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**Tuesday 4 March 2025**

The JSC CEO Network Forum was held at the QT Canberra on Tuesday 4 March 2025. This is a record of the actions and decisions taken at the meeting.

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| **Attendees**  Brett Schimming, Building, Construction, Property and Water (BuildSkills Australia), Co-Chair  Anthea Middleton, Energy Gas and Renewables (Powering Skills Organisation)  Emma King, Aged and Disability, Children’s Education and Care, Health, Human Services, Sport and Recreation (HumanAbility)  Gavin Lind, Mining and Automotive (Mining and Automotive Skills Alliance)  Jean Dyzel, Public Safety and Government (Public Skills Australia)  Michael Hartman, Agribusiness, Fibre, Furnishing, Food, Animal and Environment Care (Skills Insight)  Natalie Turmine, Arts, Personal Services, Retail, Tourism and Hospitality (Service and Creative Skills Australia)  Patrick Kidd, Finance, Technology and Business (Future Skills Organisation)  Paul Walsh, Transport and Logistics (Industry Skills Australia)  Sharon Robertson, Manufacturing (Manufacturing Industry Skills Alliance)  Renae Houston, Commonwealth, Co-Chair  Richard Bolto, Commonwealth  Marina Henley, Commonwealth    **Secretariat**  Kylie Fennell, Commonwealth  Chloe Neideck, Commonwealth  Karen Murphy, Commonwealth (attended virtually)    **Guests for specific sessions**    David Turvey, JSA  Megan Lilly, Deputy Commissioner, JSA  Kirsty Leslie, JSA (attended virtually)  Saxon Rice, CEO, ASQA (attended virtually)  Nick Andrews, Commonwealth (attended virtually)  John King, Managing Director, NCVER  Beth Ross, Commonwealth (attended virtually)  James Latimore, ASQA (attended virtually)  Ryan Sheales, The Agenda Group (attended virtually)  Courtney Mann, The Agenda Group (attended virtually) |
| **Welcome | Speaker: Renae Houston** |
| **Welcome and Introduction**   * **Renae** **Houston** acknowledged the Traditional Owners and welcomed the JSC CEOs * **Renae** declared the meeting open at 9:04am. * **Renae** acknowledgedMichael Hartman’srecent announcement of his pending retirement.   + Michael has made significant contributions over the last 24 years of service as a CEO supporting industry engagement in the VET sector through his roles at Skills Impact and Skills Insight.   + The department and CEOs wished Michael all the best in his next venture. * **Renae** advised that David Turvey and other JSA representatives would be joining for the JSA item. * **Renae** advised that Saxon Rice, ASQA CEO, would be joining virtually and John King, NCVER Managing Director would join in person. * **Renae** advised that Beth Ross, Assistant Secretary National Reform Initiatives, will be joining virtually and Nick Andrews from her Branch would be joining in person for the session before lunch. * **Renae** advised that Karen Murphy from the Secretariat team was attending online as a back-up for minute taking. * **Renae** acknowledged Co-Chair Brett Schimming who would be chairing the JSC-led items. * **Renae** advised that Marina Henley who is the new Assistant Secretary for the Industry Policy Strategy and Engagement Branch, would be joining after lunch. * **Renae** handed over to **Richard Bolto** to lead the next item. |
| **Action Register and Updates | Speaker: Richard Bolto** |
| **Action register**(standing item)   * **Richard** introduced and led this item.   **Discussion**   * The department thanked the JSCs for executing the grant agreement variations and completing activity funding submissions for the current financial year, which are currently being reviewed. * **Noted** the department is expected to provide advice within the next fortnight regarding sub-contracting (taking into account the department’s financial and risk threshold). Also to be provided is advice on sub-committees, international travel, preparation of the corporate governance statement, as well as an updated progress report template. * **Noted** the whole of government priorities overview and strategic forward plan documents provided as out of session papers for information on Friday 21 February. * **Noted** updates on co-design of performance arrangements and the independent evaluation:   + Procurement of a supplier to undertake the evaluation is on track: Request for quote is out and responses are due on 18 March.   + The department is looking forward to the first co-design workshop (28 March).   + Nicholas Gruenwill be a guest in workshop 1. He will provide independent expertise, i.e. on balancing institutional imperatives and program aspirations.   + Co-design performance arrangements and the evaluation are complementary     - Performance arrangements will focus on delivery (although not exclusively).     - Evaluation will consider both delivery and broader program design and context and will run over a longer period. A supplier will be in place by 30 June 2025.     - The CEOs provided feedback on the co-design 1:1s with dandolopartners, highlighting these sessions need to be a two-way conversation and expressing a preference to hold the first workshop in-person in Sydney. The department advised it will provide the feedback to dandolopartners. * The JSC Quarterly Update document (print outs provided to CEOs at the meeting) prepared by **Natalie Turmine** was highlighted. This related to an action item (***03/210125****: Natalie to provide a template providing an overview of the JSC program and each JSC to CEOs and the department for feedback*). It was agreed that the document be discussed as part of the Strategic Planning 2025 or Ways of Working item. * Action register was taken as noted by members. * The department advised that business as usual deliverables and reporting would not be affected by caretaker arrangements and that the activities which typically need to be carefully handled relate to promotional activities / external communications such as media releases and events/forums and consultation on current government policy. * **Noted** there is no update on SIAC since the January JSC CEO Forum meeting as SIAC last met in November 2024. Items to be discussed at its next meeting on 20 March 2025:   + JSC Update (*standing item*) covering:     - An update on the extensions of JSC grant agreements and streamlining of program requirements     - Evaluation and performance arrangements update.   + Training Package Assurance activities update, which will be a written update.   **Action**   * The department to arrange with dandolopartners a face-to-face option (as well as virtual) in Sydney for the co-design workshop on 28 March 2025.   **Richard** handed back to **Renae.** |
| **JSA and JSC Workplan and Update | Speaker: David Turvey** |
| * **Renae** introduced presenter David Turvey, and JSA Deputy Commissioner Megan Lilly. * Kirsty Leslie from JSA also joined virtually for this session.   **Discussion**   * JSA advised that during caretaker period that some work may be disrupted with major consultations and releases put on hold. Public engagement and speeches would also need to be reconsidered. * **Noted** general update on progress on key JSA projects.   + *Generative Artificial Intelligence Capacity Study:* JSA is working towards publishing the paper soon, but it may need to go on hold if not released before caretaker period.     - There are early indications that generative AI is more likely to augment many types of jobs rather than automate them.     - Discussed needing to ensure the study and data in this space stays up-to-date.   + *International Students Pathways and Outcomes Study:* JSA is working with the ABS and Australian Taxation Office to source and analyse data related to international students when they enter the labour market and issues of underemployment. The study seeks to understand what’s driving student decisions. JSA is aiming to complete the work mid-2025.     - The group discussed other work underway to support skilled migration and the importance of it. JSA advised of work underway with Home Affairs regarding points-based migration and plans to dig deeper in the skilled migration space.   + *Foundation Skills Study:* JSA is working with Roy Morgan which is conducting a survey of Australian adult literacy and numeracy skills with the view to obtaining a large enough sample to undertake national analysis. The results are expected early next year.   + *RTO Typology:* JSA is developing a new method of categorising RTOs looking at similarities and differences in how RTOs operate and relate to students, communities, specific cohorts and industry. It highlights the diversity of the VET sector. An online dashboard is planned.   + *The Gender Economic Equality Study*: workshops have been underway to examine the gendered nature of the world of work and education, skills and training and a consultation paper is open until Friday 7 March.   + *Regional, rural and remote Australia – a jobs and skills roadmap:* the team is in the field undertaking qualitative work and considering the diversity of individual needs across different regions.   + *National skills taxonomy:* work is underway with a plan to host a workshop in the future with JSCs to explore the issues. The priority is to create an enduring definition of “skill” that is applicable and meaningful to all sectors and the labour market. JSA agreed the importance of getting the definition right and effectively defining the relationship between knowledge and skill.     - JSA advised it is taking the Australian Skills Classification off its website as it is not being updated. It is available through data sharing agreements.   + *Tertiary harmonisation roadmap*: the paper was released on 22 February 2025 with JSA meeting with CEOs on 5 March 2025 to discuss it. * **Noted** JSA has opened a public consultation process on its workplan for 2025-26, as required by the *JSA Act*. Initial discussions have been held with Commonwealth departments and agencies and state and territory governments. * Thanked JSCs who have provided input so far and encouraged all JSCs to submit feedback as part of the process. * Major projects include developing data assets on First Nations and disability employment outcomes, as well as some other cohorts. * Discussed opportunity to better align work planning for both JSA and JSCs to support complementing each other’s work and scheduling projects. * Discussed potential areas of focus for the JSA workplan in 2025-26, including:   + the housing construction workforce, including skilled migration needs   + emerging industries, what do they look like and how do we plan for it? * Discussed funding arrangements for JSA undertaking work.   **David** handed back over to Renae.  **Renae** thanked JSA guests. |
| **Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) | Speaker: Saxon Rice, ASQA CEO, and CEOs** |
| * **Renae** welcomed **Saxon Rice** and handed over to **Saxon**. James Latimore, Director for Industry Engagement at ASQA, also joined virtually as an observer. * A pre-reading paper was provided on Friday 21 February.   **Discussion**   * Saxon presented on ASQA’s 2024-2025 Regulatory Risk Priorities (RRPs):   + Non-genuine providers and bad-faith operators   + International delivery   + Academic cheating   + Recognition of prior learning (RPL)   + Shortened course duration   + Student work placement   + Online delivery. * The group discussed the need to balance genuine providers delivering effective RPL with non-compliant operators. * Saxon advised of the systems and approaches to ensure genuine and compliant providers can continue to deliver RPL. * **Agreed** that caution needed to be taken in considering prescription of delivery and assessment. * The group discussed an approach to collaboration and engagement moving forward and consideration of key risks in training package design / expectations and guidance to providers. * The group considered opportunities for how ASQA and JSCs can work more closely together during training package design to support regulatory risks. * Saxon advised that ASQA would like to identity opportunities to engage JSCs more closely for support on interpretation of training packages, considering RPL issues and other matters. * **Agreed** that ASQA would seek to draw on JSCs’ industry expertise on regulatory issues as needed, as well as at the front end particularly to come to an agreed position on transitioning packages and whether extensions would be granted. * **Saxon** asked for JSC nominees to work with ASQA to progress further thinking in considering principles for the alignment between training package design and regulatory risk, as well as other matters raised. * **Discussed** the consideration of AI in training design and delivery. Saxon advised this was high on ASQA’s agenda for 2025 and 2026 with the intent to work closely with JSCs on the matter. * **Discussed** that the department should be involved from a qualification reform and broader policy perspective as well as the training assurance team in considering principles for the alignment between training package design and regulatory risk. * **Discussed** how ASQA can ensure it has access to relevant expertise, including industry expertise in the performance of its functions and how ASQA will utilise independent validation of assessment as a regulatory tool. What can be built into the system to support implementation of the revised RTO Standards?   **Actions**   * ASQA to meet with Brett Schimming, Anthea Middleton, Patrick Kidd, Sharon Robertson and Warren Hill from HumanAbility prior to the next meeting to further explore principles for the alignment between training package design and regulatory risk, and training package transition considerations.   **Renae** thanked **Saxon** and broke for morning tea. |
| **National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) | Speaker: John King, NCVER Managing Director, and CEOs** |
| * **Renae** welcomed **John King** and handed over to him.   **Discussion**   * **Noted** NCVER’s organisational renewal is progressing, with statements of expectations and intent published * **John** thanked those JSCs who had provided input as part of the capability review. * The group discussed how NCVER can assist JSCs with relevant services, insights and products. * **John** presented on the following:   + Insights of interest​     - Pathways in building and construction​     - Equity in Business​     - Apprenticeships completions and products​     - Reasons for non-completion​     - Measuring success rates. * **Noted** and discussed examples from recent collaborations with JSCs on VET pathway and occupation analyses to address evidence gaps and support workforce planning. * **Discussed and agreed** the importance of focusing on success rates rather than completion rates as success may be studying VET to get a job or reach a required milestone and then not completing because a learner had achieved their goal. Agreed that defining success is important. * **Discussed** the impact of VET in schools on non-completion rates where students are choosing VET qualifications to support their Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) but then don’t complete once they receive an ATAR. * **Discussed** the impacts of Fee-Free TAFE skewing enrolments, commencements and completions data. * **Discussed** how data can be linked from higher education back to VET to provide a broader picture of the completion landscape, with John advising it can be linked. * **John** advised the challenge is capturing enough success without capturing all of it.   **Renae** thanked **John**. |
| **The National TAFE Network and TAFE Centres of Excellence | Speaker: DEWR** |
| **Renae** welcomed **Beth Ross** and **Nick Andrews** from the National Reform Initiatives Branch and handed over to **Beth**.    **Marina joined the meeting in person during this session.**    **Discussion**   * **Beth** provided an update on TAFE Centres of Excellence and the National TAFE Network * **Noted** and discussed opportunities for the JSCs to engage with the states and territories, including through the Skills Senior Officials’ Network (SSON). Issues identified for discussion with SSON included:   + Strategic issues of cross-jurisdiction interest, such as the outcomes of JSC projects.   + Approach to engagement with TAFE Centres of Excellence and JSC CEO insights into working with Centres of Excellence.   + Understanding of the purpose and policy intent of the TAFE Centres of Excellence, particularly the national, networked nature of TAFE Centres of Excellence and the National TAFE Network.   + Opportunities for improvement in shared stewardship between JSCs, officials and Skills Ministers. * **Discussed** JSC experiences with the TAFE Centres of Excellence, including the level of engagement with JSCs, increased expectations on JSCs regarding engagement with committees and other forums. * **Discussed** concerns that some providers may view TAFE Centres of Excellence primarily as a vehicle for self-accreditation and accredited course development, with implications for industry leadership in VET. * **Discussed** concerns with duplication with some TAFE Centres of Excellence taking on roles, responsibilities and priorities in JSCs’ remit. * **Discussed** capacity concerns with JSCs being invited to be on a large number of CoE committees and sub-committees, and needing to have a presence on them. * **Beth** advised she would take the feedback and examples back to the team for consideration. * **Discussed** the Federated Industry Skills Network (FISN) and whether the group should be engaged for a collective conversation about the CoE. FISN is undergoing change but the department will consider future engagement opportunities.   **Actions**     * The department to identify an opportunity for the JSC CEOs to meet with SSON. * JSCs to provide any further thoughts to the department to inform an agenda for a meeting with SSON.   **Renae** thanked Beth and Nick and broke for lunch. |
| **JSC item – Strategic Planning 2025, Ways of Working and General Discussion Items | Speaker: JSCs and DEWR** |
| **Brett** led this item and chaired for the reminder of the day.  **Discussion**  *Ways of working*   * The group discussed the three key areas they agreed on working together on (as part of the Ways of Working project) and how these would be approached:   1. The strategic view on how to move VET in a collective direction      + The proposed work with The Agenda Group could help support this.   2. Identification of the JSC Program’s position and a collective view on key VET system reform initiatives, such as tertiary harmonisation, skills taxonomy, qualification reform and CoE, where JSCs have a collective view.      + The group discussed how JSCs need a collective view on system initiatives and how the JSC Program is responding to them, though it is up to individual JSCs what specific approach they took in terms of implementation.      + Anthea Middleton agreed to lead a test case applying the Ways of Working principles to a VET Workforce project.   3. Identification of some cross-council projects where JSCs can share information or work together.      + The group discussed identifying around six projects (not just training product development work) that JSCs are working collectively on and where they are tackling system problems that could be enabled through their Ways of Working collaborative model.   *JSC quarterly update document* (pre-reading papers provided)   * The group discussed the draft JSC quarterly update document developed by SaCSA with input from all JSCs. * **Agreed** to add the document’s purpose, to add a disclaimer and JSC logos, tighten up some of the sections and language to be in layman’s terms, and focus on what the projects will achieve. Consistency would also be applied to the different sections and general formatting. * **Agreed** that the document once completed could be added to JSC websites, if individual JSCs wish to do so. * **Agreed** that the department could leverage the document once completed to replace the current quarterly progress document.   *Qualification reform*   * The group discussed the different approaches and views of qualification reform among JSCs. * **Discussed** that the essence of qualification reform was about good quality training products delivered well, with speed to market and fit for purpose solutions, and that this messaging needed to be elevated with stakeholders. * **Noted** qualification reform would be discussed further at the broader network forum on 5 March 2025.   *Night Economy and Night Shift Workforce* (verbal discussion only, no papers)   * **Natalie Turmine** provided an overview of workforce issues for some states and cities (particularly Sydney) related to their night economy. She raised existing attraction and retention issues, and how they would be exacerbated with workers facing transport issues, lack of affordable housing near work, as well as safety concerns, and lack of childcare options and healthy food options. * **Natalie** advised a Census question may be needed to obtain a clearer picture on the night shift workforce as well as a clear definition of what a night worker is. She advised that she had spoken to JSA about the potential for a capacity study and that she’d spoken to Anna Faithfull, Deputy Secretary (Skills and Training) about meeting with key stakeholders. * **Agreed** that as an industry stewardship piece SaCSA an other relevant JSCs could develop a paper outlining the issue and recommended actions then provide it to JSA, DEWR, ABS and other relevant stakeholders ahead of any meeting.   **Actions**   * Anthea to lead a test case applying the Ways of Working principles to a VET Workforce project. * SaCSA to make some updates to the JSC update document and re-share with JSC communications staff to further input and refinement. * Natalie to speak to Brett about next steps for progressing a paper on the night economy and night shift workforce ahead of arranging a meeting with key stakeholders.   The group broke for afternoon tea. |
| **JSC item – JSC Program Pitch and Ways of Working continued | Speaker: Brett Schimming, JSCs, DEWR and the Agenda Agency** |
| **Brett** led this item.  **Discussion**  *JSC Program pitch*   * **Sharon Robertson** provided an overview of The Agenda Group who had been identified as a potential supplier (after seeking two quotes from agencies) to support the JSCs in developing a pitch focusing on the collective strengths of the JSC Program and the impact JSCs are having. * Ryan Sheales and Courtney Mann from The Agenda Group joined the meeting. * Ryan and Courtney gave a presentation and outlined the steps involved and touchpoints to develop a useful, memorable and compelling elevator pitch:   + Optional CEO messaging survey   + Group discussions on pitch approaches   + First draft of the pitch; feedback from JSC leaders   + Consolidation of feedback   + Deliver JSC pitch document. * **Agreed** that input should also be sought from Renae, Richard and Marina. * **Discussed** that once the pitch was developed how JSCs could use it to inform their own communication materials and the group could identify any collective communications collateral required.   *Ways of Working continued*   * The group discussed the Ways of Working collaborative framework and recommendations developed by Scyne. * The group acknowledged the work from Scyne and Skye Kelly at Future Skills Organisation. * Discussed the recommendation to form a CEO Working Group (owned by the CEOs) to be supported by a secretariat (staffed by the JSCs) to collectively address strategic matters and enable strategic discussions that benefit all JSCs. * **Renae** raised the option of considering changes to the existing CEO Forum arrangements rather than establishing an additional forum. The department acknowledged that it’s a matter for JSCs to consider (and agree on) but the forums are jointly owned. The department is open to adapting anything that’s not working currently. * The CEOs acknowledged the value of the CEO Forum in its current form and spoke to the need for the separate CEO Working Group to progress critical JSC business. * The CEOs agreed they would need to recruit someone to perform the secretariat role as well as potentially some other policy and coordination tasks.   *Broader Network Forum agenda check in*   * Brett raised that future thought should be given to the purpose of the broader network forum with some CEOs unclear whether they are required to attend as well as JSC staff. * **Agreed** that networking opportunities for staff are the responsibility of JSCs. * **Agreed** that both CEOs and their staff should attend Broader Network Forums arranged by the department.   **Actions**   * Sharon to proceed with engaging The Agenda Group to develop the pitch. * Brett to advise Scyne Advisory that the Ways of Working project is now complete. * JSCs to further discuss their application of the Ways of Working collaborative model at the 15 April virtual meeting. * Brett to progress developing a position description for the Secretariat role with scoping advice available from Skye Kelly. * The formation and progressing of the CEO Working Group and appointment of its Secretariat to be agreed on at the 12 June meeting. |
| **Wrap-up | Speaker: Brett Schimming** |
| **Wrap-up**  **Discussion**   * General/other business.   + **Noted** that Kylie Fennell from the Secretariat has been offered and accepted a permanent opportunity as Director of Media, Communications, Publishing and Shop at AIATSIS (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies). Kylie’s last day will be on Tuesday 11 March and Karen Murphy will be temporarily filling the position. * Confirmed the next JSC CEO Forum will be on Tuesday 15 April 2025 and will be virtual. The next in person meeting will be Thursday 12 June in Brisbane with a placeholder for the broader network forum the day before (11 June) if required. * **Agreed** Brett would chair the April and June meetings. * **Agreed** and noted that Emma King would be unable to attend the 12 June meeting and her Acting CEO would attend in her place. * **Noted** that Natalie would miss the afternoon of the September in-person CEO Forum.   *Brett closed the meeting at 4:40pm* |