

The Hon Brendan O'Connor MP
Minister for Skills and Training

The Hon Sue Ellery BA MLC
Western Australia
Minister for Education and Training

The Hon Dianne Farmer MP
Queensland
Minister for Training and Skills Development

The Hon Alister Henskens SC MP
New South Wales
Minister for Skills and Training

The Hon Blair Boyer MP
South Australia
Minister for Education, Training and Skills

The Hon Felix Ellis MP
Tasmania
Minister for Skills, Training and Workforce Growth

Mr Chris Steel MLA
Australian Capital Territory
Minister for Skills

*Senior officials observed the meeting for the
Victorian and Northern Territory Governments*

COMMUNIQUE

MEETING OF FEDERAL, STATE AND TERRITORY SKILLS MINISTERS

Federal and State and Territory Skills and Training Ministers met today, acknowledging the Victorian Government is currently in caretaker, to progress a range of key vocational education and training reform and workforce matters.

Skills Ministers' Priorities

Skills Ministers discussed the continued imperative for action to address skills shortages, as well as the need to re-position the VET sector to better support long-term prosperity and resilience against future challenges. Skills Ministers agreed priorities for collective national leadership over the next year, committing to immediate steps to address pressures in the economy for skilled workers; responding to the 'megatrends' transforming Australia's economy nationally and locally; building capability, capacity, and institutional leadership in the VET sector; and improving outcomes for priority groups.

Throughout 2023, Skills Ministers will continue to work with the sector on reforms to improve VET quality and relevance, strengthen tripartite and cross portfolio engagement, and deliver more meaningful evidence to inform skills policy.

Early and continued action

Skills Ministers are taking urgent action to address widespread skills shortages across the economy, including by finalising a 12-month Skills Agreement to deliver 180,000 Fee Free TAFE and VET places from January 2023 and sharing examples of workforce initiatives to identify opportunities to replicate successes.

Skills Ministers also agreed important updates to the Training and Education and Community Services Training Packages, which strengthens the skills and training of the VET workforce and addresses key findings from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

In preparation for the establishment of the new Industry Clusters from January 2023, Skills Ministers have agreed to updates to the training package development policies to reflect the new industry engagement arrangements. Skills Ministers noted that these updates to the Training Package Organising Framework are the first steps in supporting a future qualifications model that can better respond to Australia's skills needs.

Skills Ministers will continue progressing substantial reforms to enhance the quality and relevance of VET. A number of these reforms will reach major implementation milestones in 2023, such as implementation of new Industry Clusters and an Industry Engagement Integrity Framework, a new Qualifications Framework, and VET data infrastructure reforms to improve the timeliness and quality of VET data.

Skills Ministers also canvassed opportunities to position the VET sector to better support Australia's long-term prosperity, including through a new National Skills Agreement, guided by the Vision and Principles endorsed by the National Cabinet.

Jobs and Skills Australia update

Skills Ministers discussed the establishment of Jobs and Skills Australia, which is key in addressing the significant skills shortages across the country. Jobs and Skills Australia now stands as a statutory body within the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

Jobs and Skills Australia is tasked with collecting, analysing, sharing, and publishing data and providing advice on Australia's current and emerging labour market along with its current, emerging and future skills and training needs and priorities.

Apprenticeship Support

Skills Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to work in partnership to improve the apprenticeship support system and improve completion rates. Action is also being taken to secure the pipeline of apprentices, support higher completion rates and increase diversity in apprenticeships.

A discussion paper on Australian Apprenticeship Services and Support has been released for public consultation and is available on the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations website. Skills Ministers will consider the feedback from consultations in determining potential next steps.

To engage on a range of skills reform and policy matters, including consultation on apprenticeships, visit the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations website or reach out to your State or Territory Skills Minister.

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