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Minister for Skills and Training

The Hon Sue Ellery BA MLC
Western Australia
Minister for Education and Training

The Hon Dianne Farmer MP
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Minister for Training and Skills Development

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The Hon Alister Henskens SC MP
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Minister for Skills and Training

The Hon Blair Boyer MP
South Australia
Minister for Education, Training and Skills

The Hon Felix Ellis MP
Tasmania
Minister for Skills, Training and Workforce Growth

Mr Chris Steel MLA
Australian Capital Territory
Minister for Skills

The Hon Paul Kirby MLA
Northern Territory
Minister for Business, Jobs and Training

COMMUNIQUE

MEETING OF FEDERAL, STATE AND TERRITORY SKILLS MINISTERS

Federal and State and Territory Skills and Training Ministers met in person today for the first time since 2019 to progress a range of key vocational education and training reform matters.

As a nation we are facing the most acute skills shortages experienced in decades and key to addressing this is enhanced engagement across jurisdictions and with stakeholders.

The Ministerial Skills Council will consider the following policies for the VET sector.

Australian Jobs and Skills Summit

Following the highly successful Jobs and Skills Summit on 1-2 September 2022, which marked the renewal of a national conversation about a shared vision for Australia's economy and collaboration on addressing skills and labour shortages, Skills Ministers today discussed the [outcomes](#) of the Summit and opportunities to strengthen the national training system.

Skills Ministers agreed to work in close collaboration and in good faith on several key measures, including immediate funding to deliver 180,000 Fee Free TAFE training places, including 60,000 new places in priority skills need areas.

Skills Ministers welcomed the Commonwealth's increase in the permanent Migration Program as an outcome of the Summit and noted the importance of skilled migration as part of the solution to meeting State and Territory skills needs.

Skills Ministers also commissioned urgent work on what immediate collective action could be taken to alleviate workforce pressures drawing on best practice within States and Territories.

Skills Ministers agree to work together to improve completion rates for traineeships and apprenticeships to support more Australians into secure work.

Jobs and Skills Australia

Skills Ministers discussed progress to establish Jobs and Skills Australia, which will provide independent advice on the current, emerging, and future workforce, skills, and training needs, and develop close partnerships with state and territory governments, industry including unions, employer bodies, and education providers.

Consistent with the Australian Government's commitment to a clean energy future, Jobs and Skills Australia will, as a priority, undertake a capacity study into Australia's clean energy workforce. The capacity study will include labour market analysis on factors impacting supply and demand for workers in the sector, a gap analysis of skills in demand for clean energy occupations, a transition analysis to support transition from 'brown' to 'green' occupations, and forecast workforce requirements for the future.

This information will be critical to informing development of clean energy qualifications and micro-credentials, career pathways promotion, and other activities to assist Federal and State and Territory governments prepare for the future.

National Skills Agreements

[National Cabinet](#) has tasked Skills Ministers with negotiating a new long-term National Skills Agreement in accordance with an endorsed [vision and guiding principles](#) for long-term reform, in consultation with Treasurers.

Skills Ministers committed to collaborative engagement on a breadth of priority reform areas under the guiding principles, to achieve a VET sector with TAFE at its heart, that provides high-quality, responsive, and accessible education and training to boost productivity and support Australians to obtain the skills they need to participate in secure and rewarding employment and prosper in the modern economy.

Jurisdictions welcomed, and committed to finalising, a 12-month Skills Agreement, to deliver 180,000 Fee-Free TAFE places from January 2023. The 12-month Skills Agreement confirms TAFE's central role in the VET sector, increases opportunities and workforce participation of priority groups, and addresses skills gaps in the economy while the longer-term National Skills Agreement that will commence in 2024 is being developed.

Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)

Skills Ministers agreed to the release of the draft revised Standards for RTOs for public consultation. The Standards are being revised as part of important reforms and are aimed at improving the quality of training delivery through building the capability and capacity of teachers, trainers, assessors, and RTOs to innovate and deliver excellence in training that is focussed on learner outcomes.

The draft Standards have been developed based on feedback from the sector and aim to clearly articulate the standard expected for RTOs, while not overly prescribing how an RTO should achieve these outcomes. This will provide RTOs with the flexibility to meet the outcomes in a way that is appropriate to their size, structure, and delivery cohort.

Importantly, the draft Standards have been strengthened in areas such as learner support and wellbeing, disability, ensuring a culturally safe environment for First Nations Australian learners, and governance arrangements.

Skills Ministers look forward to receiving feedback from the sector on the draft Standards.

VET Workforce Capability Blueprint

Ensuring we have a fit for purpose VET sector is critical to teaching and training our existing and future workforce, which is why Skills Ministers agreed to progress a VET Workforce Blueprint to support, grow and retain a quality workforce.

The Blueprint will support the long-term sustainability of TAFE and the VET sector and will identify effective strategies for the attraction and retention of a high-quality workforce, along with capability and career development strategies and succession planning.

Skills Minister noted the need for the Blueprint to be linked with other education workforce strategies being developed.

Skills Ministers also acknowledged the Summit's strong message that renewed efforts are required to ensure that all Australians have opportunities to skill and upskill, with a particular focus on the participation of women and First Nations Australians, people with disability and young people struggling to enter the labour market.

Qualifications Reforms

Skills Ministers agreed to ambitious timeframes to finalise development of a new system of VET qualifications that will include a framework for micro-credentials without compromising quality. This will deliver qualifications that combine industry specialisations with transferrable skills to assist workers to improve their opportunities in line with shifts in labour force demands. Better recognition of prior learning and improved use of micro-credentials would provide greater flexibility and more opportunities so that learners can upskill or reskill more quickly.

Qualification reform will support Australians to build the skills they need now and into the future, within a high quality, responsive and easier to navigate VET system.

Consultations will continue regarding the proposed model and implementation and transition planning ahead of further consideration by Skills Ministers in 2023.

To engage on a range of Skills Reform matters, including consultation on the draft RTO Standards from mid-October, visit the [\[Engagement Hub / Department of Employment and Workplace Relations website\]](#) or reach out to your State or Territory Skills Minister.

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