



Australian Government

Australian Government Jurisdictional Action Plan

2025–2026 Update

Creating opportunities through
Vocational Education and Training



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, water, and community. We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and the elders, past, present and emerging. We acknowledge First Nations custodianship of 65,000 years of knowledge, skills and learning systems.



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The document must be attributed as the *Australian Government Jurisdictional Action Plan, 2025–2026 Update*.



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The Australian Government Jurisdictional Action Plan 2025–2026 Update

The Australian Government’s Jurisdictional Action Plan 2025–2026 Update demonstrates progress towards a stronger, more inclusive and responsive VET system

The Australian Government Jurisdictional Action Plan 2025–2026 Update reports on Commonwealth progress on the 2024–2028 National Skills Plan and the 2024 Jurisdictional Action Plan. It outlines actions across the National Skills Agreement population outcomes of productivity, labour supply, wellbeing and inclusion and resilience, and the system outcomes of industry needs, student needs, responsive courses, quality delivery and a collaborative and sustainable system.

Throughout 2025–26, the Australian Government delivered significant progress under the National Skills Agreement, strengthening the national Vocational Education and Training (VET) system and ensuring Australians can access the skills they need to obtain secure and well-paid employment. Guided by the shared outcomes and priorities in the National Skills Plan, our actions this year have focused on expanding opportunity, improving quality, and building system capability for the future.

High-quality VET gives Australians the practical skills they need to obtain well-paid, secure jobs that support our economy. In partnership with states and territories (states), we are working to improve the VET system so it keeps pace with new industries, critical skills gaps, and the needs of individuals, employers and communities.

The Australian Government and state and territory Jurisdictional Action Plans will be supported by national targets set out in the Balanced Scorecard being developed by Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA). The Balanced Scorecard, which will be released in 2026, will identify which elements of the system are contributing to specific economic and social improvements and allow progress to be tracked and gaps identified for further action.





KEY ACHIEVEMENTS DELIVERED IN 2025–26

Over the past year, the Australian Government has led and delivered a suite of reforms and initiatives, including:

- **Embedding Free TAFE as a permanent national feature** through the *Free TAFE Act 2025*, ensuring cost is never a barrier to gaining skills.
- **Supporting and modernising TAFE infrastructure** through the TAFE Technology Fund, improving access to contemporary training facilities in every jurisdiction.
- **Launching Mobile TAFE**, enabling high-quality training to reach outer regional and remote First Nations communities and better respond to local labour market needs.
- **Establishing TAFE Centres of Excellence** to drive innovation, industry collaboration and world-class training in National Priority areas.
- **Releasing the Outcomes Framework**, allowing governments to track, monitor and respond to changes over the life of the National Skills Agreement and guide strategic discussions on the progress of the VET system.
- **Implementing the National Foundation Skills Strategy 2025–2035** to lift language, literacy, numeracy, and digital (LLND) skills and employability skills capability for all Australians.
- **Establishing the National TAFE Network** to foster national collaboration across TAFEs, strengthen workforce capability, develop shared curriculum, and drive innovation in teaching and learning.

- **Making available a total of \$1 billion** under the National Skills Agreement to states for all finalised policy initiative implementation plans and National TAFE Network bilateral appendices, except Enhanced VET Data and Evidence which follows a separate timeframe (due by 30 June 2026).

RESPONDING TO EMERGING NATIONAL PRIORITIES

In 2025–26, Skills Ministers confirmed the National Priorities and agreed to the following new areas of focus:

- **Building national capability in Artificial Intelligence (AI)** to support AI adoption and harness productivity benefits.
- **Strengthening alignment between VET and higher education**, contributing to a more integrated and flexible tertiary system.
- **Ensuring training system capacity matches demand** in sectors critical to national prosperity and resilience.

These priorities reflect our shared commitment to preparing the workforce for technology-driven change, achieving better pathways for learners, and meeting the needs of industry and the economy.

DRIVING LONG-TERM IMPACT

Through the actions delivered in 2025–26, we are reshaping the VET system to maximise participation, support secure and meaningful employment, and ensure that skills supply keeps pace with national demand.

Timeline

Action Plan for the next 12 months

2026

Early 2026

- Refreshed National Code of Good Practice for Australian Apprenticeships **Jan 2026**
- Annual Review and updated Outcomes Framework
- First Nations VET Policy Partnership established **Early 2026**
- Independent Review of the National Skills Agreement Stewardship Model commenced
- Remaining TAFE Centre of Excellence established
- Indigenous Centre of Vocational Excellence host established **Apr 2026**

Mid 2026

- VET Data Streamlining implementation plans due **Mid 2026**
- Balanced Scorecard released **Mid 2026**
- VET Workforce Blueprint national action outcomes anticipated for publication from **Mid 2026**
- 2026 National TAFE Network Annual Workplan endorsed and first projects commenced
- Clean Energy Capital Investment Fund and Turbocharging the VET Workforce initiatives commenced **Mid 2026**
- Mobile TAFE projects selected by **Mid 2026**
- National Training Centre in New Energy Skills project commenced **Mid 2026**

Late 2026

- Skills Ministers advised on scoping the development of a Sector Strengthening Plan for the Aboriginal Community Controlled and First Nations Owned RTO sector **Sep 2026**
- Independent Review of the National Skills Agreement Stewardship Model completed
- National Skills Plan updated
- Jurisdictional Action Plan updated

2027

Ongoing

- Two independent reviews (one on the stewardship model and one on the National Skills Agreement) delivered between 2025–28
- Through 2025–28, evidence and insights from the Balanced Scorecard will help link actions to the delivery of a high-quality, responsive and accessible VET system.

National Skills Agreement National Priorities



GENDER EQUALITY

Enrolments in VET qualifications and corresponding occupations remain highly gender-segregated, a pattern quantified by JSA's [Gender Segregation Intensity Scale \(GSIS\)](#) and explored in the JSA Gender Economic Equality Study. Courses leading to lower-paid, historically undervalued occupations, such as aged care, nursing and early childhood education have been dominated by women, while those leading to higher-paid roles in trades and construction skew heavily towards men.

Gender-imbalanced workplaces and training pathways exacerbate workforce shortages in high demand VET qualifications and sectors important to Australia's priorities, including the Net Zero transformation. Addressing these challenges requires embedding gender and intersectional analysis into VET policy, funding and delivery, and aligning reforms with national strategies such as [Working for Women \(2024-34\)](#).



CLOSING THE GAP

VET is a critical enabler of economic and social participation for First Nations peoples and provides a pathway through qualifications and into meaningful employment.

First Nations peoples participation in VET is relatively high, but completion and employment outcomes remain lower than those of other Australians.

Many First Nations people balance education and training alongside important kinship, family and cultural responsibilities, which shape how and when they engage with the VET system.



SUPPORTING THE NET ZERO TRANSFORMATION

Achieving Net Zero will require substantial innovation and investment across the economy. JSA's Clean Energy Generation report found that we will need close to 2 million workers in building and engineering trades by 2050, an increase of around 40%. This includes a need for up to 42,000 more energy trades workers and 22,000 more energy apprentices by 2030.

The path to Net Zero will require innovation and investment across all sectors. Skills and training initiatives will play an important role in supporting the Net Zero transition, including through the apprenticeship system and connecting the work of JSA and the Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs).



SUSTAINING ESSENTIAL CARE SERVICES

The care and support economy is one of the fastest growing sectors in the Australian economy. JSA projects employment in the Health Care and Social Assistance Industry to grow strongly over the next ten years, from 2,369,300 in May 2025 to 2,911,200 in May 2035 (22.9% change).¹

To meet this growing demand, the Australian Government is implementing a significant reform agenda for a sustainable and productive care and support economy, recognising that quality care and support require quality training and jobs. Workforce objectives include ensuring that there are enough workers with the right skills and training to deliver quality care and support, that jobs are well paid and professionalised, and that there are pathways to facilitate career progression, further training and mobility.

Growing the First Nations care and support workforce and meeting the needs of rural, regional and remote communities are also key areas of focus.

¹ *Jobs and Skills Australia, Employment projections – May 2025 to May 2035*, Victoria University modelling for JSA, accessed 11 February 2026, <https://www.jobsandskills.gov.au/data/employment-projections>.

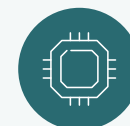


DEVELOPING AUSTRALIA'S SOVEREIGN CAPABILITY AND FOOD SECURITY

Australia has the lowest level of manufacturing self-sufficiency of OECD nations with a high dependency on manufactured imports. This leaves the economy vulnerable to external supply chain stresses, including geopolitical conflict and events like the COVID-19 pandemic.

There are emerging skills and workforce needs in these sectors and critical workforce shortages in transport and logistics affecting all sectors, including the food supply chain. JSA's [Food Supply Chain Workforce report](#) highlighted the importance of a resilient workforce to Australia's food security, including having the right skills in the right location at the right time.

From a defence perspective, securing Australia's national interests requires a competitive maritime capability, including naval ships, Collins Class submarines and over time building Australia's sovereign capability to build and sustain conventionally armed nuclear-powered submarines (NPS). The NPS program will require around 20,000 direct workers over the coming decades, and significantly more across the supply chain, many of which will require a VET qualification.



ENSURING AUSTRALIA'S DIGITAL AND TECHNOLOGY CAPABILITIES

As digital transformation accelerates, demand for skills to build and participate in the digital economy will grow. Emerging technologies, particularly artificial intelligence, are reshaping work.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force Survey indicates the technology industry has seen a 10% increase in total employment between 2021 and 2024. [Future Skills Organisation's 2025 Workforce Plan](#) projects a shortage of approximately 131,000 tech workers by 2030.

Additionally, the 2025 Workforce Plan projects 154,000 workers in the technology industry will need to acquire new skillsets, representing approximately one in four workers in the sector.



DELIVERING ON HOUSING SUPPLY

Population growth, labour shortages and material constraints have contributed to nationwide housing shortages and rising affordability pressures.

Supporting a skilled workforce through the national training system is essential to meeting the National Housing Accord ambition.

Many construction trades are currently in shortage, with demand projected to grow. Assuming labour is the only constraint to housing supply, Buildskills Australia's [Housing Workforce Capacity Study](#) modelling indicates that an extra 116,700 workers (trade and non-trade) will be needed to meet the Housing Accord target (an increase of 23.8%) by mid-2029.



DELIVERING REFORMS TO IMPROVE THE REGULATION OF VET QUALIFICATIONS AND QUALITY

High-quality VET is essential for building Australia's skills base. Training quality relies on provider standards and course relevance. With new national investment in VET, attention now shifts to driving excellence, building the capacity of providers to meet strengthened standards and responding with strong regulatory actions where standards are not met.

As the economy evolves, more flexible qualification design will make the VET system agile and responsive to labour market needs.

There is a growing demand for higher skills with JSA finding that over 90% of employment growth over the next decade will be in occupations that require post-secondary qualifications, 54.3% requiring higher education qualifications and 40.1% requiring VET qualifications. As part of its response to the Australian Universities Accord, the Australian Government has set a national target of 80% of the working age population having a Certificate III or above by 2050. Efforts to meet this target will require improved collaboration between VET and Higher Education through tertiary harmonisation reforms.

Delivering on National Priorities

Gender Equality

AMBITION

- Reduce gender imbalanced workplaces, which exacerbate both skills shortages and gender inequality.
- Support flexible education and training delivery that allows students to balance their care and employment responsibilities with their learning goals at every stage of their career.
- Build a VET sector that is inclusive, safe and supportive for people of all genders, free from gender-based discrimination, and guided by an intersectional approach that recognises the compounding barriers faced by women and other priority cohorts, including people with disability, First Nations, and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and individuals experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage.
- Embed gender equality across the skills sector, including through curriculum review, tertiary harmonisation and workforce planning to ensure system change.

PROGRESS

- **Australian Skills Guarantee** – Aims to increase the proportion of women working on major Australian Government-funded construction and ICT procurement projects. The Government is investing **\$20.6 million** through to June 2028 to implement the Australian Skills Guarantee, including to develop and sustain the online Skills Guarantee reporting solution which began operating on 8 May 2025. In 2025-26, major construction projects are required to ensure:
 - 7% of apprentice labour hours and 5% of all trade apprentice labour hours to be undertaken by women in 2025-26 for major construction projects.
 - 10% of apprentice or other learning worker labour hours to be undertaken by women in 2025-26 for major ICT projects.
- **Apprentice Connect Australia (ACA) Providers** – Provide non-financial support services to Australian Apprentices and their employers. Specialist Women in Male-Dominated Trade ACA Providers deliver experience and expertise to increase participation, provide tailored wraparound support and improve completion rates.
- **Building Women's Careers** – Aims to drive structural and cultural change in training and workplaces to improve women's access to skilled, well-paid careers and address critical skills shortages in the construction, clean energy, advanced manufacturing, and technology and digital industries. The program provides **\$60.6 million** over four years.
 - From March 2025, 20 partnership projects were funded up until 2028. Collectively, there are over 170 organisations that are collaborating to deliver change across the four priority industries.
 - Since June 2025, a total of 6 Communities of Practice have been held with participation across all 20 projects to share lessons learned.
- **Free TAFE** – From 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2025, there were **over 458,000 enrolments by women** in Free TAFE, almost 62% of all enrolments. Priority cohorts include unpaid carers, women facing economic insecurity and women undertaking study in non-traditional fields.



- **Diversity in STEM** – On 11 November 2025, the Australian Government released a **Statement on the Pathway to Diversity in STEM Review**, outlining actions to attract and retain diverse talent in STEM and support industry growth under the Future Made in Australia vision.
 - **Science in Australia Gender Equity** received an additional **\$7.1 million** over 5 years from 2024–25 to deliver an expanded diversity in science accreditation framework.
 - **STEM Equity Monitor** received an additional **\$0.7 million** over 6 years from 2024–25 to facilitate data collection and compilation on additional underrepresented groups in STEM education and organisations.
- **JSA Gender Economic Equality Study** – Released in 2025, this study provides a comprehensive analysis of the drivers of gender inequality and other compounding forms of inequality in the VET sector and broader labour market. Findings are informing inclusive skills policy approaches to reduce occupational segregation and enable equitable participation in priority sectors.

WHAT'S NEXT

- **Australian Skills Guarantee** – Continued roll-out of gender targets, with an increase in targets each financial year until 2030, one percentage point for construction projects and two percentage points for ICT projects.
- **Building Women's Careers** – Ongoing evaluation and amplification to drive structural and cultural change to improve women's access to flexible, safe and inclusive training and work opportunities in male-dominated industries.
- **Free TAFE** – Continued focus on priority cohorts, including women facing economic insecurity and enrolments for women in priority and non-traditional fields.
- **Diversity in STEM** – Implementation of commitments under the Pathway to Diversity in STEM statement, including expanded accreditation and improved data through the STEM Equity Monitor on under-represented groups.
- **JSA Gender Economic Equality Study** – Use of insights to shape future policy across national priorities and VET reforms, including gender-inclusive qualification design and training products.
 - Integration of findings into measurement approaches under the Outcomes Framework.
- **Mapping of gender equality initiatives** across jurisdictions, including the Commonwealth, to build a national picture of current activity. This work will provide a clearer national view of gender equality efforts across the VET system, helping identify gaps and overlaps and supporting better alignment, collaboration, and sharing of effective practice. The insights gained will inform the annual review cycle under the National Skills Agreement, ensuring current evidence supports decision making, guides prioritisation, and strengthens ongoing action to advance gender equality across the skills sector.
- Publication of the first **Balanced Scorecard** (expected mid 2026) to track progress against outcomes including gender indicators.



Closing the Gap

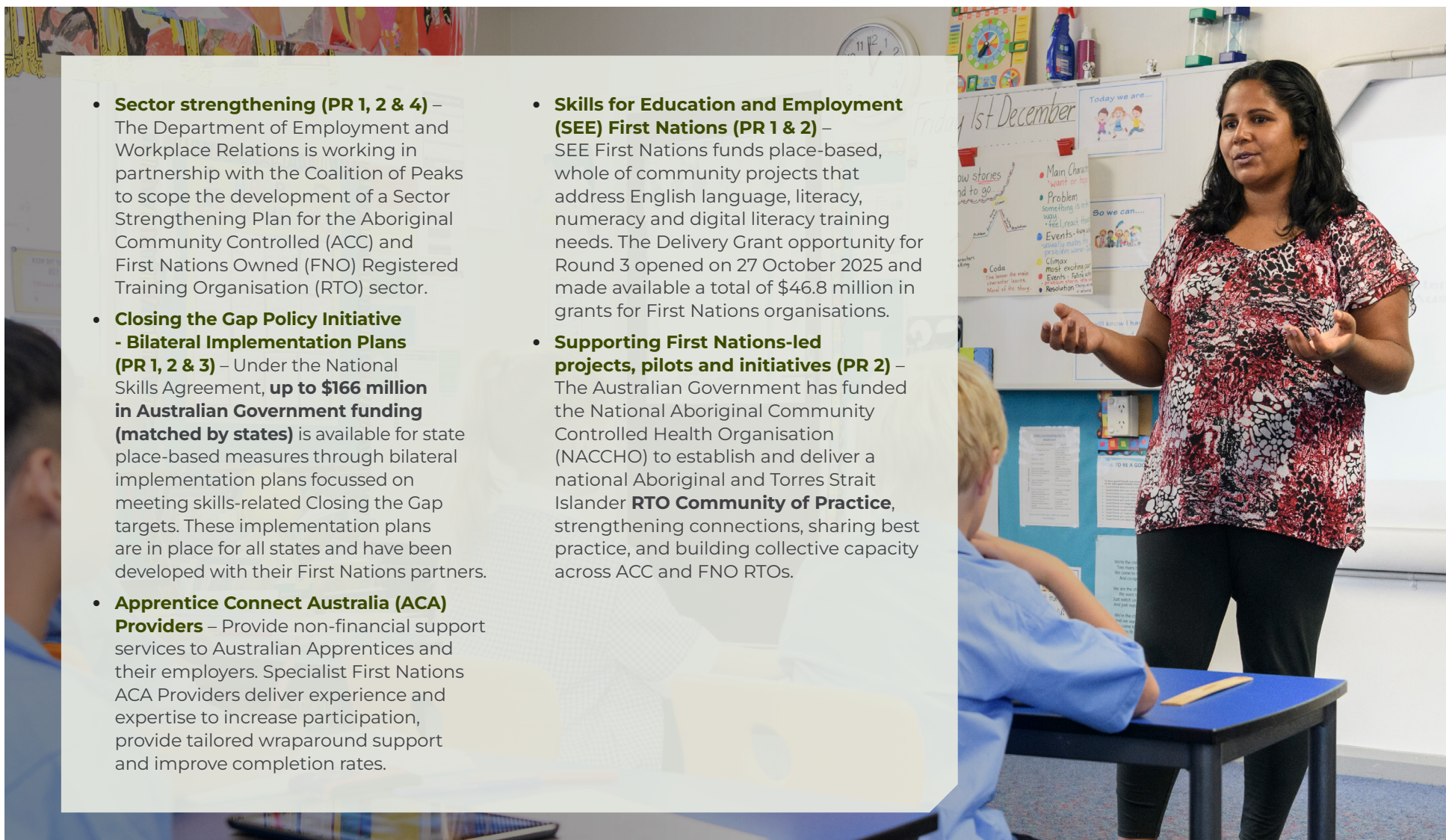
AMBITION

- Focus efforts on embedding the Priority Reforms and achieving Closing the Gap targets for First Nations students within the VET system.
- Utilise formal partnerships to jointly shape skills and training priorities through shared decision making with First Nations partners.
- Take action to ensure training is culturally safe and appropriate for First Nations students.
- Recognise and value the cultural expertise of First Nations people, communities and organisations and ensure this informs VET delivery to First Nations students.

Building the Aboriginal Community controlled and First Nations owned training sector will support a more culturally responsive VET system, which delivers better outcomes for First Nations students.

PROGRESS

- **First Nations VET Policy Partnership (PR 1)** – The Australian Government is investing **\$36 million** to progress a national partnership framework to ensure active engagement on VET policy with First Nations people, organisations, and communities.
- **Interim Partnership Committee** – Established in 2024, the Committee has guided immediate priorities under the National Skills Agreement and co-designed a nationally networked **First Nations VET Policy Partnership (VETPP)**.
- **Indigenous Centre for Vocational Excellence (ICOVE)** – The Commonwealth has commenced a grant process to establish the ICOVE as part of its Closing the Gap deliverables under the National Skills Agreement. The ICOVE will operate as an alternative model to a First Nations skills peak and perform the role of a national, evidence-informed best practice hub to create and promote high quality, culturally responsive training opportunities for First Nation Australians.
- **Remote Training Hubs Network (PR 1, 2, 3 & 4)** – **\$30.2 million** initiative under the *A Better, Safer Future for Central Australia* plan to connect people with training for skills needed On-Country. It will be rolled out in phases, with the network established by 30 June 2028. Hubs will be located in Southern Tanami, Luritja Pintubi, Iyarrka, Ljirapinta, Rodinga, The Plenty and Anmatjere.
 - Work is underway on the **Central Australia Remote Training Hubs Grant**. Round 1 is currently under completion. Round 2 is on track and Round 3 is anticipated to open in the third quarter of 2026.
- **The Desert Peoples Centre** – **\$3 million** grant in March 2025 was awarded to deliver four custom-built, industry standard Mobile Training Units by March 2026. The units will provide training linked to in-demand industries in remote First Nations communities in Central Australia.
- **Mobile TAFE (PR 1)** – The Australian Government is investing **\$31 million** in Mobile TAFE, to deliver up to 12 projects across outer regional and remote Australia, expanding access to training for First Nations learners.



- **Sector strengthening (PR 1, 2 & 4)** – The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations is working in partnership with the Coalition of Peaks to scope the development of a Sector Strengthening Plan for the Aboriginal Community Controlled (ACC) and First Nations Owned (FNO) Registered Training Organisation (RTO) sector.
- **Closing the Gap Policy Initiative - Bilateral Implementation Plans (PR 1, 2 & 3)** – Under the National Skills Agreement, **up to \$166 million in Australian Government funding (matched by states)** is available for state place-based measures through bilateral implementation plans focussed on meeting skills-related Closing the Gap targets. These implementation plans are in place for all states and have been developed with their First Nations partners.
- **Apprentice Connect Australia (ACA) Providers** – Provide non-financial support services to Australian Apprentices and their employers. Specialist First Nations ACA Providers deliver experience and expertise to increase participation, provide tailored wraparound support and improve completion rates.

- **Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) First Nations (PR 1 & 2)** – SEE First Nations funds place-based, whole of community projects that address English language, literacy, numeracy and digital literacy training needs. The Delivery Grant opportunity for Round 3 opened on 27 October 2025 and made available a total of \$46.8 million in grants for First Nations organisations.
- **Supporting First Nations-led projects, pilots and initiatives (PR 2)** – The Australian Government has funded the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) to establish and deliver a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander **RTO Community of Practice**, strengthening connections, sharing best practice, and building collective capacity across ACC and FNO RTOs.



WHAT'S NEXT

- **First Nations VET Policy Partnership (PRI)** – Establishment of the **nationally networked First Nations VET Policy Partnership** in 2026, transitioning responsibilities from the Interim Partnership Committee.
- **Indigenous Centre for Vocational Excellence (ICOVE)** – Completion of the national grant process and establishment of ICOVE in 2026, enabling formal First Nations representation in national VET policy design.
- **Mobile TAFE** – States to develop and submit Mobile TAFE project proposals to the Commonwealth for selection and funding.
- **Remote Training Hubs Network (PR 1, 2, 3 & 4)** – Further grant rounds in early 2026 to expand implementation.
 - Progressive rollout of Hubs across Central Australia, with the full network established by **30 June 2028**.
- **Sector strengthening (PR 1, 2 & 4)** – Completion of scoping the development of a **Sector Strengthening Plan**, to be considered by the Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council in 2026. This work will enable governments to explore longer-term reform options that consider how to best support the sustainability, capability, and cultural integrity of First Nations RTOs within the VET system.
- **Closing the Gap Policy Initiative Bilateral Implementation Plans (PR 1, 2 & 3)** – Implementation of activities as scheduled in bilateral implementation plans between states and First Nations partners, using matched funds under the National Skills Agreement.
- **SEE First Nations (PR 1 & 2)** – Implementation of funded Delivery and Scoping Grants, with some approved projects currently scheduled until the end of 2029.
- **Supporting First Nations-led projects, pilots and initiatives (PR 2)** – Continuing in 2026, funding of First Nations-led projects and initiatives, such as the operation and expansion of the national RTO Community of Practice and future capability-building initiatives informed by NACCHO's Trainer and Assessor Demonstration Project.

Supporting the Net Zero transformation


AMBITION

- Build a skilled and experienced VET workforce to ensure the VET sector has the capacity and capability to address emerging skills needs.
- Strengthen VET infrastructure to support high-quality training delivery in clean energy skills.
- Increase uptake of training in clean energy skills and qualifications to support the net zero transformation, particularly in regional and remote areas to allow those communities to maximise the benefits harnessed from the transition.
- Increase diverse participation in clean energy VET and employment, including for women and First Nations people.

PROGRESS

- **TAFE Centres of Excellence** – Five TAFE Centres of Excellence established across ACT, Qld, WA, NSW and Tas are supporting the national transition to clean energy with **\$93.7 million** in Australian Government funding (matched by states) and a further **\$15.1 million** to fast-track establishment of the ACT, WA, NSW and Tas TAFE Centres of Excellence.
- **TAFE Technology Fund** – Seven projects across NSW, Vic, Qld, SA, WA and the ACT have been funded under the TAFE Technology Fund, with a combined value of over **\$17.4 million**. These projects modernise and expand training facilities, including infrastructure and equipment upgrades for clean energy related training.
- **First Nations Engagement in the Transition to Net Zero project** – Delivered by Ninti One in June 2025, the project assessed existing cultural safety measures and identified practical opportunities to create safer, more supportive environments for First Nations learners and workers in decarbonisation-related sectors.
- **Powering Skills Organisation (PSO)** – The JSC responsible for the energy, gas and renewables sector is undertaking research and consultation to ensure training products meet industry needs and establish clear career pathways into clean energy. PSO will have a central role in driving the clean energy transition through collaboration with industry to build the green energy workforce.
- **Key Apprenticeships Program (KAP)** – Commenced 1 July 2025, building on the New Energy Apprenticeship Program and creating two streams: the New Energy Apprenticeship stream and the Housing Construction Apprenticeship stream. The \$10,000 apprentice KAP incentives and \$5,000 employer KAP incentives aims to grow the workforce and expand the pipeline of workers training for critical occupations in priority sectors.
- **Apprentice Connect Australia (ACA) Providers** – Provide non-financial support services to Australian Apprentices and their employers. Specialist Clean Energy ACA Providers deliver experience and expertise to increase participation, provide tailored wraparound support and improve completion rates.

/// The Australian Government's emissions reduction targets are 43% by 2030, 62-70% by 2035 and net zero by 2050, supported by the Net Zero Plan.

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- **New Energy Apprentices Mentoring Program** – Closed 31 March 2025, providing career guidance, peer support and networking for apprentices. Over 500 engagements were delivered across the clean energy industry and included formal presentations, seminars, workshops, conferences, roadshows, award nights, and industry campaigns. Apprentices training in clean energy occupations can continue to access additional support through clean energy specialist Apprentice Connect Australia Providers.
 - **Net Zero plan and sectoral plans** – Released in September 2025, covering the electricity and energy, transport, industry, agriculture and land, resources, and the built environment sectors. The plans support the Australian Government's *Future Made in Australia* agenda and the Net Zero Plan by providing analysis of emissions reduction pathways and workforce requirements.



WHAT'S NEXT

- **TAFE Centres of Excellence** – Further announcements and continued operationalisation and expansion of clean-energy Centres of Excellence, including development of higher apprenticeship pathways, applied research activity and stronger industry-TAFE partnerships.
- **TAFE Technology Fund** – Further rollout of modernised training facilities as state projects including the Canberra Institute of Technology Electric Vehicle Precinct and the South Australian Green Energy Technology Training Academy.
- **Powering Skills Organisation (PSO)** – PSO's current work includes a full training product review of the UEE Electrotechnology Training Package that will incorporate stakeholder input to support national energy transition goals.
- **Key Apprenticeships Program** – Continuation of the New Energy Apprenticeships and Housing Construction streams, with apprentice and employer incentive uptake shaping the clean-energy workforce pipeline.
- **Net Zero plan and sectoral plans** – Ongoing implementation across sectors, including alignment of VET training products, workforce planning and regional transition strategies.
 - Use of sectoral plans to guide training capacity, investment planning and workforce development under the National Skills Agreement.
- **Clean Energy Capital Investment Fund and Turbocharging the VET Workforce** – Continued work to progress implementation of the clean energy measures with states to support projects that increase the capacity of the training system with initiatives to commence mid-2026.
- **National Training Centre in New Energy Skills** – Continued work with Vic on the establishment of the Centre with commencement expected in mid-2026.

Sustaining Essential Care Services

AMBITION

- Grow the VET pipeline of skilled workers to keep pace with rising demand for care and support services.
- Attract and retain more diverse cohorts in care and support programs, including First Nations people, men, people of diverse ages, people with disability, and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and remote communities.
- Ensure education and training provided is high quality, responsive to current and emerging skills needs, widely available (including in thin markets), supports entry into the sector, and provides pathways for career progression as well as opportunities for upskilling, re-skilling, and mobility.
- Align with broader reforms to improve the safety and quality of care and support services across multiple sectors.

PROGRESS

- **Indigenous Employment Initiative (IEI) Program** – **\$34.6 million** in 2025–26 to provide grant funding to aged care service providers to create entry-level employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers in non-clinical aged care roles.
- **First Nations Health Worker Traineeship Program** – **\$56.9 million to support up to 500 First Nations students** to train and complete their qualifications as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Health Practitioners.
- **Regional, Rural and Remote Home Care Workforce** – **\$21.6 million** over three years to support aged care providers to recruit, train and retain an **additional 4,000 home care workers** in regional, rural and remote locations with acute workforce shortages.
- **Free TAFE** – From 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2025, there were **over 203,000 enrolments in care sector courses** and over 58,000 in early childhood education and care courses, representing **over 35%** of Free TAFE enrolments.
- **Commonwealth Prac Payment** – **\$427.4 million** to support eligible teaching, nursing and midwifery, and social work students in VET and higher education qualifications to complete mandatory practicums. In the VET system, over 5,000 Diploma of Nursing students are expected to benefit each year from July 2025.
- **Y Careers agency** – **\$14.1 million** to establish and operate the Agency, supporting employment opportunities for young people in the care economy.
- **Supporting skills and training of ECEC employees** – **\$72.4 million** to support the skills and training of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) employees, including a paid practicum subsidy for eligible ECEC qualifications. These measures are benefiting **up to 75,000 staff** from July 2023 to June 2027. Implemented by the Department of Education.
- **Peer Workforce Training Placements Program** – **\$2.8 million** over four years (2025–26 to 2028–29) to support **500 work placements** for students undertaking the Certificate IV in Mental Health Peer Work, delivered by the Department for Health, Disability and Ageing.

- **TAFE Centres of Excellence** – Four TAFE Centres of Excellence for sustaining essential care services in Vic, Qld, SA and NT, supported by **\$46.9 million** in Australian Government funding (matched by states) and an additional **\$15.3 million** to Qld, SA and the NT TAFE Centres of Excellence to fast-track establishment.
- **TAFE Technology Fund** – Four projects across NSW, Qld and WA have been funded under the TAFE Technology Fund, with a combined value of **\$6.9 million**. These projects modernise and expand training facilities for care sector related training.
- **HumanAbility Jobs and Skills Council** – Delivering the 2025 Workforce Plan and launching critical research projects informed by extensive stakeholder engagement, including on Earn While You Learn models, VET Enrolments and Completions, the VET Workforce and Microcredentials in the care and support economy. Progressing 10 training product development reviews, including in Early Childhood Education and Care, and Aged Care, Disability, Leisure and Health.





WHAT'S NEXT

- **Indigenous Employment Initiative Program** – The IEI Program Grant Opportunity for 2026–27 to 2028–29 (\$109.2 million) is under assessment. An independent program review and changes to aged care have resulted in some changes for providers, such as increasing the program from 2 to 3 year funding and reducing reporting from 6 monthly to annual to reduce some of the administrative burden for the sector.
- **First Nations Health Worker Traineeship Program** – Since July 2023, 6 trainee intakes have commenced. Cohort 1 has been finalised. The next phase will see remaining trainees in Cohorts 2 to 6 continue their training to complete their relevant qualifications. In addition, Cohort 7 and Cohort 8 will commence training during this phase.
- **Regional, Rural and Remote Home Care Workforce** – Funded organisations are working closely with local communities to determine targeted supports in all eligible regions and have commenced recruiting and training personal care workers in these regions.
- **Y Careers agency** – Y Careers to continue supporting outcomes for young people in the care economy. Grant activity is scheduled to end 30 June 2026.
- **Supporting skills and training of ECEC employees** – The Department of Education is currently undertaking an evaluation of these measures and the evaluation will inform next steps.
- **TAFE Centres of Excellence** – Centres in Vic, Qld, SA and NT to strengthen essential care workforces through uplifting capability in digital health technologies, culturally safe learning pathways, expanded skills development and strong partnerships with industry and First Nations communities.
- **TAFE Technology Fund** – Integration of upgraded facilities to expand access and improve training quality in regional NSW.
- **HumanAbility Jobs and Skills Council** – Finalising critical research projects, using outcomes and evidence-based findings to inform the next tranche of training product development reviews, and continuing to work closely with tripartite stakeholders to inform 2026 Workforce Planning in the Disability Services and Aged Care sectors.

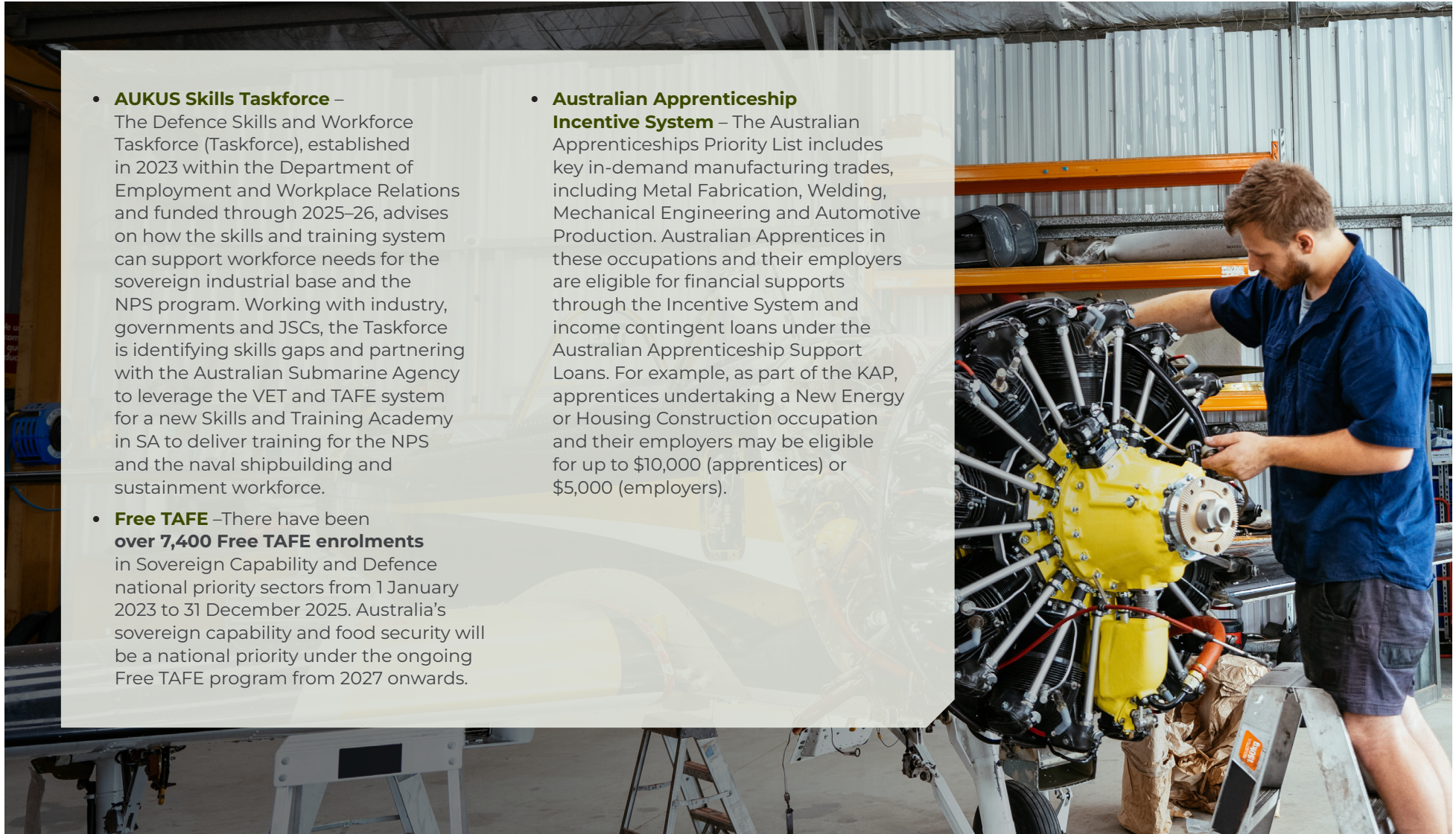
Developing Australia's Sovereign Capability and Food Security

AMBITION

- Equip the VET sector to provide innovative, cutting-edge training to support modern infrastructure, new industries, and advanced manufacturing.
- Establish a sustainable defence industry workforce with sustainment capabilities, including transferrable qualifications.
- Improve the attractiveness of STEM-related training, including apprenticeships, to women and First Nations people to help grow this workforce.

PROGRESS

- **TAFE Centres of Excellence** – Six TAFE Centres of Excellence supporting Australia's sovereign capability have been announced across NSW, WA, SA and ACT, with a combined **\$98.4 million** in Australian Government funding, matched by states, with a further **\$5.7 million** to fast-track establishment of the ACT and NSW Hunter TAFE Centres of Excellence.
- **Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs) sovereign capability and food security projects** – JSCs are working with industry and governments to coordinate responses to priority workforce challenges.
 - The **Manufacturing Industry Skills Alliance**, the JSC for manufacturing, is delivering the **Aviation Maintenance Skills Alignment** project to align new Civil Aviation Safety Authority licensing requirements with VET qualifications and strengthen the aviation maintenance workforce.
 - **Skills Insight**, the JSC for the agribusiness, fibre, furnishing, food, animal and environment care industries, is developing a **Meat Worker Induction Safety Pilot** to provide foundational safety capabilities and support national consistency in safety training.
 - The **Mining and Automotive Skills Alliance**, the JSC for the mining (extraction) and automotive industries, is developing updated training for electric vehicle technicians, driver assistance systems, and hydrogen fuel systems, and is producing critical minerals workforce insights and research bulletins.
 - **Industry Skills Australia**, the JSC for transport and logistics (including aviation, maritime, rail and warehousing, logistics and stevedoring), is progressing a suite of projects to build a pipeline of trained seafarers to support the government's **Strategic Fleet** initiative and sustain the broader maritime industry.
- **JSA's Food Supply Chain Capacity Study** – Released **22 January 2025**, provides new data and analysis to guide workforce planning across Australia's food manufacturing and supply sectors. Recommendations focus on strengthening education and training, building veterinary and biosecurity pathways, improving migration and labour hire practices, supporting apprenticeships, improving regional workforce outcomes, and enabling long-term workforce planning.



- **AUKUS Skills Taskforce** – The Defence Skills and Workforce Taskforce (Taskforce), established in 2023 within the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations and funded through 2025–26, advises on how the skills and training system can support workforce needs for the sovereign industrial base and the NPS program. Working with industry, governments and JSCs, the Taskforce is identifying skills gaps and partnering with the Australian Submarine Agency to leverage the VET and TAFE system for a new Skills and Training Academy in SA to deliver training for the NPS and the naval shipbuilding and sustainment workforce.
- **Free TAFE** – There have been **over 7,400 Free TAFE enrolments** in Sovereign Capability and Defence national priority sectors from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2025. Australia's sovereign capability and food security will be a national priority under the ongoing Free TAFE program from 2027 onwards.

- **Australian Apprenticeship Incentive System** – The Australian Apprenticeships Priority List includes key in-demand manufacturing trades, including Metal Fabrication, Welding, Mechanical Engineering and Automotive Production. Australian Apprentices in these occupations and their employers are eligible for financial supports through the Incentive System and income contingent loans under the Australian Apprenticeship Support Loans. For example, as part of the KAP, apprentices undertaking a New Energy or Housing Construction occupation and their employers may be eligible for up to \$10,000 (apprentices) or \$5,000 (employers).



WHAT'S NEXT

- **TAFE Centres of Excellence** – Continued establishment and operationalisation of the six Centres of Excellence across defence, manufacturing, and cyber security.
 - Centres will expand applied learning models, industry partnerships, and higher-level VET pathways to support sovereign capability workforce pipelines.
- **JSCs Sovereign Capability and Food Security Projects** – Progression of current training product development work, including implementation of updated qualifications aligned to aviation maintenance, meat processing safety, electric vehicle systems and hydrogen technologies.
 - The **Manufacturing Industry Skills Alliance** has established a technical committee for the **Aviation Maintenance Skills Alignment** project and has begun work to review the MEA Aeroskills Training Package to identify required changes to meet part 66 modular licensing requirements.
 - **Industry Skills Australia** continues to progress its maritime skills program of work to support sustainable solutions that enhance Australia's maritime workforce capability.
 - **Skills Insight** in consultation with industry stakeholders, has designed and tested a Meat Worker Induction Safety training program including simulated learning modules. The program will be launched in 2026, and an adoption strategy will be implemented by Skills Insight and MINTRAC, with support sought from and other key industry stakeholders.
 - Expanded collaboration with governments and industry to address evolving skills gaps identified through workforce planning.
- **JSA's Food Supply Chain Capacity Study** – Use of the study's recommendations to shape national and regional workforce strategies, including reforms to VET pathways, **improved labour mobility**, and better alignment of training to emerging food supply chain needs.
- **AUKUS Skills Taskforce** – Conclusion of the Defence Skills and Workforce Taskforce and the progression of work with the **Australian Submarine Agency** on training supports and pathways for the NPS program to enhance the naval shipbuilding and defence workforce.
 - Further development of VET pathways in engineering, electrotechnology, cyber security, logistics and advanced manufacturing, consistent with sovereign capability priorities.

Ensuring Australia's Digital and Technology Capability

AMBITION

- Ensure that all Australians have the digital capability needed to fully participate in the modern economy and society.
- Increase the number of women and First Nations digital and tech students.
- Ensure that digital and tech VET keeps pace with technological change to meet the needs of students and industry and increase the standing of VET pathways in the industry.
- Support the VET workforce to deliver strong, high quality digital and technology training, including in rapidly evolving areas such as AI.

KEY DIGITAL AND TECH STRATEGIES

National AI Plan

The plan will set out the Government's approach to AI, focussed on three key pillars: capturing the opportunities of AI, ensuring the benefits are shared widely, and keeping Australians safe.

2023–2030 Australian Cyber Security Strategy

A strategy to improve our national resilience to cyber threats and help realise the Australian Government's vision of becoming a world leader in cyber security by 2030.

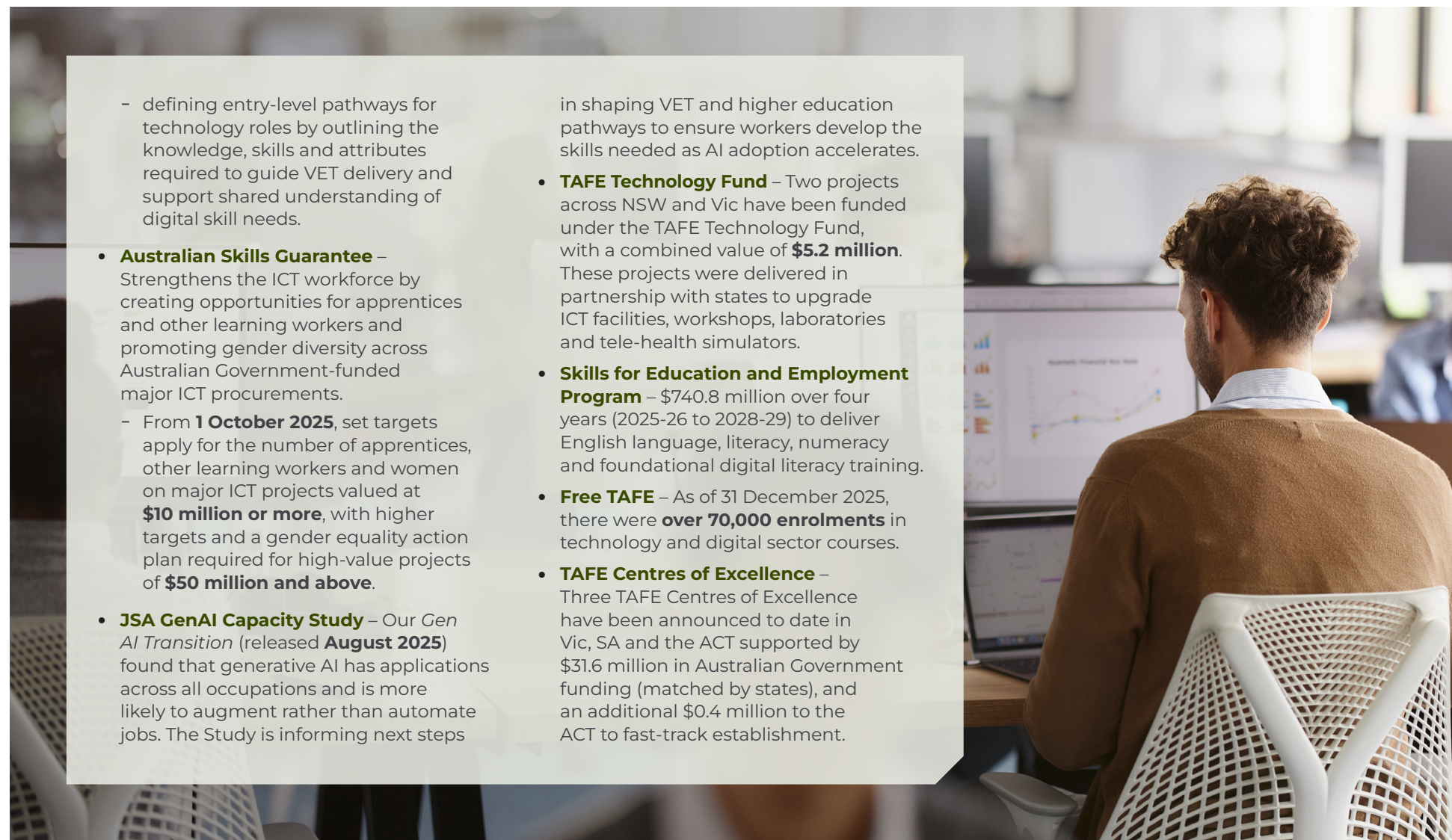
National Robotics Strategy

This strategy is designed to help build a stronger, more unified robotics industry and harness the benefits of robotics and automation across the Australian economy.

PROGRESS

- **Future Skills Organisation (FSO)** – The JSC for the finance, technology and business sectors is:
 - establishing the **FSO Skills Accelerator – AI**, a partnership between employers, industry and training providers to help close Australia's AI skills gap
 - continuing the **Digital Knowledge Exchange**, a national collaboration platform sharing best practice on digital skills initiatives across states, including:
 - › the **20% Alternative Pathway Pledge**, securing employer commitments to fill 20% of digital entry-level roles from non-university pathways by 2030, scaling a model developed with the NSW Digital Skills and Workforce Compact 2023–30
 - › **Uplift Digital Capability for Educators**, providing teachers and trainers with resources to build student digital competencies, with state-tailored delivery.
 - researching barriers to AI adoption among small and medium enterprises and diverse workers and identifying targeted supports to ensure equitable uptake
 - developing units of competency for generalist and specialist digital, AI and cybersecurity skills across all Australian Qualification Framework levels

Harnessing data and digital technology is one of the five pillars of the Australian Government's productivity agenda outlined in [Working Future: The Australian Government's White Paper on Jobs and Opportunities](#). Making AI a national priority and building a skilled, adaptable workforce are among the 10 reform directions from the [2025 Economic Reform Roundtable](#).



- defining entry-level pathways for technology roles by outlining the knowledge, skills and attributes required to guide VET delivery and support shared understanding of digital skill needs.
- **Australian Skills Guarantee** – Strengthens the ICT workforce by creating opportunities for apprentices and other learning workers and promoting gender diversity across Australian Government-funded major ICT procurements.
 - From **1 October 2025**, set targets apply for the number of apprentices, other learning workers and women on major ICT projects valued at **\$10 million or more**, with higher targets and a gender equality action plan required for high-value projects of **\$50 million and above**.
- **JSA GenAI Capacity Study** – Our *Gen AI Transition* (released **August 2025**) found that generative AI has applications across all occupations and is more likely to augment rather than automate jobs. The Study is informing next steps in shaping VET and higher education pathways to ensure workers develop the skills needed as AI adoption accelerates.
- **TAFE Technology Fund** – Two projects across NSW and Vic have been funded under the TAFE Technology Fund, with a combined value of **\$5.2 million**. These projects were delivered in partnership with states to upgrade ICT facilities, workshops, laboratories and tele-health simulators.
- **Skills for Education and Employment Program** – \$740.8 million over four years (2025-26 to 2028-29) to deliver English language, literacy, numeracy and foundational digital literacy training.
- **Free TAFE** – As of 31 December 2025, there were **over 70,000 enrolments** in technology and digital sector courses.
- **TAFE Centres of Excellence** – Three TAFE Centres of Excellence have been announced to date in Vic, SA and the ACT supported by \$31.6 million in Australian Government funding (matched by states), and an additional \$0.4 million to the ACT to fast-track establishment.

WHAT'S NEXT

- **Future Skills Organisation** – Continued rollout of the FSO Skills Accelerator - AI and Digital Knowledge Exchange, including further scaling of the 20% Alternative Pathway Pledge to ensure the integration of entry-level roles for non-university participants in the workforce.
 - Continued development of new units of competency in digital skills, AI and cyber security.
 - Continued research on barriers to AI adoption, including those specific to learners from priority cohorts and small and medium enterprises.
- **Australian Skills Guarantee** – Ongoing implementation of procurement-linked apprentice, trainee and gender targets on major ICT projects, including higher expectations for large-scale projects and gender equality action plans.
- **JSA GenAI Capacity Study** – Integration of study findings into future VET qualification design, training product updates and digital capability planning including informing AI readiness and digital transformation initiatives under the National Skills Agreement.
- **TAFE Technology Fund** – Further upgrades to ICT, cyber and digital training infrastructure as multi-year projects progress in partnership with states.
 - Increased use of advanced simulation, tele-health tools and industry-aligned digital production facilities.
- **TAFE Centres of Excellence** – Further announcements and continued establishment and operationalisation of the Centres of Excellence across cybersecurity, national security and digital qualifications, playing a key role in supporting workforce demand as identified in the National Skills Plan.



Delivering Housing Supply

AMBITION

- Increase the number of construction workers to build capacity in the residential construction sector, improve quality housing supply and affordability and meet the targets of the National Housing Accord.
- Drive productivity and innovation in the construction industry through a future focussed VET sector.
- Unlock workforce supply by increasing the attractiveness and adaptability of trades and other construction-related qualifications in VET for a broader pool of workers, particularly women, people from diverse backgrounds, and regional and remote residents.

/// Under the National Housing Accord, all jurisdictions have committed to a target of 1.2 million new well-located homes over 5 years by mid-2029.

PROGRESS

- **Free TAFE** –
 - An additional **\$86.4 million** provided to states for a further **20,000 Fee-Free Construction places**, including **5,000 pre-apprenticeship places**, to boost the supply of the construction industry.
 - From 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2025, there were **over 58,000 Free TAFE enrolments** in construction sector courses, including those delivered under Fee-Free Construction.
- **TAFE Centres of Excellence** – TAFE Centre of Excellence for innovative, industry-relevant training in Modern Methods of Construction in Vic, supported by **\$25 million** in Australian Government funding (matched by Vic) announced.
- **BuildSkills Australia** – The JSC for the building, construction, property and water services industries, is progressing a series of workforce initiatives:
 - The **Housing Workforce Capacity Study**, released in September 2025, outlines strategies to boost the residential construction workforce, improve apprenticeship outcomes, increase female participation, enhance skilled migration settings, and lift productivity.
 - Research on **labour mobility between residential and non-residential construction**, examining barriers and the training, regulatory and policy responses required, to be delivered in 2026.
 - **Minimum Australian Context Gap training for migrant plumbers** – Aims to develop a single nationally accepted Minimum Australian Context Gap course focused on safety, regulations and Australian standards to support migrant plumbers who hold an Offshore Technical Skills Record to obtain an occupational license.

- **Key Apprenticeships Program Housing Construction Apprenticeship (HCA) Stream** – Apprentices in housing construction occupations are eligible for up to \$10,000 over their apprenticeship. Eligible employers are eligible for \$5,000. From 1 July 2025 to 1 February 2026, more than 13,000 apprentices have commenced in the HCA stream of the KAP.
- **Advanced Entry Trades Training Program** – Investing \$78.0 million to support 6,000 experienced but unqualified workers in residential housing and civil construction trades to obtain nationally recognised VET qualifications through recognition of prior learning and gap training.
- **Migration settings** – The **Skills in Demand visa**, introduced in December 2024, provides a streamlined pathway for skilled migrants and a simpler process for employers seeking workers. Since 1 July 2024, over 14,000 applicants with construction trade skills have benefited from streamlined and prioritised skills assessments.
- **National Construction Industry Forum Blueprint for the Future** – Endorsed on 22 September 2025, the [Blueprint for the Future](#) sets out tripartite actions to modernise, strengthen and improve safety and inclusion across the construction industry.
 - Nine recommendations were agreed, with early implementation focused on removing structural barriers to entry and supporting best practice approaches to increase women’s participation in construction.
- **Skilling the Construction Workforce** – **\$1.8 million** over two years to streamline skills assessments for around 1,900 potential migrants from countries with comparable qualifications who want to work in Australia’s housing and construction industry, and prioritising processing of around 2,600 Trades Recognition Australia skills assessments in targeted construction occupations.





WHAT'S NEXT

- **TAFE Centres of Excellence** – Further announcements and continued establishment and operationalisation of the Centres of Excellence with a focus on affordable and environmentally sustainable construction practices to improve the productivity of residential construction.
- **BuildSkills Australia's Workforce Plan 2025-26** – Outlines actions to support the emergence of a more agile, responsive, and future-ready VET system for the built environment, including residential construction:
 - Report on research findings on labour mobility between residential and non-residential construction workforces.
 - Assess the jobs and skills implications of Modern Methods of Construction in partnership with industry to ensure training products evolve appropriately.
 - Progress training product development work, including updating and developing qualifications related to formwork, falsework and insulation installation.
 - Examine the supply-side barriers that are limiting the capacity of Registered Training Organisations to deliver relevant, up-to-date training—particularly in high-demand and emerging skill areas.
- **Key Apprenticeships Program Housing Construction Apprenticeship Stream** – Continuation of the Housing Construction stream, with apprentice and employer incentive uptake shaping the housing construction workforce pipeline.
- **Advanced Entry Trades Training Program** – Work in partnership with states to implement the Advanced Entry Trades Training Program in 2026.
- **Migration settings** – Continued streamlined assessments for targeted construction occupations and widen employer uptake of the Skills in Demand visa, reducing vacancy durations in high-pressure trades.
- **National Construction Industry Forum Blueprint for the Future** – Operationalising the first tranche of Blueprint actions including best-practice pathways for women, consistent accreditation/licensing and mobility-enabling reforms. The actions will increase on-site participation and productivity uplift within the construction sector.

Delivering reforms to improve the regulation of VET qualifications and quality

AMBITION

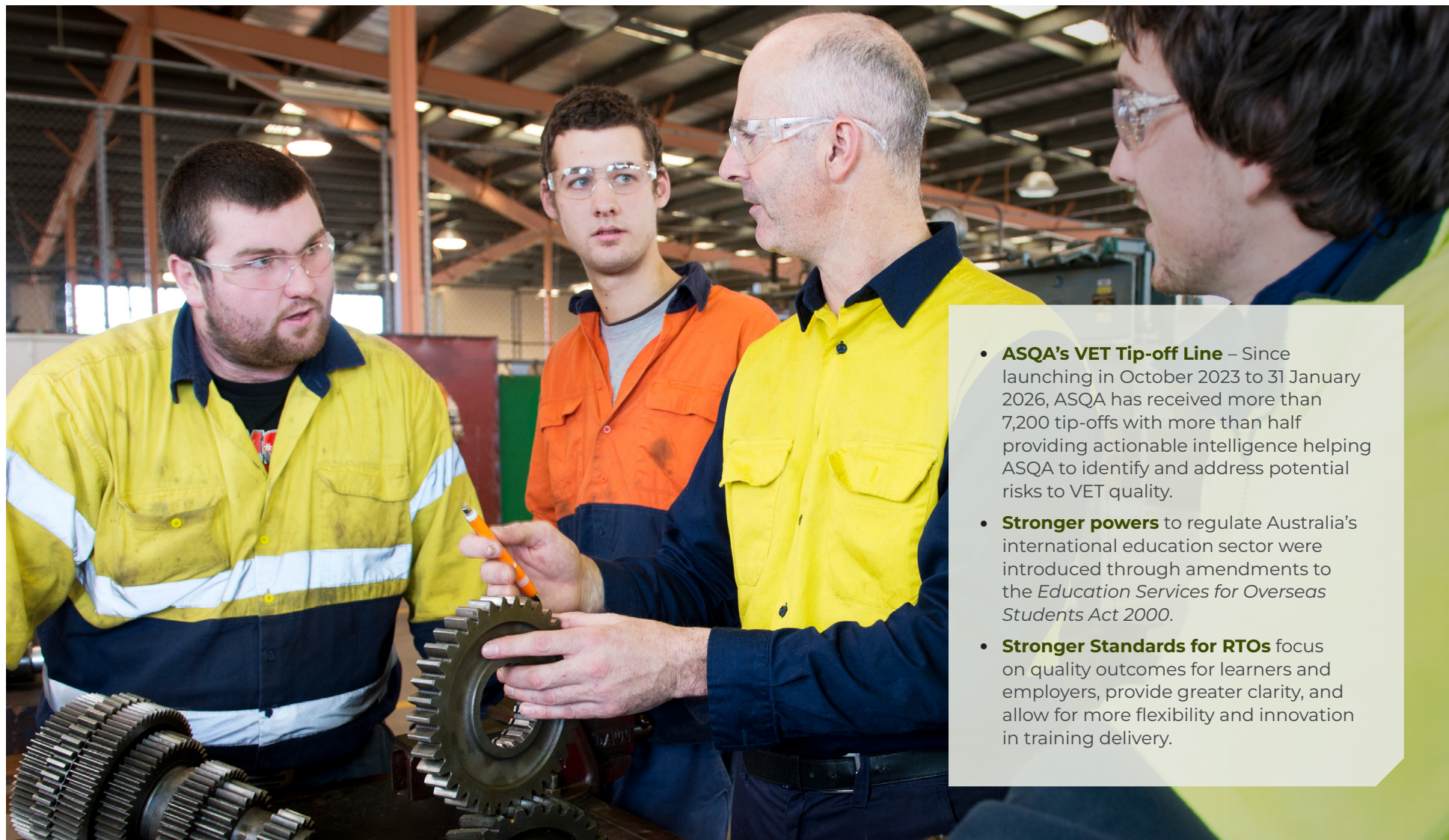
- Improve the VET qualifications system so that it is high-performing, easy to navigate, and meets the needs of employers and learners, especially priority cohorts.
- Make sure the VET sector supports excellence in training delivery and assessment, accessibility for priority cohorts, and quality in training outcomes, with TAFE at the heart of VET.
- Ensure the VET sector supports more employers to use nationally recognised training and delivers an adaptable skilled workforce resilient to structural change.

Our quality and regulatory reforms will ensure the VET system is trusted and can deliver a growing skilled workforce that is resilient to structural change

PROGRESS

- **Australian Skills Quality Authority's (ASQA)** purpose is to ensure quality education and training so that students, industry, governments and the community can have confidence in the integrity of qualifications issued by training providers.
- ASQA is:
 - Supporting the sector to meet the *2025 Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)* (the 2025 Standards), to ensure high quality training and assessment.
 - Enforcing stronger powers under the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (NVETR) Act 2011* to protect students, act against non-genuine providers, and ensure suitable market entry.
 - Building organisational capability, including upgrades to digital and data systems.
 - In the 2025-26 Budget, ASQA was allocated \$77.3 million in total appropriations². For the same financial year, ASQA estimates that it will cost recover approximately \$36.4 million.
- **Qualification Reform Design Group** – Throughout 2024, the tripartite Group worked with governments, key stakeholders and JSCs to test and refine a new qualification design approach.
 - On **6 December 2024**, Skills Ministers agreed to adopt the new purpose-led, principles-based approach, embedded in the Training Package Organising Framework. The reform shifts away from a one-size-fits-all model to improve quality, simplify course structures, and ensure qualifications better meet learner and employer needs.
 - Training package products developed by JSCs will also be assessed by the Training Package Assurance Body against the newly agreed Framework.
 - The National Training Register (training.gov.au) has been enhanced to support these reforms.

² Total appropriation figure includes unspent appropriations carried over from previous years in addition to the 2025–26 annual appropriation.



- **ASQA's VET Tip-off Line** – Since launching in October 2023 to 31 January 2026, ASQA has received more than 7,200 tip-offs with more than half providing actionable intelligence helping ASQA to identify and address potential risks to VET quality.
- **Stronger powers** to regulate Australia's international education sector were introduced through amendments to the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000*.
- **Stronger Standards for RTOs** focus on quality outcomes for learners and employers, provide greater clarity, and allow for more flexibility and innovation in training delivery.



WHAT'S NEXT

→ ASQA measures –

- Ongoing sector program to support provider uplift against the 2025 Standards, including workshops, webinars, podcasts and resources.
- Targeted performance assessments focused on learner outcomes and integrity risks, supported by upgraded digital and data capability.
- Joint implementation with the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency of the Dual Sector Regulatory Strategy (published September 2025) to streamline regulation and reduce administrative burden while maintaining quality assurance.

→ Qualification Reform Design Group –

JSCs to release more training products designed under the Training Package Organising Framework, with the Training Package Assurance Body providing assessment and consistent quality checks.

→ Fostering a culture of continuous improvement across the VET sector –

With the 2025 Standards for RTOs in place, the focus now shifts to driving excellence, building the capacity of providers to meet strengthened standards and responding with strong regulatory actions where standards are not met.

→ Targeted review of the Training Package Organising Framework –

As part of the phased approach to implementing qualifications reform, Skills Ministers will consider additional changes to the Training Package Organising Framework in 2026 to address areas of the Framework which were not considered for changes through the qualification reform process.

