

ISA STATEMENT OF RESPONSE TO THE 2026 MINISTERIAL STATEMENT OF PRIORITIES

Introduction

This document sets out Industry Skills Australia's (ISA) response to the priorities identified in the Ministerial Statement of Priorities dated 18 December 2025. It outlines ISA's commitments and accountability arrangements and describes how the organisation will align its operations and activities with the Government's policy priorities and objectives, while also recognising ISA's existing workplan and relevant industry priorities.

Purpose and Role

Industry Skills Australia (ISA) is the Jobs and Skills Council (JSC) for Australia's Transport Supply Chain Industries (TSCI), encompassing aviation, maritime, rail, transport and logistics, as well as the emerging sectors of omnichannel logistics and space transport. Collectively, these industries comprise approximately 213,000 businesses and employ around 730,000 workers. When transport and logistics roles embedded across sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, mining and tourism are included, the national TSCI workforce exceeds one million workers.

ISA is committed to building a world-class supply chain workforce that enhances productivity, supports high-quality jobs, and creates meaningful opportunities for individuals and communities. Guided by collaboration and a tripartite approach, ISA brings together senior industry leaders, unions, governments, and the vocational education and training (VET) system to provide leadership on current and emerging workforce development and skills challenges.

The core functions of Jobs and Skills Councils include industry stewardship; strategic workforce analysis and planning; training product development; the design, delivery, and promotion of high-impact solutions; and monitoring the extent to which the VET system meets industry needs.

Governance and Accountability

Industry perspectives are embedded across all aspects of ISA's operating model, from strategic direction and advocacy through to the local delivery of tailored industry-led solutions. The ISA Board is responsible for the organisation's overall governance, strategic oversight and performance.

To deliver on the Statement of Priorities, ISA will:

- Maintain transparent, timely and effective reporting and engagement with the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR).

**People first, for a future-fit
supply chain workforce**

- Operate in full compliance with the Stage 2 Grant Agreement, Code of Conduct, Program Guidelines, Integrity Framework, Performance Monitoring arrangements, and the broader policy and national priorities of the VET system.
- Meet all legislative, regulatory and contractual obligations applicable to the organisation, including those associated with the management of public funding.
- Apply robust risk management and assurance processes in line with ISA's Risk Management Policy and responsive to the evolving operating environment.
- Uphold the highest standards of integrity, probity and ethical conduct, supported by clear expectations of Board and Director behaviour and effective mechanisms for preventing, identifying and addressing misconduct.
- Undertake regular, independent evaluations of Board and Director performance, and use the outcomes to strengthen governance capability and accountability.

Organisational Capability

To deliver on the Statement of Priorities, ISA will:

- Maintain and continuously strengthen organisational capability, including business systems, specialist expertise and internal policies required to support effective, efficient, and compliant operations.
- Invest in robust data, research, and analytics capability to inform high-quality, evidence-based advice to government and industry.
- Strengthen internal performance management and quality assurance frameworks to ensure programs and initiatives are delivered consistently, efficiently, and to a high standard.
- Foster a culture of continuous improvement, informed by performance insights, evaluation findings, and stakeholder feedback.
- Maintain sound financial management practices and transparent reporting to demonstrate the effective, efficient, and responsible use of public funds.

Government Policy Priorities and Objectives for all JSCs

To deliver on the Statement of Priorities, ISA will:

- **Productivity**
Implement a program of work to support Australia's productivity by strengthening the TSCI workforce. This includes mapping industry's new and emerging digital skills needs; advancing diversity and inclusion across the TSCI workforce; responding to critical occupational shortages; and building a sustainable pipeline of high-quality VET trainers and assessors.
- **Closing The Gap**
Progress priority reforms under the Closing the Gap National Agreement through collaborative engagement with the Department, First Nations peoples and industry stakeholders including employers and unions. This will include active participation in the cross-JSC Closing the Gap Working Group; development and implementation of a Reconciliation Action Plan to strengthen engagement and shared decision-making across ISA's program of work; and delivery of the Regional Fora Implementation Plan.

- **Inclusivity and Diversity**

Work in partnership with TSCI employers, unions, and VET providers to drive inclusive workforce practices, improve outcomes for underrepresented groups, and reduce gender segregation, thereby expanding equitable employment opportunities across the industry. This will include active participation in the cross-JSC Gender Equality Working Group; implementation of the Increasing Industry Diversity project; and building employer awareness of good practice through the Regional Fora.

- **Strategic Workforce Planning and Stakeholder Engagement**

Continue to undertake strategic workforce planning and strong ongoing stakeholder engagement to develop a shared, evidence-based understanding of workforce challenges, opportunities, and priorities for action by ISA and industry more broadly. This will include implementing ISA's Strategic Engagement Strategy and Industry Engagement Plans; empowering Strategic Workforce Planning Committees and the Industry Advisory Council; convening industry leaders' events and VET stakeholder roundtables in every jurisdiction; and engaging senior leaders from major TSCI organisations through ISA's Supply Chain Leaders' Summit.

- **AI and Digital Transformation**

Identify and respond to the impacts of artificial intelligence and digital transformation on TSCI occupations. This will include identifying technology-related challenges and responses within each Workforce Plan; codifying new and emerging skills and knowledge requirements within the nationally endorsed Training Packages; and establishing the Technology Futures Taskforce Pilot (Phase II).

- **Qualification Reform**

Continue to embed Qualification Reform principles across all ISA Training Package development and maintenance activities. This will include updating Heavy Vehicle Driver qualifications; updating the Diploma of Aviation – Flight Instructor; and developing Certificate II in Rail Fundamentals (pre-vocational program).

Government Policy Priorities and Objectives for ISA

To deliver on the Statement of Priorities, ISA will:

- **National Industry Policy and Strategy**

Continue to support major national policies and strategies by developing and implementing industry-led skills, training, and workforce solutions in partnership with governments. This will include implementing a Maritime Program of Work to support the establishment of the Strategic Fleet and national maritime skills pipeline; improving rail interoperability and mutual recognition of rail skills across jurisdictions to enhance workforce mobility; and progressing priorities under the National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy and the Aviation White Paper.

- **Underrepresented Cohorts**

Identify and research barriers to entry into the TSCI industries to help improve diversity and strengthen pathways for underrepresented cohorts. This will include implementing the Increasing Industry Diversity project; building employer awareness of good practice through the Regional Fora; and strengthening the evidence base through the Workforce Plan consultation and data analysis process.

- **New and Emerging Skills**

Continue to analyse and validate the impact of Net Zero and digital transformation on TSCI jobs and skills to support effective upskilling and reskilling of the workforce. This will include piloting the Technology Futures' Taskforce (Phase 2); incorporating new and emerging skills and knowledge requirements nationally endorsed Training Packages; and scoping the impact of maritime decarbonisation on maritime jobs, skills and qualifications.

- **Career Pathways**

Support industry to develop improved entry and career pathways for occupations facing critical shortages. This will include identifying models to expedite access to training berths for maritime trainees; identifying barriers to the transition of Defence flight instructors into civil aviation; developing pre-vocational programs in rail, transport and logistics; identifying occupational pathways from Defence into maritime careers; and improving career information for all TSCI sectors.

- **First Nations Peoples and Organisations**

Deepen existing partnerships and strengthen engagement with First Nations Peoples and organisations across ISA's JSC model and program of work. This will include developing and implementing a Reconciliation Action Plan and progressing the Regional Fora Implementation Plan for 2026.

Partnering for Success

To deliver on the Statement of Priorities, ISA will:

- **Government Departments and Agencies**

Work closely with DEWR and other relevant government departments and agencies to ensure alignment with national priorities. This will include working with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sports & Arts; the Australian Maritime Safety Authority; the Civil Aviation Safety Authority; the National Transport Commission; and SafeWork Australia.

- **Key Stakeholders and Partners**

Engage employers, unions, VET system stakeholders and other partners to ensure ISA's work reflects current and emerging workforce and skills needs across its industry coverage. This will include implementing ISA's Strategic Engagement Strategy and individual Industry Engagement Plans for Aviation, Maritime, Rail, Transport and Logistics.

- **First Nations Peoples and Organisations**

Establish and strengthen meaningful partnerships with First Nations Peoples and organisations, supporting shared decision-making and improved workforce outcomes. This will include developing and implementing a Reconciliation Action Plan; and actively participating in the cross-JSC Closing the Gap Working Group.

- **Jobs and Skills Councils**

Contribute to cross-JSC initiatives where these align with industry needs and Australian Government priorities. This will include actively participating in the Quality Qualifications Working Group; the Generalist Skills Working Group; and the Gender Equality Working Group.