



Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council

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

The Hon Joel Bowden
Northern Territory
Minister for Skills, Training and International Education

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

The Hon Felix Ellis MP
Tasmania
Minister for Skills and Training

The Hon Lance McCallum MP
Queensland
Minister for Training and Skills Development

The Hon Simone McGurk MLA
Western Australia
Minister for Training and Workforce Development

Mr Chris Steel MLA
Australian Capital Territory
Minister for Skills and Training

The Hon Gayle Tierney MLC
Victoria
Minister for Skills and TAFE

The Hon Steve Whan MP
New South Wales
Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

COMMUNIQUE

MEETING OF FEDERAL, STATE AND TERRITORY SKILLS MINISTERS

Federal, State and Territory Skills and Training Ministers met in Sydney today to discuss Australia's inaugural National Skills Plan under the National Skills Agreement and the draft Vocational Education and Training (VET) Workforce Blueprint. Ministers also discussed the ongoing reform of the VET sector including important changes to improve the quality and industry relevance of training to students and industry, and strengthening connections between the VET and higher education sectors.

Jobs and Skills Australia – 2024-25 Work Plan Development

Skills Ministers were joined by Professor Barney Glover AO, the inaugural Commissioner of Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), who provided an overview of JSA's 2024-25 draft Work Plan, emphasising the importance of JSA's work to industry workforce planning on a national and regional level. Skills Ministers welcomed JSA's prioritisation of better regional intelligence, and the alignment of intelligence on skills and migration requirements. Skills Ministers noted the work underway by JSA to develop and finalise priorities and deliverables for 2024-25.

The National Skills Plan

Skills Ministers discussed the development of Australia's first National Skills Plan. The Plan is a key deliverable under the National Skills Agreement and will guide investment in skills and the development and delivery of economic and social benefits through the VET system.

The National Skills Plan will outline how governments work together towards national priorities and shared outcomes, while preserving flexibility for all jurisdictions to address local needs and circumstances. The Plan is a key component of building a shared stewardship model under the five-year National Skills Agreement and will guide development of Jurisdictional Action Plans which are expected to be published by all governments by November 2024. The Plan will also reiterate that TAFEs are valued and trusted public institutions at the heart of our VET sector.

The Plan will provide further detail on eight agreed national priorities where focussed collaborative effort is required to address critical skills and workforce shortages. The plan will outline ambitions, drivers of change, key focus areas and early actions to progress each national priority.

Fee-Free TAFE and TAFE Centres of Excellence

Skills Ministers discussed the continued delivery of Fee-Free TAFE, which removed financial barriers to VET for 355,000 Australians in 2023. Skills Ministers also received an update on the establishment of the first TAFE Centre of Excellence in the ACT. The Electric Vehicle Centre of Excellence will be followed by the establishment of other TAFE Centres of Excellence in other jurisdictions in the coming months.

Quality Reforms

High quality VET is vital to Australia's future, giving people the knowledge and skills they need for secure and rewarding careers, and positioning Australia as an economically prosperous, socially equitable and environmentally sustainable nation.

Skills Ministers discussed the significant progress on the revised Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and their shared ambition to lift quality and integrity across the entire sector, through a more flexible, robust, quality driven approach to regulation. They also discussed how the revised Standards will enable TAFEs to further develop their role as the trusted public provider at the heart of the VET sector. Skills Ministers agreed to progress the Standards for public release in August and to come into full regulatory effect from 1 July 2025.

VET Workforce Blueprint

Skills Ministers considered the draft VET Workforce Blueprint which will identify opportunities and associated actions to support and grow a sustainable VET workforce in Australia, including for regional Australia. The Blueprint will respond to the key themes of understanding, growing, retaining and developing the workforce and will be finalised as a priority.

A capable and well supported VET workforce is essential to a strong and vibrant VET sector. It is the shared ambition of all Skills Ministers that our VET workforce is dynamic and inclusive. A workforce that can help students gain the skills needed to navigate the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, including a Future Made in Australia, the move to renewables and net zero carbon emissions, an ageing population, growth in the care and support sector, technological transformation, and broader global and economic shifts. Central to this are TAFEs, our valued and trusted public institutions at the heart of the VET sector, complemented by a diverse range of high-quality registered training organisations.

Ministers agreed to progress the VET Workforce Blueprint for finalisation.

Australian Universities Accord

Skills Ministers noted the 2024-25 Australian Universities Accord (the Accord) Federal Budget measures impacting the VET sector. This follows on from Skills Ministers discussing the Accord at an extraordinary Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council meeting in April 2024. Skills Ministers today affirmed the critical importance of the VET and higher education sectors, and the need to strengthen connections between them to create a joined up system where students are provided with pathways to study and training to gain the skills needed by industry and the economy.

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