of remoteness categories 2-4.
State Skills Minister	Minister responsible for skills and training in a state or territory
TAFE	A training provider that is recognised as a Technical and Further Education (TAFE), public dual sector higher education provider, or through a TAFE auspicing or partnership arrangement.
TAFE Technology Fund	The Commonwealth fund to support TAFEs across the country to upgrade and expand their facilities, such as laboratories, workshops and IT services. Mobile TAFE is an additional funding round of the TAFE Technology Fund.

Value for money	Demonstrates an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources and determined from a variety of considerations, including: • the economic impact of the milestones, activities or outcomes, and • fit for purpose to contribute to government objectives.
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Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is Mobile TAFE?

- The Mobile TAFE initiative provides \$31 million to support projects developed by states and territories (states) in partnership with First Nations communities that will help meet skills needs in outer regional and remote areas.

2. Are private RTO's eligible for funding through the Mobile TAFE Fund?

- Yes, however only state governments are eligible to apply for funding on behalf of Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs), publicly owned VET provider campuses, including community education providers, public dual sector higher education providers (e.g. CQ University, Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education), First Nations Owned/Led Registered Training Organisations or privately owned Registered Training Organisations. This includes schools.
- States can submit joint project applications if so desired, however these will require the support of both state governments and any associated ACCOs and/or First Nations Owned/Led organisations or groups.

3. Can ACCOs, TAFEs or other training providers apply directly for funding?

- No, only state governments are eligible to apply for funding. Partnership arrangements with First Nations communities and/or organisations are a core selection criterion.

4. Do skills and facilities provided through Mobile TAFE projects need to be exclusive to First Nations learners?

- No, skills and facilities do not have to be exclusive to First Nations learners. Facilities can be accessible to all learners within the local community.

5. Why is the funding for capital funding only?

- The funding specifically targets infrastructure to support expansion of access to training in outer regional and remote areas.
- State or providers are not required to provide co-funding for projects, however, they are required to cover any ongoing operational funding costs and provide ongoing training as the entity using the facilities and/or equipment on a long-term basis.

6. What is the maximum amount of funding a project can receive?

- There is no set maximum amount for the project (noting the overall funding pool is capped and the need to have geographic spread across Australia). The projects were costed based on \$2.5 million per project.

7. What happens in the case of cost over-runs?

- States are responsible for meeting any costs for the project above those agreed by the Commonwealth.

8. How will projects with completion beyond 30 June 2030 be treated?

- Ministerial agreement would need to be sought for completion of projects beyond 30 June 2030.
- Payments will be made upon completion of the project, unless the state and federal government have agreed to terminate the project and no further payments will be made.

9. What reporting evidence will be required?

- States and TAFEs will be required to report biannually (by 31 March and 30 September each year) using the TAFE Technology Fund Project Biannual Reporting Template provided by the Commonwealth. Reporting will include:
 - Status of the project
 - Description of progress over the past 6 months
 - Expenditure to date on the projects
 - Activities currently in progress
 - Major delays or risks to the project
 - Outlook for the next 6 months, including any planned events in relation to the project
 - Up to date implementation timeline, and
 - Endorsement by State and provider officials.