
**Communiqué for the COAG Industry and Skills Council Meeting of
Skills Ministers
3 October 2018**

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Industry and Skills Council (the Council) gathered in Adelaide on 3 October 2018. Skills ministers met first before joining industry colleagues at a joint session. The Council acknowledged they met on the traditional lands of the Kaurna people.

The meeting of skills ministers was chaired by Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash, Australian Government Minister for Small and Family Business, Skills and Vocational Education.

In attendance were state ministers with portfolio responsibility for skills:

- Deputy Premier, the Hon John Barilaro MP, New South Wales Minister for Skills;
- Deputy Premier, the Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP, Tasmanian Minister for Education and Training;
- the Hon David Pisoni MP, South Australian Minister for Industry and Skills;
- the Hon Shannon Fentiman MP, Queensland Minister for Employment and Small Business, Minister for Training and Skills Development;
- the Hon Gayle Tierney MP, Victorian Minister for Training and Skills;
- the Hon Selena Uibo MLA, Northern Territory Minister for Education and Minister for Workforce Training;
- Western Australia and the ACT were represented by officials.

Council acknowledged the excellent careers that come from vocational education and training. It is a sector that contributes significantly to the development of a skilled workforce and to providing industry with work ready employees.

The members discussed the need to return the status of vocational education as an equally valued pathway to a rewarding career, relative to higher education.

The members also discussed the need to address community perceptions of the value of vocational education and training, including apprenticeships and traineeships.

National Training System Quality

Members received updates on a number of Council priorities, with a particular focus on quality in vocational education and training. Council members expressed a shared commitment to delivering a quality national training system and discussed a range of measures that contribute to ongoing enhancements to the sector.

In the context of the discussion on quality, members considered an update on training product reform. It was agreed to progress training product reform by undertaking pilots and projects to test proposed enhancements to training products, including work on banks of common units of competency. The Council will consider recommendations based on the outcomes of the pilots and further research in 2019. Skills officials are to come back to Council with options to further support the standing and quality of VET practitioners.

Another element supporting a quality skills sector was a consideration of the next steps for the recommendations following the review of the *National VET Regulator Act (2011)*.

Council noted progress of the review of the Standards for VET Accredited Courses and agreed to consider the amended Standards for VET Accredited Courses out-of-session following discussions with jurisdictions and VET regulators.

Council discussed opportunities to address quality concerns with unduly short training and was provided with stakeholder feedback received through public consultations on the strategic review of unduly short training by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA). Council noted the recommendations made by ASQA in their review for regulatory reform and stakeholder feedback in response.

Council agreed to write to ASQA requesting further advice on the three recommendations in their strategic review of unduly short training.

Reports to Council

The Council welcomed reports on the significant body of work undertaken by both the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) and ASQA over the preceding twelve months.

Council discussed the importance of streamlining the skills and training system design to enable the VET sector to meet the rapid pace of change and the future of work. Senior officials will work with the AISC to provide further advice to Council on approaches to streamlining.

The Council heard from Professor Pollaers, AISC Chair, about key work underway to enhance training packages and industry engagement, including modernising training products to keep up with the changing nature of work and the needs of the modern economy.

The Council endorsed the twenty-one training packages approved by the AISC to support this modernisation:

- FNS Financial Services
- FDF Retail Baking / Rice Milling
- SIS Sport, Fitness and Recreation
- PSP Public Sector (Auslan)
- AUR Automotive Retail, Service and Repair
- CUA Creative Arts and Culture
- HLT Health
- BSB Business Services
- RII Resources and Infrastructure
- RGR Racing Training
- FBP Food Beverage and Pharmaceutical Manufacturing
- UEG Gas
- POL Police
- SHB Hairdressing and Beauty Services
- AUM Automotive Manufacturing
- ICP Printing and Graphic Arts
- ICT Information and Communications Technology
- DEF Defence
- MEA Aeroskills
- MSL Laboratory Operations
- TLI Transport and Logistics

Mr Mark Paterson AO, Chief Commissioner of ASQA, delivered a report to ministers covering the annual regulatory performance of the national vocational education and training regulator.

Mr Paterson also engaged with Council on the key areas of focus for the regulator in continuing to

drive good practice by registered training organisations.

Discussion on skills shortages in small business

Council discussed programs that support uptake of trades to promote job growth.

The Council also considered a request from the COAG Energy Council to undertake a workforce assessment for the electricity sector and agreed to contribute to a process to assess and map emerging skills needs of the energy sector to vocational education and training products through the existing functions of the AISC.

Information for consumers, governments and regulators

The Council noted the Performance Information for VET (PIVET) projects are on track to transform the data available to consumers, governments and regulators. Council will continue to consider critical decisions for PIVET as implementation progresses.

Council agreed to provide at the next meeting an update on approaches to promoting VET, apprentices and trainees, and how to better support consumers and influencers in career choices.

The Council was updated on the proposed expansion of the Unique Student Identifier initiative (USI) to the higher education and schools sector, with next steps to be ongoing consultation on the progress and implementation of the USI.

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Workforce

Council discussed the needs of the NDIS workforce and has tasked skills officials to work alongside disability officials on developing and supporting a national disability workforce strategy with a report back to skills ministers at the next meeting. South Australia has agreed to lead this work.

Next meeting

The next meeting will be held in the first half of 2019 on a date and location to be determined.