

The Hon. Amanda Rishworth MP
Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations

The Hon. Andrew Giles MP
Minister for Skills and Training

Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister Rishworth and Minister Giles,

Thank you for your correspondence setting out the annual Statement of Australian Government Priorities (Statement) as they relate to HumanAbility. We have recently reviewed our Strategic Plan and confirm that it, and the annual work priorities, are aligned with the Stage 2 Grant Agreement, Code of Conduct, Program Guidelines, Integrity Framework and Performance Monitoring arrangements referenced in your letter.

I write to confirm the intent of HumanAbility to use our best endeavours to give effect to the Statement. I confirm that the Statement and the HumanAbility response will be published on our website.

HumanAbility is deeply committed to the success of the Jobs and Skills Council (JSC) program by identifying the skills and workforce challenges across the Health, Community (Human) Services, Aged Care and Disability, Early Childhood Education and Care and Sport and Recreation Sectors. We will seek, as required by the Statement, to ensure that our work is informed by industry intelligence and embedded in progressing the tripartite objectives of the program. We will share our industry intelligence, data and solutions to inform both government and industry decision-making.

The priorities and objectives outlined in the Ministerial Statement of Priority for all Jobs and Skills Councils align with those of HumanAbility. They are central to the priorities of the sectors that are within our remit and the purpose of HumanAbility. Accordingly, we will be actively involved in:

- Continuing to undertake activities that support a skilled, adaptable and inclusive workforce to help address Australia's productivity challenges.
- Continuing to work closely with your department and other Government Departments, First Nations people, employers, unions, and other Jobs and Skills Councils to progress the priority reforms under the Closing the Gap National Agreement.
- Work to address strengthening system inclusivity in gender segregated industries, including through analysis of education and training pathways, and how these intersect with the gender make-up of occupations and industries.

- Continuing to use strategic workforce planning and strong stakeholder engagement to build a shared, evidence-based view of current and emerging workforce challenges and opportunities across our industries and the broader JSC network. This includes participating in all cross-JSC forums and working groups, including:
 - JSC CEO Forum
 - JSC CEO Strategic Alliance
 - Cross-JSC Gender Equality
 - Cross-JSC Close the Gap
 - Cross JSC – Artificial Intelligence
 - Cross-JSC VET Workforce
 - Cross-JSC Qualification Reform
 - Contributing to other cross JSC projects and submissions as appropriate.
- Work to reflect the possible impacts of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and broader digital transformation in workforce planning analysis, particularly emerging and changing skills needs within our industry sectors, and incorporate data, digital and AI learning outcomes into the design and review of qualifications and training products.
- Ensure that updates to training products are consistent with Qualification Reform principles, delivering streamlined, relevant and future-ready qualifications that aim to reduce duplication, align with workforce needs and respond to industry and learner expectations.

We appreciate the acknowledgement that HumanAbility has a significant program of work underway in support of the sectors within our remit. We note the critical importance of the sectors to the wellbeing and quality of life of all Australians, and the importance of working closely with key partners, including government, as the major funder and service policy driver, to enact key initiatives to make effective change.

In recognition of the Australian Government's specific priorities for HumanAbility, we will continue a strong focus on supporting workforce skills and training priorities across all areas within our remit, operating within allocated resources, agreed priorities with DEWR and organisational capacity. This incorporates:

1. Undertaking training package reviews and other projects that equip workers with the skills and knowledge required to deliver quality care and support services, and that facilitate workforce entry pathways, professionalism and mobility.

By way of example, this includes commencing, continuing or completing training package reviews and associated resources in:

- CHC Aged Care and Disability Support Career Pathways
- HLT Pathology
- HLT Optical Dispensing
- HLT Audiometry
- HLT Health Service Assistance
- SIS Outdoor Recreation and Leadership
- CHC Community Services

- CHC Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs
- CHC Out of School Hours Care
- CHC Identify and Report Children and Young People at Risk
- CHC Early Childhood Education and Care
- CHC Aged Care, Disability, Leisure & Health
- HLT Sterilisation Services
- Career Development and Employment Services
- HLT Dental
- HLT Health Administration and Medical Practice
- Cross JSC Generalist Skills Review (alongside FSO and SaCSA)
- A project to examine how Recognised Prior Learning can support workforce participation, mobility and reform goals. This will include desktop analysis with targeted sector engagement, examining where it works, where it breaks down and why. It will draw together existing tools, examples and sector experience to produce policy-ready insights that support future workforce reform.

2. Supporting the implementation of the National Children’s Education and Care Workforce Strategy, including ensuring a strong focus on child safety.

This includes:

- Working with Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), RTOs, the SA TAFE Centre of Excellence, industry, unions and universities through the Early Childhood Network to establish design elements of the reviewed qualifications. This is to incentivise Recognition of Prior Learning and facilitating advanced standing and credit transfer between VET and Higher Education to support career and qualification progression. This work supports the recommendations in the Opportunity and Productivity: Towards a tertiary harmonisation road map’ (Harmonisation Road Map).
- Continuing the ongoing focus on the quality of vocational education and training, including undertaking a review of the Early Childhood Education and Care training packages to align them with contemporary job roles and expectations.
- Working to Improve access to an increasing range of microcredentials for educators and teachers in areas of identified need. This includes working with the TAFE SA Centre of Excellence to collaborate on microcredentials and sharing the TAFE SA Unit of Competency on Supporting Children with Autism. We are also delivering on Focus Area 3.2 of the National Children’s Education and Care Workforce Strategy 2022–2032 – improving access to an increasing range of microcredentials.
- Maintaining continuous consultation with government representatives, Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Department of Education and the Australian Centre for Child Protection to collaboratively develop solutions for training and training package design to better support educators with critical areas such as:
 - Identifying, reporting, and responding to child maltreatment using trauma-informed practices.
 - Recognising grooming behaviours and understanding developmentally expected versus concerning behaviours in children.

- Implementing effective supervision and behaviour guidance, and reportable conduct.
- Mapping undertaken to align two new draft units for the Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care that complement the Australian Centre for Child Protection (ACCP) training to ensure training is available both in pre-service qualifications assessed under the VET compliance requirements as well as the implementation of the ACCP online training. These units will be further tested during consultation of training product development.
- Continuing to engage with the development of the Advanced ACCP training course to inform the development of complimentary units of competency within the Diploma qualifications.
- Continue to engage regularly with the National Workforce Strategy Working Group.

3. Ongoing, regular collaboration and engagement with states and territories and relevant Australian Government agencies, to enable opportunities to provide input.

For example, this includes:

- Delivering 'roadshows': our tripartite stakeholder engagement forums in all states and territories to actively consult on projects and workforce planning matters. Our roadshows also provide an opportunity for stakeholders to raise issues of relevance to training, skills and workforce, that adds to our industry knowledge and intelligence.
- In person and on-line tripartite stakeholder forums to seek feedback regarding all training packages under development. Additional meetings are held with subject matter expert groups to inform the development of training packages as appropriate, in addition to the Technical Committees formed for each training package.
- Quarterly Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) meetings across health, community services, aged care and disability, early childhood education and care and sport and recreation sectors. All committees have a tripartite composition and play an active role in informing the priorities and work of HumanAbility.
- Quarterly meetings with Industry Training Advisory Boards (ITABs) or equivalent entities across states and territories where ITABs do not exist.
- A National Forum.
- Regular engagement with regulators.
- Technical Committees across all Training Products that are in line with the Training Package Operating Framework (TPOF) and associated governance arrangements.
- Regular consultation with State Training Authorities (STA)s, ITABs, regulators, and peak bodies to identify jurisdictional and specific priorities.
- Work closely with the TAFE Centres of Excellence within our remit. This includes attending steering groups and related groups established by the Centres of Excellence. HumanAbility currently has active involvement on the TAFE SA Early Childhood Education and Care Centre of Excellence, the TAFE Queensland Centre of Excellence Health Care and Support and the Northern Territory Regional and Remote Essential Care Services Centre of Excellence.
- Meet regularly with education peak bodies such as TAFE Directors Australia and the Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia.
- Participate in state and territory working groups howsoever named. For example, HumanAbility is an active member of the Western Australia Care Sector Working Group.

- Participate in key government committees and fora, including for example, the Australian Government Band 1 and 2 Care and Support Economy Working Group.

4. Working collaboratively with First Nations stakeholders to support workforce development opportunities as identified by them, including skills and training related responses that will assist in the growth and development of First Nations care and support workforces. We note and are committed to the importance of strengthening cultural safety and trauma informed care and awareness more broadly, and the importance of taking a First Nations-led approach in areas of expertise.

For example, this will incorporate:

- Developing a HumanAbility First Nations engagement strategy aligned with identified Closing the Gap measures.
- Undertaking comprehensive, safe, appropriate engagement and consultation with First Nations stakeholders to seek advice on VET training products and workforce development policy. Initially, the focus will be on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce, with learnings to be embedded in HumanAbility training product development, workforce development and policy. Our intention is to repeat and apply learnings to the broader industries within HumanAbility's remit and to embed the process and outcomes across HumanAbility's work.
- A partnership with NACCHO to develop a mentoring framework for the VET workforce.
- Membership, attendance and associated actions of the cross-JSC Closing the Gap working group.

5. Contribute to responses to workforce development, skills and training priorities set out in national strategies, including the National Skills Agreement's National Priority for sustaining essential care services. This will include consideration of how relevant priorities and actions can be progressed through current and planned research projects, strategic advice to the Australian Government, training package development and other projects as agreed between the department and HumanAbility, in line with research allocation and work prioritisation.

For example, HumanAbility is commencing, continuing or completing workforce development, skills and training priorities as set out below:

- Workforce planning, focussing on "deep dive" workforce plans in disability and in aged care in 2026, with a view to delivering a 'deep dive' in each of our sectors over a three-year cycle to end of 2028.
- Research projects focussing on:
 - Earn While You Learn, including proposing Earn While You Learn pilot ideas to Government for consideration.
 - Enrolment and Completions – to identify strategies to increase completion of qualifications across HumanAbility sectors.
 - The VET workforce – with a specific focus on supporting Teachers, Trainers and Assessors (TTAs) to maintain industry currency.
 - Microcredentials research will focus on supporting the upskilling and professional development of the existing workforce, as part of a retention and career progression strategy. The research will commence with a focus on early childhood education and care.
 - An international comparison of registration schemes that contemplates implications in an Australian context.

- A discussion paper identifying targeted strategies to address structural barriers to the use of apprenticeship pathways in the aged care and disability sectors, responding to Recommendation 2.13 of the Strategic Review of the Australian Apprenticeship Incentive System, noting that this incorporates HumanAbility hosting a tripartite meeting to bring unions, employers, and the relevant agencies and ministers together.
- Research into gender segregation and interventions to reduce subsequent gender economic inequality focused on the care and support sectors.
- Research considering AI and technology and the care and support workforce, working to strengthen digital and artificial intelligence capability across the workforce. Research will explore evolving implications of advances in digital technology, including artificial intelligence (AI) systems, on the workforces in our sectors. Areas of focus will include the challenges and opportunities posted by AI and broader digital transformation in skills and training development, workforce planning, care and support service deliver, and compliance.
- Ongoing research, discussion papers and associated activities to address productivity challenges in the sectors within HumanAbility's remit. Reforms that were suggested in HumanAbility's submissions to the Productivity Inquiry have been embedded across HumanAbility work.
- Targeted research to further understand regional and remote workforces including obstacles faced and identifying place-based solutions.
- Exploration of Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) and updated frameworks.
- A Sport and Recreation workforce insights report – to guide sector readiness for the 2032 Brisbane Olympics and Paralympics.

HumanAbility will also explore funding for a campaign to attract people to work in the care and support industries and will continue to promote career pathways within and across the industries within our remit.

In addition, please note the training product reviews being commenced, continued or completed as set out above.

HumanAbility shares the Government's view that the success of the JSC Program depends on HumanAbility working in close partnership with the industries within our remit: employers, unions, other stakeholder associations and groups, the Department and other government agencies. The centrality of tripartism is embedded in our governance and engagement policies at all levels of the organisation. We have and will continue to actively work to promote diversity in the composition of our structural representation and our systems of engagement. We will continue to strengthen formal partnerships with First Nations people and organisations, working to enable shared decision making, and supporting projects that empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to determine and drive their own economic development.

The governance and operations of HumanAbility will continue to be designed to ensure transparency, accountability and constructive collaboration. This includes stakeholder engagement and communications in our everyday practices, regular forums to bring together key stakeholders to inform our work and broader engagement opportunities.

We appreciate your commitment that the department will continue to support our efforts to bring together industry, including employers and unions, and government to shape and drive workforce

solutions across the economy, including by providing information and fostering connections across government.

HumanAbility looks forward to ongoing and constructive engagement with your offices and the department. We welcome the opportunity to contribute to the significant workforce needs across the health, community (human) services, aged care and disability, early childhood education and sport and recreation sectors. We are committed to working closely with government to address these needs.

Yours sincerely,

Rob Bonner
Chair
HumanAbility

HumanAbility

ABN 36 665 836 608

Suite 4, 109 Union Road, Surrey Hills VIC 3127

humanability.com.au



HumanAbility is a Jobs and Skills Council funded by the Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.