Australian Government
Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

Closing the Gap

Achieving better outcomes for First Nations people in the VET sector

The National Skills Agreement introduces a step-change in governments' approach to delivering on Closing the Gap commitments for skills, with dedicated investment and concrete action to ensure that the design and delivery of VET to First Nations Australians is in full and genuine partnership.

Closing the Gap is identified in the Agreement as a national priority requiring focused effort from all governments.

Recognising Closing the Gap as a national priority, and First Nations peoples as a priority group, provides a genuine commitment to meet Closing the Gap targets across all levels of government.

In addition to the Closing the Gap initiatives, the Agreement provides a range of mechanisms that can be used to support First Nations learners. This includes implementing culturally safe best practice approaches to improve VET completions for First Nations students.

States and territories also have access to a flexible funding stream, which supports their training systems to deliver on national priorities such as Closing the Gap.

What is the Closing the Gap policy initiative?

Through the National Skills Agreement, the Australian Government has partnered with states and territories to work with First Nations people on a package of reforms focused on 4 Priority Reform Areas of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

The Closing the Gap initiative is:

- establishing partnerships with First Nations organisations in VET to provide genuine engagement and agency in policy making *(Priority Reform 1: Formal partnerships and shared decision making)*.
- expanding investment in the capability, sustainability, and growth of the Aboriginal Community-Controlled (ACC) and First Nations Owned (FNO) training sector (*Priority Reform 2: Building the community controlled sector)*.
- growing the First Nations VET workforce and boosting cultural capability of mainstream RTOs (*Priority Reform 3: Transforming government organisations)*.

- boosting data and evaluation capability in the First Nations VET sector *(Priority Reform 4: Shared access to data and information at a regional level).*

What are the benefits?

The reforms will increase self-determination and shared decision-making, leading to policies and programs which better reflect the needs of First Nations people, improving outcomes.

How much funding has been allocated?

The Australian Government is investing up to $197 million over 5 years to help meet Closing the Gap skills targets. This includes up to $36 million to progress a national partnership framework to ensure active and genuine engagement on national VET policy matters impacting First Nations people and enable First Nations-led initiatives.

Where can I find further information?

The Australian, and State and Territory Governments are working closely with First Nations partners to coordinate engagement, including implementation of bilaterally agreed plans. Further details are available in the published Closing the Gap implementation plans on the Federal Financial Relations (FFR) website.