



Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council

The Hon Brendan O'Connor MP

Minister for Skills and Training

The Hon Blair Boyer MP

South Australia

Minister for Education, Training and Skills

The Hon Tim Crakanthorp MP

New South Wales

Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

The Hon Felix Ellis MP

Tasmania

Minister for Skills, Training and Workforce Growth

The Hon Dianne Farmer MP

Queensland

Minister for Training and Skills Development

The Hon Paul Kirby MLA

Northern Territory

Minister for Business, Jobs and Training

The Hon Simone McGurk MLA

Western Australia

Minister for Training, Water and Youth

Mr Chris Steel MLA

Australian Capital Territory

Minister for Skills

The Hon Gayle Tierney MLC

Victoria

Minister for Training and Skills

COMMUNIQUE

MEETING OF FEDERAL, STATE AND TERRITORY SKILLS MINISTERS

Federal, State and Territory Skills and Training Ministers met on Friday, 30 June 2023 to progress key reforms to vocational education and training (VET) and the development of a new National Skills Agreement (NSA). Skills Ministers are committed to ensuring reforms deliver on the skills and workforce needed for a high-performing economy.

A new 5-year National Skills Agreement

Skills Ministers discussed the key architecture for new funding and stewardship arrangements under the NSA, due to commence from 1 January 2024. Discussion included arrangements for the Commonwealth's investment over 5 years, providing States and Territories with flexibility, autonomy and funding certainty to deliver national, State and Territory priorities. The NSA will embed joint stewardship of the VET sector that will identify and address national priorities, while recognising the need for place-based responses and State and Territory flexibility.

Qualifications Reform

Qualifications reform is a key to supporting workforce development and a stronger, more resilient, and productive economy. Skills Ministers recommitted to important qualifications reform, agreeing to a VET qualifications system which is:

- high-performing, easy to navigate, and meets the needs of employers and learners now and into the future;
- supports innovation and excellence in training delivery and assessment;
- supports safety and quality in training outcomes;
- delivers an adaptable skilled workforce resilient to structural changes; and
- supports more employers to use nationally recognised training.

In response to stakeholder feedback, a time-limited tripartite Qualifications Reform Design Group will be established to take this reform forward. The Qualifications Reform Design Group will draft new rules for the development of units of competency and qualifications that recognise the differing needs of industry by the end of 2023. This will be the first step of a multi-year program of work to deliver on the Skills Ministers' reform ambition.

The Qualifications Reform Design Group will be comprised of members with strong VET sector experience and representation from unions, employers, a State/Territory government, and education experts. The group will be supported by advice from a wide representation of industry stakeholders including Jobs and Skills Councils, TAFEs and RTOs, and students. Jobs and Skills Councils will be integral to the reform process, providing expert advice and leading the transition.

Jobs and Skills Australia

Professor Peter Dawkins AO, Interim Director of Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), provided Skills Ministers with an update on the work of JSA, including its upcoming priorities and the 2023-24 workplan that has been developed with tripartite partners.

Skills Ministers welcomed the new governance arrangements and expanded functions contained in the Jobs and Skills Australia Amendment Bill 2023. The arrangements represent a significant

opportunity to provide independent data and analysis to Skills Ministers and the nation on current, emerging, and future workforce, skills, and training needs.

Quality Reforms: RTOs Standards and VET Workforce Blueprint update

Skills Ministers discussed the progress of Quality Reforms, including possible early changes to the current Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 (RTO Standards).

As an immediate priority, Skills Ministers committed to work together to strengthen the Fit and Proper Person Requirements under the RTO Standards, to ensure integrity in the VET sector.

Skills Ministers also discussed potential changes to the RTO Standards to reflect the updated Training and Education Package, and to support growing the available VET workforce, with a final suite of amendments to be considered separately.

TAFE Centres of Excellence

Skills Ministers discussed the ongoing development of nationally networked TAFE Centres of Excellence.

These TAFE Centres of Excellence will partner with industry, universities, and governments to address critical challenges in our economy such as transition to a clean economy, manufacturing and sovereign capability, and care and support and other place-based regional priorities.

Not only will these Centres address key skills shortage areas, they will work to establish trust and confidence in a high-quality training sector.

FRIDAY, 30 JUNE 2023