



Australian Government

Australian Government response to the
House Standing Committee on Employment, Education and
Training report:

Shared vision, equal pathways

MARCH 2026

Introduction

The House Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training's inquiry report into the perceptions and status of vocational education and training (VET) – *Shared vision, equal pathways* was tabled in February 2024. The Australian Government (the Government) recognises and acknowledges the work of members in preparing and delivering the report and associated recommendations.

As highlighted by the Committee, Australia's economic and social prosperity relies on a highly skilled and qualified workforce to meet current skills shortages and future needs. Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) projections indicate that over 90% of the employment growth over the 10 years to May 2035 will occur in occupations requiring a post-secondary qualification (covering skill levels 1 to 4). Over half (54.3%) of this growth is anticipated to occur in occupations related to a bachelor's degree or higher as the primary education pathway (Skill Level 1), and a further 40.1% in occupations with VET as the primary pathway (Skill Levels 2 to 4) (JSA, 2025).

VET is central to building Australia's future by creating employment pathways for school leavers, enabling working age Australians to reskill and upskill and supporting workforce supply in nationally significant areas including construction, net zero, care and support, digital skills and AI.

Through the National Skills Agreement, the Government is investing \$12.6 billion over five years to support the VET sector.

The 5-year National Skills Agreement (the Agreement) represents a fundamental shift in the way the Commonwealth, state and territory governments work together to address challenges and capitalise on shared opportunities in the VET system.

Since 1 January 2024, the Agreement has supported work to:

- deliver a national VET system that is high-quality, responsive and accessible
- support Australians to develop the skills and capabilities they need to obtain well-paid, secure jobs
- ensure Australia has the skilled workforce it needs now and into the future, with TAFE at the heart of the VET sector.

Under the Agreement, the Commonwealth is expanding and transforming access to the VET sector, supporting training providers to deliver quality education and training, and implementing reforms to address critical skills needs. The Agreement is also designed to deliver an uplift in funding across all states and territories.

The Commonwealth's funding includes up to \$1.3 billion to implement agreed reforms to strengthen the VET sector, this includes establishing TAFE Centres of Excellence, a National TAFE Network, Closing the Gap initiatives designed in partnership with and led by First Nations people, improvements to foundation skills training, and measures to improve VET completions for women and other priority cohorts.

The new national stewardship model supports governments to work collaboratively and purposefully towards national priorities, while providing states and territories with flexibility to meet local skills needs. The first National Skills Plan, published in September 2024, communicates Skills Ministers' shared vision for the VET system and how governments will work together to deliver shared outcomes and priorities. All jurisdictions, including the

Commonwealth, have published jurisdictional action plans outlining local action to deliver on the National Skills Plan.

The Government is investing in communicating the quality, diversity and benefits of VET pathways.

The Government has been working to improve perceptions and lift the status of VET by improving the availability and quality of careers and pathways information.

This includes through the establishment of 10 Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs) whose functions include supporting learners and workers to make informed, evidence-based career decisions within their respective sectors, and the Your Career website.

Your Career provides up-to-date, accurate industry, occupation and VET information to support career related decision-making. Since its inception in October 2020, Your Career has had over 7.4 million unique users and over 21.6 million page views. Your Career provides independent, nationally relevant information about industries and occupations in Australia linked to study, training and job options.

The Government has also produced publications targeted to specific cohorts including resources to encourage conversations with primary-school aged students 'Little Ripples' and First Nations primary school aged children 'Little yarns, Big dreams'; resources for exploring career pathways for people with disability; the Australian Jobs Report (co-produced with Jobs and Skills Australia); and the School Leavers Information Kit (SLIK).

Successful VET career journeys are celebrated and showcased through initiatives such as the Australian Training Awards, WorldSkills Australia and the VET Alumni. With over 700 VET alumni ambassadors, comprised of individuals, Registered Training Organisations (RTO) and businesses in all industries and states and territories sharing their stories and modelling success in their chosen fields, initiatives like these support increased awareness and respect for skills-based careers. The VET Alumni also play an important role in influencing policy makers by providing user centred input to policy discussions, advisory groups and committees, including the JSCs.

The Government supports the professionalisation and quality of careers advice and guidance via the Australian Blueprint for Career Development (ABCD). Refreshed in late 2022, the ABCD supports and builds the capability of Australia's professional career practitioners and career educators in schools. The ABCD has been downloaded over 9,000 times and formed the basis of masterclass sessions attended by over 600 professional career practitioners.

Through the Careers Community of Practice (CCoP), continued dialogue between Commonwealth and state and territory government officials responsible for careers education is encouraged, including to share information, discuss best practice, increase engagement and reduce duplication.

The Government is supporting students and encouraging priority groups into the VET sector to gain the skills needed for Australia's economic prosperity.

To support people looking to train or retrain and businesses which need more skilled workers, the Government's \$1.2 billion Future Made in Australia skills plan is focused on closing the gap in key areas of skills shortages with new places at university and TAFE. This includes driving structural and cultural change via 20 partnership projects across key

male-dominated industries through the \$60.6 million Building Women's Careers program and supporting women into flexible, safe and inclusive work and training opportunities.

The Government, in partnership with state and territory governments, is delivering \$1.5 billion in joint funding for over 500,000 Free TAFE and VET places across Australia from 2023 to 2026. Places are offered in fields of study in high demand and skills need and are prioritised to cohorts who typically face barriers to education and training. From 1 January 2023 to 30 September 2025, there have been over 725,000 enrolments nationally. Over 254,000 enrolments have been by young people, over 178,000 by job seekers, over 61,000 by people with disability and over 44,000 by First Nations learners. Women make up over half of the enrolments, with 448,000 enrolments (almost 62%). Over 248,000 enrolments (over 34%) are by students in regional and remote locations.

The Government has now made Free TAFE a permanent feature of the national VET system, investing over \$1.6 billion to 2034-35 to support at least 100,000 places per year from 2027, underpinned by the *Free TAFE Act 2025*.

The Australian Skills Guarantee introduced national targets for apprentices, trainees, paid cadets and women working on eligible major government-funded construction and information and communication technology projects from 1 July 2024. Since 1 July 2024, the Government's new model for Australian Apprenticeship Support Services is delivering strengthened support such as mentoring for apprentices and employers, and greater assistance for apprentices at the highest risk of noncompletion including women in male-dominated trades and First Nations people.

Recognising the critical skills shortages in the construction and residential housing sector, the Government has expanded and reframed the New Energy Apprenticeship Program (NEAP) to the Key Apprenticeships Program (KAP), to ensure continued uptake in high priority housing construction and new energy occupations.

The KAP, which commenced on 1 July 2025, includes two streams, a new Housing Construction Apprenticeship (HCA) Stream to support apprentices in high priority housing construction occupations, and a New Energy Apprenticeship (NEA) Stream to continue supporting apprentices in clean energy occupations. On 1 December 2025, the Government announced employers engaging an apprentice in an eligible KAP occupation is eligible to continue to receive up to \$5,000 from 1 January 2026.

The Government is committed to a joined up tertiary system with a shared vision and equal pathways.

The Universities Accord final report reflects many of the same issues identified in *Shared vision, equal pathways*. Australia's tertiary education system must evolve to support better harmonisation between VET and higher education to produce the skills, knowledge and intellectual ambition required to respond to the nation's current and emerging social, economic and environmental challenges. Across tertiary education, there is a need to encourage aspiration and increase attainment of historically under-represented cohorts. A more seamless tertiary system where higher education and VET are viewed as equally important pathways bringing different strengths will better meet the skills needs of Australia now and in the future.

The Government is laying the foundations to better align VET and higher education through the 2024-25 Tertiary Education Harmonisation measure which is supporting work to better align VET and higher education pathways, improving credit transfer and recognition of prior learning to allow easier movement between the VET and higher education sectors, and improving tertiary data.

In addition, JSA's February 2025 report, *Opportunity and Productivity: Towards a Tertiary Harmonisation Roadmap*, presents a vision for a more connected, equitable and effective tertiary education system. It identifies initial and longer-term reform priorities in governance, funding alignment, and learner mobility, aimed at strategically aligning higher education and VET while preserving their distinct roles. This alignment would support better coordination among system actors to equip learners with the skills needed for a dynamic labour market.

The Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC) is leading the development of a Tertiary Roadmap, in close collaboration with JSA, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) and the Department of Education. The Tertiary Roadmap will identify the next steps to make it easier for students to move between the VET and higher education sectors. It will set up the system to support students to gain qualifications matched to Australia's future skills needs.

A Tertiary System Advisory Council is also being established to support ATEC drive this work. It will be chaired by the JSA Commissioner, Professor Barney Glover AO, with other members to include representatives from the Commonwealth, states and territories, industry, unions, and the VET and higher education sectors.

To lift the status of VET, the Government is committed to continuing to build a stronger, more equitable, desirable, dynamic and agile VET sector that meets the workforce challenges of the future and provides learners with an enriched, work-based, integrated learning experience that builds skills and knowledge.

To ensure the perception of VET reflects the high-quality training provided, the Government is working with states and territories to support an increasingly diverse range of students to access skills and training (including foundation skills) that set them up to find secure, well-paid jobs.

See **Appendix A** on page 29 for a high-level summary of recommendations and responses.

Recommendation	Government Response
-----------------------	----------------------------

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends the Australian Government work with state and territory governments and key stakeholders such as the National Centre for Vocational Education Research to improve data collection and reporting mechanisms in the vocational education and training sector. This should include a focus on the diversity of pathways within the sector and on better understanding the complex barriers faced by students.

The Government **SUPPORTS** this recommendation

The Government is committed to working with state and territory governments, and stakeholders to improve data collection and reporting in VET. The National Skills Agreement outlines a commitment for the Australian, state and territory governments and key stakeholders, such as the National Centre for Vocational Education Research, to cooperate to enhance the reliability and timely access to high quality VET activity data and information, including to measure the achievement of outcomes and support reform within the VET system.

The Government is also undertaking work as a response to the VET Workforce Blueprint to develop a data strategy to enable the collection of VET workforce data to support policy and VET workforce strategies.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government enhance the functions of the National Careers Institute (NCI) to ensure the NCI is able to operate as a single, trusted source of information on education, training, and careers. The primary focus of the NCI should be supporting key influencers such as teachers, employment service providers, and career educators. This should include but should not be limited to the following measures:

- Overhaul the Your Career website and replace it with a new online portal which provides accurate, relevant, and current information on courses, qualifications, and career pathways. This should include measures to
 - enable the NCI to offer additional information on individual training providers and courses
 - ensure that information provided to users is based on the user's needs and aspirations and does not indicate a 'default' preference for courses or qualifications in a specific tertiary sector
 - ensure that users can easily navigate online resources.
- In collaboration with Jobs and Skills Australia, the National Centre for Vocational Education Research, and the Jobs and Skills Councils, identifying and addressing future skills needs and actively promoting careers which respond to those needs.
- Ensuring that career educators in schools, Technical and Further Education (TAFE), and employment service providers are aware of the NCI and can use it as a resource in performing their functions.
- Identifying and addressing duplication in sources of information on careers and vocational education and training (VET) at the national, state, and local levels.

Explore creating a grants funding program to support and enable the expansion of proven, evidence-based local career education programs.

The Government **NOTES** this recommendation

The Government is supporting the provision of careers information through the Your Career website which provides industry, occupation and VET course and provider information to support careers related decision-making. Updates to the Your Career website in early 2025 include the addition of the Career Explorer, which provides users with information based on their needs and aspirations, providing unbiased results informed by research, labour market insights and insights from industry experts. The algorithm which supports the search functions on Your Career has been enhanced to provide relevant results based on the search criteria entered. These functional updates enable easier searching and navigation of the website.

Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) also plays an important role in providing expert information and advice on the current, emerging and future skills and human capital needs of the economy.

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) engaged Ninti One, a First Nations-owned not-for-profit organisation, to develop a suite of resources to ensure opportunities for First Nations peoples are maximised in the transition to net zero. The resources aim to build awareness and strengthen visibility of job opportunities for First Nations peoples and help to create culturally safe work and learning environments in the decarbonisation workforce. This project was completed in June 2025, and the resources are having a strong impact as DEWR and Ninti One continue to promote them to industry and government stakeholders.

	<p>DEWR is also promoting clean energy careers as part of the Future Made in Australia initiative. To date this has included promotion of clean energy careers on the Your Career website and in the 2024 Australian Jobs Report, and the development of a Careers in STEM Job Kit for the occupation of electrician, with 9,000 hard copies distributed nationally to educational institutions, careers advisers and STEM organisations.</p>
--	---

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government, via the National Careers Institute, work with State and Territory Governments to boost the capacity of vocational education and training alumni programs, including to develop work plans to underpin proactive outreach to schools, business associations, and employment bodies.

The Government **SUPPORTS IN PRINCIPLE** this recommendation

The Government recognises the value of alumni programs in providing 'living proof' of the many ways a person can succeed through vocational education and training (VET). The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations works closely with states and territories in managing the Australian Training Awards, WorldSkills Australia and Australian VET Alumni ambassador program.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments, the Jobs and Skills Councils, and other key stakeholders to design and deliver national campaigns to promote vocational education and training (VET) pathways and the careers they serve. Campaigns should be promoted at the national, state, and local levels, and should include material that:

- Is diffused through a variety of media sources, including social media, government websites, and television.
- Is accessible to all audiences.
- Is adapted—insofar as possible—to local areas and labour markets, with a view to highlighting the value of VET to local communities.
- Targets different entry pathways to VET, including post-secondary pathways and pathways for adult learners.
- Showcases the benefits of the apprenticeship and traineeship pathways.
- Targets diverse cohorts, with a focus on improving perceptions for women, First Nations peoples, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Showcases positive experiences with VET and examples of success among VET graduates.
- Showcases a variety of career opportunities enabled by the VET sector, with a focus on in-demand industries and potential areas of skills shortage.

Campaigns should be underpinned by robust monitoring and evaluation processes to ensure their impact can be measured and to inform and refine future marketing initiatives.

The Government **SUPPORTS IN PRINCIPLE** this recommendation

Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs) functions include mapping and promoting education and career pathways in industries in their remit, and assisting learners and workers to make well-informed, evidence-based career decisions.

Several JSCs are already undertaking work in this area. For example, HumanAbility, the JSC for the aged and disability services, health, human services, children's education and care, and sport and recreation sectors, has recently completed a project to identify, showcase and promote career pathways across the aged, disability and veterans' care and support sectors. Manufacturing Industry Skills Alliance, the JSC for the manufacturing sector, has launched ManuFACTuring, a national campaign to promote the wide range of opportunities in the modern, innovative and future focused manufacturing industry.

<p>Recommendation 5</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government, via the National Careers Institute, work with State and Territory Governments to support and incentivise schools to promote vocational education and training (VET) to students and parents, including promoting VET and university as equally legitimate and valuable post-secondary pathways. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively championing VET in promotional material and information relating to education and training. • Developing clear, accessible, nationally consistent information resources for use by students, parents, teachers, and other influencers. • Developing best-practice guidelines for schools to promote VET pathways, informed by consultation with education experts. <p>Establishing and raising the profile of student advisory groups and steering committees, including by ensuring that there is a mechanism to capture student views in the development of state and national education policy.</p>	<p>The Government NOTES this recommendation</p> <p>The Government acknowledges the need to promote both VET and university as equally legitimate and valuable post-secondary pathways and works closely with state and territory governments and other stakeholders to support this.</p> <p>The Government also supports best practice in the provision of career information for schools, through the Australian Blueprint for Career Development (ABCD), developed with the Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA), which supports schools and career educators in understanding best practice in design, implementation and evaluation of career development learning. The ABCD is available on the Your Career website, along with supporting material for its use.</p>
---	---

<p>Recommendation 6</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments to examine the impact of the Australian Tertiary Admissions Ranking (ATAR) framework on the quality and uptake of vocational education and training (VET) pathways in secondary schools, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which the ATAR and university entrance are used to determine resourcing for schools, with a view to introducing new metrics which value both VET and university pathways. • How VET and non-VET subjects contribute to ATAR scores, with a view to removing disincentives in the ATAR framework to students pursuing VET pathways during secondary school and promoting national consistency in how VET subjects are treated within that framework. 	<p>The Government NOTES this recommendation</p> <p>The Government believes that VET and higher education pathways should be presented as equally valuable opportunities to secondary school students and is committed to working with state and territory governments and non-government schools sector representatives to address potential biases in the system.</p> <p>The Government is currently working with states and territories to improve university admissions practices through a National Admissions Framework.</p> <p>Commonwealth recurrent funding for schools is based on the Schooling Resource Standard. Higher education admission practices, and the use of the ATAR, have no bearing on Commonwealth resourcing for schools.</p>
<p>Recommendation 7</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments to champion examples of education and career success which are not linked to the Australian Tertiary Admissions Ranking or to a university pathway.</p>	<p>The Government SUPPORTS this recommendation</p> <p>The Government champions education and career success through the Australian VET Alumni program which aims to raise the status of VET and encourage people to consider a VET pathway.</p>

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government review entry pathways into vocational education and training (VET) and university, with a view to developing a measure of success which can be used to support entry into both sectors. This should include the examination of learner profiles as a potential entry mechanism.

The Government **NOTES** this recommendation

Skills Ministers have agreed to an updated Training Package Organising Framework (effective 1 July 2025) which embeds a new, purpose-led, principles-based approach to VET qualification design; including opportunities to improve pathways and support for life-long learning that meets the needs of industry and learners. Jobs and Skills Councils are leading the reform via training package product development activity, regularly reporting back to ministers.

The Government is also delivering on reforms recommended by the Universities Accord, including improving credit recognition between VET and higher education.

Recommendation 9

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments to develop and implement a national strategy for career education in schools, including the following measures:

- Career education starting in primary school and continuing to the end of secondary school. Career education should vary by year level, and there should be a minimum number of contact hours for each student.
- Australian secondary schools have at least one accredited career practitioner.
- Improved professional development for career educators and teachers, including courses which build capacity to work with students from diverse cohorts.
- Nationally consistent and up-to-date career information and resources, including on VET and university study options.
- A career education framework at the school level, including plans to
 - appoint a school career leader with the function of coordinating careers education—including to ensure that all teachers are equipped to provide career advice if needed
 - engage with students and parents on career planning, including to inform parents about potential VET and university pathways
 - measures to build closer connections with and increase students' exposure to VET-related industries.

The National Career Institute, Jobs and Skills Australia, and the Jobs and Skills Councils should be actively involved in the development and implementation of the strategy. The strategy should be developed in close consultation with professional bodies such as the Career Industry Council of Australia, academic, policy, and education experts, teachers and students, sector regulators, and other key stakeholders.

The Government **NOTES** this recommendation

The Government recognises the importance of career education delivered through the Australian school system and its role in improving education and employment outcomes for students.

The Government has supported the development of the Australian Blueprint for Careers Development (ABCD), the national framework that supports best practice design, implementation and evaluation of career development which can be used in a school context.

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations also convenes and facilitates the state and territory Careers Communities of Practice to support information sharing, discussion of best practice, and engagement across jurisdictions.

Recommendation 10

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments to enhance the quality and consistency of vocational education and training delivered to secondary school students (VETDSSS). This should include the following key measures:

- Establish cooperative arrangements between secondary schools, technical and further education (TAFE) institutes, and industry to underpin the design and delivery of VETDSSS. Key priorities for these partnerships should include:
 - overcoming barriers to the delivery of VETDSSS through TAFEs;
 - better integrating VET courses with the broader school curriculum, underpinned by an understanding that VETDSSS should not, in principle, be different to ‘mainstream’ VET;
 - encouraging and enabling industry to offer meaningful work experience to VETDSSS students, where appropriate; and
 - ensuring that VETDSSS courses are responsive to industry needs.
- Provide targeted investment for schools to deliver VETDSSS, with funding conditional on schools delivering VETDSSS in partnership with TAFEs.
- Ensure that all VETDSSS courses can lead to or be counted towards a nationally recognised qualification.

The Government **SUPPORTS IN PRINCIPLE** this recommendation

The Government is committed to improving the quality of VET delivered to secondary school students (VETDSSS) and is working collaboratively with state and territory governments to this end. Through this work, governments will identify challenges and barriers to quality delivery and explore opportunities for enhancements at both the Australian and state and territory government level.

Recommendation 11

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments, education experts and the vocational education and training (VET) and university sectors to implement the following measures:

- Additional initial teacher education (ITE) programs with a VET speciality.
- Additional ITE programs which focus on enabling industry experts to become qualified VET delivered to secondary school students (VETDSSS) educators, including 'fast track' programs where appropriate.
- Adding units on VET into all ITE courses, to ensure all teachers are able to provide reliable, accurate information on VET to their students.

The Government **SUPPORTS IN PRINCIPLE** this recommendation

The Government is working collaboratively with state and territory governments to identify challenges and barriers to improve the supply of VET teachers in secondary schools, and to strengthen their preparation.

Recommendation 12

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments to ensure that all Australian schools are funded to 100 per cent of the Schooling Resourcing Standard.

The Government **SUPPORTS** this recommendation

The Australian Government has reached agreement with every state and territory government to get all public schools on a path to 100 per cent of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) through the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement 2025-2034 and the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement 2025-2034 – Full and Fair Funding (collectively known as the BFSA).

Under the BFSAs, the Australian Government is lifting its share of the SRS for public schools to 25 per cent by 2034 in every state and the ACT, and 40 per cent in the Northern Territory.

Additional funding is tied to reforms to improve educational outcomes for all Australian students.

Reforms are focused on three priority areas: equity and excellence, wellbeing for learning and engagement, and a strong and sustainable workforce. These reform areas have been designed to ensure all students can access a quality education and provide the support to help all students finish school and reach their educational potential.

Recommendation 13

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments, education experts, and other stakeholders to streamline the process of developing and accrediting vocational education and training qualifications. This should include:

- Setting a pathway for technical and further education (TAFE) institutes to self-accredit courses and qualifications, supported by robust safeguards.
- Allowing minor amendments to training packages to take place at the Jobs and Skills Council (JSC) level, subject to industry consultation.

The Government **SUPPORTS IN PRINCIPLE** this recommendation

Under the 2024-25 Tertiary Education Harmonisation measure the Government funded the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) to scope and pilot delegating its course accreditation function to selected TAFEs to enable them to create, approve and deliver accredited VET courses. The pilot ran from December 2024 through to 30 June 2025 and provided valuable insights to inform consideration of ongoing expansion and scalability of delegation of the course accreditation function. These are nationally accredited courses outside of national training package qualifications.

Under the Training Package Organising Framework, minor changes to national training package products, made by Jobs and Skills Councils in consultation with stakeholders, do not require the full development and endorsement process, or compliance assessment, and are recorded as minor releases on the National Training Register.

<p>Recommendation 14</p> <p>The Committee recommends that as part of the ongoing process of qualification and skills reform, the Australian Government review existing training packages to simplify the training ecosystem and reduce unused, duplicative, or clearly unnecessary products. This should include consideration of occupational profiles as a means of identifying where full training packages are and are not required, and as a means of enhancing the development of training packages which respond to industry need.</p>	<p>The Government SUPPORTS IN PRINCIPLE this recommendation</p> <p>Skills Ministers have agreed to an updated Training Package Organising Framework (effective 1 July 2025) which embeds a new purpose-led approach to qualification design, guided by strengthened principles to underpin development. These include removing duplication and unnecessary specification to enable flexible and high-quality delivery and drawing on broad industry and educator expertise when developing qualifications.</p> <p>Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs) are leading the reform via training package product development activity, regularly reporting back to ministers. JSCs also have a role in considering occupational profiles and pathways mapping as part of workforce planning and training package development work.</p>
<p>Recommendation 15</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government ensure the ongoing process of qualification and skills reform support a collaborative approach to the development of qualifications and units of competency, involving industry, employers, workers, and unions.</p>	<p>The Government SUPPORTS this recommendation</p> <p>Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs) bring together employers, unions and governments in a tripartite arrangement to find solutions to skills and workforce challenges and to develop fit-for-purpose qualifications. JSCs are responsible for undertaking comprehensive stakeholder engagement during their training package development work including with relevant industry peaks, employers, unions and training providers.</p>

<p>Recommendation 16</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) work with Jobs and Skills Australia, the Jobs and Skills Councils (JSC) and other key stakeholders to develop and implement robust assessment guidelines for use in the vocational education and training sector.</p>	<p>The Government NOTES this recommendation</p> <p>ASQA is responsible for regulating approximately 90% of Australian VET providers and accredits VET ‘accredited courses’ (courses providing training that is not being met through national training packages and which needs to be nationally recognised) to ensure they meet nationally approved standards. Development of assessment guidelines which align with industry need is not within the remit of ASQA.</p> <p>Jobs and Skills Council functions include working with RTOs to connect nationally recognised training products with delivery and assessment of training, including developing resources for RTOs, trainers, assessors and employers to improve training and assessment practices (noting specific projects are determined based on industry needs identified through workforce planning).</p>
<p>Recommendation 17</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments, education experts and other key stakeholders to explore introducing proficiency-based assessment into the vocational education and training sector.</p>	<p>The Government NOTES this recommendation</p> <p>Skills Ministers have agreed to an updated Training Package Organising Framework (effective 1 July 2025) which embeds a new purpose-led, principles-based approach to qualification design, with ongoing state and territory engagement to align policy and funding. The approach includes a new unit of competency – Application of Skills and Knowledge template, with provision to add grading/proficiency assessment guidance under the supporting Companion Volume Implementation Guide.</p>

Recommendation 18

The Committee recommends the Australian Government expressly recognise and address systemic barriers that hinder participation by women and by gender diverse people in vocational education and training (VET), with a specific focus on lifting women’s participation in male-dominated industries.

This should include but not be limited to:

- Investing in strategies delivered through the VET sector that support women in acquiring skills and entering male-dominated industries.
- Addressing workplace discrimination and gender-based violence and ensuring equitable employment conditions.
- Introducing additional apprenticeship pathways which specifically target women and gender-diverse people.

Implementing promotional and educational campaigns which challenge gender stereotypes and negative attitudes that perpetuate barriers for both women and men in non-traditional VET pathways.

The Government **SUPPORTS** this recommendation

The Government is focused on increasing the profile of women’s participation in VET, particularly in trade roles. This includes through investing \$60.6 million over 4 years in the Building Women’s Careers program which aims to drive structural and cultural change through 20 partnership projects across key male dominated industries and improving women’s access to flexible, safe and inclusive work and training opportunities.

National targets have been set through the Australian Skills Guarantee for apprentices, trainees, paid cadets and women working on eligible major Government-funded construction and information and communication technology (ICT) projects.

Under a new support services model introduced on 1 July 2024, Apprentice Connect Australia Providers identify women in male-dominated trades as a key client group. Providers deliver strengthened wraparound support to improve retention and completion rates.

Jobs and Skills Councils also have an important role to play in considering opportunities to address gender imbalances across industry through their workforce planning and project activities.

Women undertaking study in non-traditional fields are a priority cohort under Free TAFE.

Recommendation 19

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments, Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), industry participants, and other key stakeholders to lift and incentivise participation in traditionally female dominated vocational education and training (VET) areas including fashion and textiles.

The Government **SUPPORTS IN PRINCIPLE** this recommendation

Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs) have an important role to play in considering opportunities to address gender imbalances across industry in their workforce planning and project activities. For example, HumanAbility, the JSC for the aged and disability services, health, human services, children’s education and care, and sport and recreation sectors, has identified the need to attract more men into the care and support sector through current and planned projects.

Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) provides detailed, evidence-based research and advice on how Australia’s training systems and labour market are gendered, and what opportunities there are to improve equity outcomes including through its Gender Economic Equality Study.

JSA have highlighted how gender workforce issues can have wide reaching impacts on our labour market, productivity, and our ability to meet our skills potential. As an example, recent JSA data revealed that gender-skewed workforces, such as male-dominated trade and female-dominated caring roles, are more vulnerable to skills shortages, contributing to substantial labour challenges for those critical industries.

<p>Recommendation 20</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government develop and implement a pilot program for a new, specialised, industry-led network of apprenticeship support providers to deliver industry-appropriate mentoring and support to apprentices and trainees. This should include tailored assistance for apprentices and trainees from disadvantaged and underrepresented backgrounds, including women, First Nations peoples, people with disability, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.</p> <p>The learnings from this pilot program should be adapted to future design and tender processes for apprenticeship support providers, including the current Australian Apprenticeship Support Network and Australian Apprenticeship Support Services.</p>	<p>The Government SUPPORTS IN PRINCIPLE this recommendation</p> <p>The Government rolled out a new suite of apprenticeship support services from 1 July 2024, delivering strengthened support for apprentices and trainees who are at the highest risk of non-completion, including women apprentices in male-dominated trades, First Nations apprentices, and clean energy apprentices. Additionally, the Strategic Review of the Australian Apprenticeship Incentive System (Strategic Review) examined the role of apprenticeship services and supports to inform longer-term policy settings in line with its Terms of Reference. The findings of the Strategic Review are being used to inform Government options going forward.</p>
<p>Recommendation 21</p> <p>The Committee recommends that as part of the ongoing process of skills reform, the Australian Government explore measures to increase take-home wages for apprentices and trainees. This should include consideration of measures to ensure gender pay equity in apprenticeships and traineeships so far as this is possible.</p>	<p>The Government NOTES this recommendation</p> <p>The Strategic Review of the Australian Apprenticeships Incentive System (Strategic Review) considered how cost of living pressures impact apprenticeship and traineeship take up and completion in the current economic context. The findings of the Strategic Review are being used to inform Government’s future policy options going forward.</p>

Recommendation 22

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments to explore measures to increase consistency across jurisdictions as to the qualifications that are offered as apprenticeships. This should include consideration of expanding apprenticeships to new sectors and industries where this is warranted.

The Government **SUPPORTS IN PRINCIPLE** this recommendation

The Strategic Review of the Australian Apprenticeships Incentive System (Strategic Review) considered how to reduce complexity and improve understanding of apprenticeships across all jurisdictions. The findings of the Strategic Review are being used to inform Government's future policy options.

In addition to the Strategic Review, the Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council (SWMC) is progressing work as part of the SWMC Future Apprenticeships and Traineeships Workplan (Workplan) to maximise shared stewardship of the apprenticeship system. The outcomes of this work will help the Australian Government, in partnership with states and territories, better coordinate the apprenticeship system.

TAFE Centres of Excellence established under the National Skills Agreement are partnering with industry to create new degree-level apprenticeships, especially in areas of high skills need such as net zero, digital, and care sectors. Centres of Excellence are nationally networked and required to share best-practice teaching products and innovations across TAFEs.

Recommendation 23

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments, Jobs and Skills Australia, academic and policy experts, and the vocational education and training (VET) and university sectors to design and implement a national policy framework for micro-credentials, including the following key elements:

- A clear definition of a ‘micro-credential’ to inform policy decisions.
- A clear default principle that micro-credentials cannot be undertaken in lieu of full qualifications and cannot, on their own, ‘stack’ into full qualifications.
- Clear guidance on the circumstances in which micro-credentials can be recognised as credit towards full qualifications—for example where a person is seeking to transition to another industry or return to the workforce.
- Clear guidance on the circumstances in which government funding will be available in relation to micro-credentials, including that:
 - as a default principle, micro-credentials only receive Commonwealth funding where they are portable and targeted to identified areas of skills shortage, and where the student already possesses a full VET or university qualification; and
 - micro-credentials which relate to occupational licensing or other job-specific requirements should typically be funded by the employer or the individual, with exceptions made for people in financial hardship.

The Government NOTES this recommendation

The Government is delivering on reforms recommended by the Australian Universities Accord, including improving credit recognition between VET and higher education. The Government is also working to progress changes to the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) and providing better guidance on recognition of prior learning, including recognition of microcredentials. Guidance material is also being developed for inclusion in the AQF. This will strengthen recognition of microcredentials for credit or articulation towards qualifications.

Recommendation 24

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government expedite the development and implementation of the vocational education and training (VET) Workforce Blueprint, and ensure the Blueprint considers measures to:

- lift pay and conditions for VET educators, including measures to reduce short term and casual contracts and make the sector attractive to trainers of all genders and backgrounds. This should include consideration of ringfenced funding for Technical and Further Education (TAFE) to underpin more competitive pay and conditions
- enable various entry pathways to the teaching workforce, including pathways which encourage entrants with considerable experience in industry and with advanced qualifications. This should include exploring measures to allow people who do not hold a specialised VET teaching qualification such as the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE) enter the teaching workforce
- reduce cost and red tape associated with completing the TAE. This should include consideration of fully subsidising the TAE and of expanding fast-track pathways such as the 'Pay to Learn' program
- ensure educators can provide a supportive learning environment for students. This should include consideration of including units on culturally competent and trauma-informed pedagogy in qualifications for VET educators, and ensure that reliable, accurate data on the teaching workforce is gathered to enable continuous improvement
- enhance the capacity and expertise of the VET workforce to apply an intersectional lens and analysis across VET policies, programs, and initiatives, with reference to barriers facing women.

The Government **SUPPORTS IN PRINCIPLE** this recommendation

The VET Workforce Blueprint, published in October 2024, has the key objectives of growing, retaining and developing, and understanding the VET workforce and was informed by Jobs and Skills Australia's VET Workforce Study. Developed collaboratively with states and territories, the Blueprint identifies 8 opportunities and 14 actions to grow and support a high-quality and sustainable VET workforce.

The Government is implementing a suite of nationally led actions to:

- drive better data and improve our understanding of the VET workforce
- build the First Nations VET workforce
- grow and support the VET workforce through industry specific projects including for the critical sectors of electrical and construction.

Under the NSA, the government is investing \$70.0m in matched funding for local measures to support attraction, retention and development of the VET workforce. This includes measures that provide supported pathways to undertake the TAE where jurisdictions have identified this as a priority.

Fee-Free TAFE provides further options for individuals to undertake the TAE at low or no cost.

The Government has also supported the development of resources to strengthen the capability of educators, registered training organisations (RTOs) and training product developers to support student mental health and students with disability in VET. These resources will help providers meet requirements

under the *2025 Standards for Registered Training Organisations* (the 2025 Standards), which include a greater focus on learner support.

The 2025 Standards Credential Policy sets out the credential requirements for those delivering training and assessment in the VET sector; ensuring training and assessment is only delivered by appropriately credentialed people, with current skills and knowledge in training and assessment.

The 2025 Standards also enable RTOs to engage industry experts to support training and assessment and provide practical insight into real workplace settings, recognising this can add value, variety and interest into the training program. Importantly however, the 2025 Standards impose parameters around the use of industry experts to maintain the quality and integrity of training, including that industry experts are only authorised to work under the direction of a person who meets the requirements of the Credential Policy.

<p>Recommendation 25</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government ensure that the ongoing process of skills reform include measures to encourage and support partnerships between technical and further education (TAFE) institutes and high-performing not-for-profit and industry-led providers.</p>	<p>The Government NOTES this recommendation</p> <p>States and territories are responsible for the management of the vocational education and training system in their jurisdictions, including partnership arrangements between their TAFEs and other registered training organisations.</p>
<p>Recommendation 26</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments to explore options to separate vocational education and training (VET) into ‘education’ and ‘training’, including funding and governance arrangements to support high-performing independent providers to deliver shorter and industry-specific courses and to prioritise the delivery of longer courses and qualifications through technical and further education (TAFE) institutes.</p>	<p>The Government NOTES this recommendation</p> <p>Implementation of qualification reforms will inform future consideration by Skills Ministers about VET system settings.</p>

Recommendation 27

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments and with the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) to rationalise and improve regulation in the vocational education and training (VET) sector, including by better targeting regulatory and compliance action to deliberately or persistently noncompliant providers. This should include the following key measures:

- The removal of duplicative administrative and reporting requirements.
- Giving ASQA greater flexibility in terms of how it prioritises, considers, and makes decisions in relation to applications for regulation.
- Strengthening registration requirements to prevent providers from changing the scope of their registration whether they have been operating for less than 2 years.
- Providing that a provider's registration automatically lapses when that provider has not delivered training or assessment for a period of 12 months.

Resourcing and supporting ASQA to focus its regulatory approach on lifting the quality of training in the sector, enhancing VET student outcomes, and building and maintaining a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

The Government **SUPPORTS** this recommendation

The *2025 Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)* commenced on 1 July 2025. They aim to strengthen the focus on quality outcomes for learners and employers, provide greater clarity, and allow for more flexibility and innovation in training delivery.

Amendments to the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011* have been made to address integrity risks to the VET sector.

In 2023 the Government invested \$37.8 million to establish an integrity unit within ASQA, upgrade ASQA's digital and data systems and create a tip-off line to address threats to integrity.

ASQA is continuing to work with dual sector providers and Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) to minimise duplicative administrative and reporting requirements.

The Government is investing \$4.7 million in 2025-26 for ASQA to undertake a surge in enforcement activity to immediately respond to large-scale fraudulent issuance of VET qualifications. This is bolstering ASQA's capacity to take further action to mitigate public safety risks, safeguard the integrity of VET qualifications, and protect the reputation of Australia's VET sector.

In response to the VET Workforce Blueprint, the Australian Government is undertaking work to map and analyse compliance and administrative activity across the VET sector to better understand this activity and to identify opportunities to alleviate this activity for the VET workforce, where appropriate.

<p>Recommendation 28</p> <p>The Committee recommends that as part of the ongoing process of skills reform, the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments and with the vocational education and training (VET) sector to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore aligning fees and subsidy amounts for VET qualifications to the greatest extent possible • review the VET Student Loans (VSL) scheme and investigate its relationship with Fee-Free TAFE. 	<p>The Government NOTES this recommendation</p> <p>States and territories are responsible for the setting of the fees and subsidies in their jurisdictions. The Government continues to monitor the VET Student Loans Program and how it interacts with Free TAFE.</p>
<p>Recommendation 29</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments to ensure that the lived experiences of individuals involved with or impacted by the vocational education and training (VET) sector are prioritised in advisory and governance mechanisms.</p>	<p>The Government NOTES this recommendation</p> <p>It is important that decisions around the VET sector include the needs of students. The 5-year National Skills Agreement (NSA) between the Australian, state and territory governments, commenced on 1 January 2024, and sets out desired system outcomes, including in relation to student needs.</p> <p>The Government has established advisory boards with members with lived experience. For example, the Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) Ministerial Advisory Board, established in March 2024, has specific members with lived experience of disadvantage within VET or higher education across First Nations, people with disabilities and gender equality. The Board is a critical part of JSA’s governance arrangements and provides advice to the JSA Commissioner and the Minister for Skills and Training.</p>

Recommendation 30

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments to:

- continue to upgrade and modernise facilities on technical and further education (TAFE) institute campuses, including to ensure that physical and digital spaces are accessible for students with disability
- improve key support services on TAFE campuses, and ensure that students have access to counselling, career advice, legal services, health services, and disability support
- establish robust mechanisms for student and staff representation.

The Government **SUPPORTS** this recommendation

The Government is committed to upgrading and modernising TAFE campuses and improving support services. The Government is providing \$50 million to states and territories through the TAFE Technology Fund to support TAFEs to upgrade and expand their facilities, including laboratories, workshops and IT services.

In addition, the \$35 million Clean Energy Capital Investment Fund is expanding and upgrading training capacity across a broader set of clean energy skills and training areas.

The Government has also committed through the National Skills Agreement – Improved Completions initiative \$250 million, to be matched by states and territories, to trial, evaluate and scale innovative and best practice initiatives to help students complete their studies.

Recommendation 31

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments and the sector to increase engagement by technical and further education (TAFE) institutes with students early in their training pathway, to ensure students fully understand the demands of the qualification and can make informed decisions about their training and career pathway. This should involve the development of tools to assess students' aptitude for the units and qualifications they are looking to pursue and supporting tailored advice.

The Government **SUPPORTS IN PRINCIPLE** this recommendation

Since 1 July 2024, a pre-commencement assessment of apprentices and employers is undertaken by Apprentice Connect Australia Providers. This assessment is designed to assess the apprentice and employer's readiness for the apprenticeship and identifying the support required to improve the likelihood of successful completion.

Under the 2025 Standards for registered training organisations (RTOs), RTOs are required to provide accurate and accessible information to enable students to make informed decisions about whether the RTO and training product is right for them. Where a prospective student does not have the required skills and competencies needed to successfully participate in a training product, RTOs are expected to advise the person on the suitability of the training product for them.

Recommendation 32

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government ensure that the skills reform agenda includes specific measures to boost access to vocational education and training (VET) for people in regional, rural, and remote areas, informed by local skills need.

The Government **SUPPORTS** this recommendation

The National Skills Agreement is delivering significant investment in the national VET system to provide high quality, responsive and accessible education and training. Under the Agreement, governments are working towards shared national priorities while also retaining flexibility to address local skills and training needs.

JSA's regional roadmap provides detailed, place-based insights into local workforce barriers and training needs, helping the Government tailor VET access measures for regional, rural and remote communities.

Free TAFE is also supporting students in regional, rural and remote areas, with over 248,000 enrolments (over 34%) in regional and remote areas over the period 1 January 2023 to 30 September 2025.

A Remote Training Hubs Network to First Nations people has also been established (\$30 million over 5 years) to help Central Australian First Nations people access on-country VET.

On 2 August 2025, the Prime Minister announced \$31 million for Mobile TAFE. Mobile training units will enable VET providers to take skills on the road and train the next generation of workers in outer regional and remote areas. The government is working with states and territories to implement Mobile TAFE, who will partner with First Nations organisations to identify projects that will meet local skills needs.

Recommendation 33

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government implement the recommendations of the Australian Universities Accord Final Report, and work with State and Territory Governments and other key stakeholders to define a roadmap to a genuinely integrated tertiary education system. This roadmap should include the following key elements:

- Integrated funding arrangements which support lifelong learning.
- Clearly defined guidelines for the qualifications that can be offered by vocational education and training (VET) providers and by universities.
- Clearly defined guidelines and targeted funding for dual qualifications which align with current and emerging skills needs, including advanced apprenticeships.
- Clear pathways between VET and university courses and qualifications, with defined entry points and processes for credit transfer.
- An adaptive, user-friendly framework for the recognition of prior learning.
- Service-level agreements between the regulators responsible for the VET and university sectors to reduce duplication and streamline process.

The development of the roadmap should be led by a coordinating council, with representatives from Commonwealth and State Government, and from both the VET and university sectors.

The Government **SUPPORTS IN PRINCIPLE** this recommendation

The Australian Government is laying the foundations for a more connected and responsive tertiary education system that leverages the strengths of the VET and higher education sectors. In response to the Universities Accord the Government is bringing the two sectors to work more closely together to improve education pathways for students including through better credit recognition and ensuring that they gain the skills needed by industry and the economy in the future, particularly in areas of national priority.

A Tertiary Roadmap is being developed to identify the next steps to make it easier for students to move between the VET and higher education sectors. It will set up the system to support students to gain qualifications matched to Australia's future skills needs.

The development of a Tertiary Roadmap will be led by the Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC) in close collaboration with Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations and the Department of Education.

A Tertiary System Advisory Council is being established to support ATEC drive this work. It will be chaired by the JSA Commissioner, Professor Barney Glover AO, with other members to include representatives from Commonwealth, states and territories, industry, unions, and the VET and higher education sectors.

	<p>Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) and Tertiary Education Quality Standards Authority (TEQSA) published a Dual Sector Regulatory Strategy in September 2025, which identifies opportunities to streamline regulation and reduce administrative burden while maintaining quality assurance for providers registered in both sectors.</p>
<p>Recommendation 34</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government, through the Jobs and Skills Councils, work with State and Territory Governments, peak bodies, experts, employers, employment service providers, and other key stakeholders to develop sector-level guidance on the skills requirements of individual roles. This guidance should support better-targeted recruitment focused on skills requirements over qualifications</p>	<p>The Government NOTES this recommendation</p> <p>Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs) consider occupational skills requirements, as part of their workforce planning function, to support training product development and qualification design. The development of sector-level guidance on skills requirements of individual roles is in line with these expectations, subject to JSCs’ priorities and other activities.</p>

APPENDIX A: SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS and RESPONSES

Recommendation	Response
<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p>The Committee recommends the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments and key stakeholders such as the National Centre for Vocational Education Research to improve data collection and reporting mechanisms in the vocational education and training sector. This should include a focus on the diversity of pathways within the sector and on better understanding the complex barriers faced by students.</p>	<p>Supports</p>
<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government enhance the functions of the National Careers Institute (NCI) to ensure the NCI is able to operate as a single, trusted source of information on education, training, and careers. The primary focus of the NCI should be supporting key influencers such as teachers, employment service providers, and career educators. This should include but should not be limited to the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overhaul the Your Career website and replace it with a new online portal which provides accurate, relevant, and current information on courses, qualifications, and career pathways. This should include measures to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ enable the NCI to offer additional information on individual training providers and courses; ○ ensure that information provided to users is based on the user’s needs and aspirations and does not indicate a ‘default’ preference for courses or qualifications in a specific tertiary sector; and ○ ensure that users can easily navigate online resources. • In collaboration with Jobs and Skills Australia, the National Centre for Vocational Education Research, and the Jobs and Skills Councils, identifying and addressing future skills needs and actively promoting careers which respond to those needs. • Ensuring that career educators in schools, Technical and Further Education (TAFE), and employment service providers are aware of the NCI and can use it as a resource in performing their functions. • Identifying and addressing duplication in sources of information on careers and vocational education and training at the national, state, and local levels. • Explore creating a grants funding program to support and enable the expansion of proven, evidence-based local career education programs. 	<p>Notes</p>
<p>Recommendation 3</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government, via the National Careers Institute, work with State and Territory Governments to boost the capacity of vocational education and training alumni programs, including to develop work plans to underpin proactive outreach to schools, business associations, and employment bodies.</p>	<p>Supports in principle</p>
<p>Recommendation 4</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments, the Jobs and Skills Councils, and other key stakeholders to design and deliver national campaigns to promote vocational education and training (VET) pathways and the careers they serve. Campaigns should be promoted at the national, state, and local levels, and should include material that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is diffused through a variety of media sources, including social media, government websites, and television. • Is accessible to all audiences. • Is adapted—insofar as possible—to local areas and labour markets, with a view to highlighting the value of VET to local communities. • Targets different entry pathways to VET, including post-secondary pathways and pathways for adult learners. • Showcases the benefits of the apprenticeship and traineeship pathways. 	<p>Supports in principle</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets diverse cohorts, with a focus on improving perceptions for women, First Nations peoples, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. • Showcases positive experiences with VET and examples of success among VET graduates. • Showcases a variety of career opportunities enabled by the VET sector, with a focus on in-demand industries and potential areas of skills shortage. <p>Campaigns should be underpinned by robust monitoring and evaluation processes to ensure their impact can be measured and to inform and refine future marketing initiatives.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 5</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government, via the National Careers Institute, work with State and Territory Governments to support and incentivise schools to promote vocational education and training (VET) to students and parents, including promoting VET and university as equally legitimate and valuable post-secondary pathways. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively championing VET in promotional material and information relating to education and training. • Developing clear, accessible, nationally consistent information resources for use by students, parents, teachers, and other influencers. • Developing best-practice guidelines for schools to promote VET pathways, informed by consultation with education experts. • Establishing and raising the profile of student advisory groups and steering committees, including by ensuring that there is a mechanism to capture student views in the development of state and national education policy. 	<p>Notes</p>
<p>Recommendation 6</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments to examine the impact of the Australian Tertiary Admissions Ranking (ATAR) framework on the quality and uptake of vocational education and training (VET) pathways in secondary schools, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which the ATAR and university entrance are used to determine resourcing for schools, with a view to introducing new metrics which value both VET and university pathways. • How VET and non-VET subjects contribute to ATAR scores, with a view to removing disincentives in the ATAR framework to students pursuing VET pathways during secondary school and promoting national consistency in how VET subjects are treated within that framework. 	<p>Notes</p>
<p>Recommendation 7</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments to champion examples of education and career success which are not linked to the Australian Tertiary Admissions Ranking or to a university pathway.</p>	<p>Supports</p>
<p>Recommendation 8</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government review entry pathways into vocational education and training (VET) and university, with a view to developing a measure of success which can be used to support entry into both sectors. This should include the examination of learner profiles as a potential entry mechanism.</p>	<p>Notes</p>
<p>Recommendation 9</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments to develop and implement a national strategy for career education in schools, including the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career education starting in primary school and continuing to the end of secondary school. Career education should vary by year level, and there should be a minimum number of contact hours for each student. • Australian secondary schools have at least one accredited career practitioner. • Improved professional development for career educators and teachers, including courses which build capacity to work with students from diverse cohorts. • Nationally consistent and up-to-date career information and resources, including on VET and university study options. 	<p>Notes</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A career education framework at the school level, including plans to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ appoint a school career leader with the function of coordinating careers education—including to ensure that all teachers are equipped to provide career advice if needed; and ○ engage with students and parents on career planning, including to inform parents about potential VET and university pathways; and • Measures to build closer connections with and increase students’ exposure to VET-related industries. <p>The National Career Institute, Jobs and Skills Australia, and the Jobs and Skills Councils should be actively involved in the development and implementation of the strategy. The strategy should be developed in close consultation with professional bodies such as the Career Industry Council of Australia, academic, policy, and education experts, teachers and students, sector regulators, and other key stakeholders.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 10</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments to enhance the quality and consistency of vocational education and training delivered to secondary school students (VETDSSS). This should include the following key measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish cooperative arrangements between secondary schools, technical and further education (TAFE) institutes, and industry to underpin the design and delivery of VETDSSS. Key priorities for these partnerships should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ overcoming barriers to the delivery of VETDSSS through TAFEs; ○ better integrating VET courses with the broader school curriculum, underpinned by an understanding that VETDSSS should not, in principle, be different to ‘mainstream’ VET; ○ encouraging and enabling industry to offer meaningful work experience to VETDSSS students, where appropriate; and ○ ensuring that VETDSSS courses are responsive to industry needs. • Provide targeted investment for schools to deliver VETDSSS, with funding conditional on schools delivering VETDSSS in partnership with TAFEs. • Ensure that all VETDSSS courses can lead to or be counted towards a nationally recognised qualification. 	<p>Supports in Principle</p>
<p>Recommendation 11</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments, education experts and the vocational education and training (VET) and university sectors to implement the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional initial teacher education (ITE) programs with a VET speciality. • Additional ITE programs which focus on enabling industry experts to become qualified VET delivered to secondary school students (VETDSSS) educators, including ‘fast track’ programs where appropriate. • Adding units on VET into all ITE courses, to ensure all teachers are able to provide reliable, accurate information on VET to their students. 	<p>Supports in Principle</p>
<p>Recommendation 12</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments to ensure that all Australian schools are funded to 100 per cent of the Schooling Resourcing Standard.</p>	<p>Supports</p>
<p>Recommendation 13</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments, education experts, and other stakeholders to streamline the process of developing and accrediting vocational education and training qualifications. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting a pathway for technical and further education (TAFE) institutes to self-accredit courses and qualifications, supported by robust safeguards. • Allowing minor amendments to training packages to take place at the Jobs and Skills Council level, subject to industry consultation. 	<p>Supports in Principle</p>

<p>Recommendation 14</p> <p>The Committee recommends that as part of the ongoing process of qualification and skills reform, the Australian Government review existing training packages to simplify the training ecosystem and reduce unused, duplicative, or clearly unnecessary products. This should include consideration of occupational profiles as a means of identifying where full training packages are and are not required, and as a means of enhancing the development of training packages which respond to industry need.</p>	<p>Supports in Principle</p>
<p>Recommendation 15</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government ensure the ongoing process of qualification and skills reform support a collaborative approach to the development of qualifications and units of competency, involving industry, employers, workers, and unions.</p>	<p>Supports</p>
<p>Recommendation 16</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) work with Jobs and Skills Australia, the Jobs and Skills Councils and other key stakeholders to develop and implement robust assessment guidelines for use in the vocational education and training sector.</p>	<p>Notes</p>
<p>Recommendation 17</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments, education experts and other key stakeholders to explore introducing proficiency-based assessment into the vocational education and training sector.</p>	<p>Notes</p>
<p>Recommendation 18</p> <p>The Committee recommends the Australian Government expressly recognise and address systemic barriers that hinder participation by women and by gender diverse people in vocational education and training (VET), with a specific focus on lifting women’s participation in male-dominated industries. This should include but not be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investing in strategies delivered through the VET sector that support women in acquiring skills and entering male-dominated industries. • Addressing workplace discrimination and gender-based violence and ensuring equitable employment conditions. • Introducing additional apprenticeship pathways which specifically target women and gender-diverse people. • Implementing promotional and educational campaigns which challenge gender stereotypes and negative attitudes that perpetuate barriers for both women and men in non-traditional VET pathways. 	<p>Supports</p>
<p>Recommendation 19</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments, Jobs and Skills Australia, industry participants, and other key stakeholders to lift and incentivise participation in traditionally female-dominated vocational education and training (VET) areas including fashion and textiles.</p>	<p>Supports in Principle</p>
<p>Recommendation 20</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government develop and implement a pilot program for a new, specialised, industry-led network of apprenticeship support providers to deliver industry-appropriate mentoring and support to apprentices and trainees. This should include tailored assistance for apprentices and trainees from disadvantaged and underrepresented backgrounds, including women, First Nations peoples, people with disability, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.</p> <p>The learnings from this pilot program should be adapted to future design and tender processes for apprenticeship support providers, including the current Australian Apprenticeship Support Network and Australian Apprenticeship Support Services.</p>	<p>Supports in Principle</p>
<p>Recommendation 21</p> <p>The Committee recommends that as part of the ongoing process of skills reform, the Australian Government explore measures to increase take-home wages for apprentices and trainees. This should include consideration of measures to ensure gender pay equity in apprenticeships and traineeships so far as this is possible.</p>	<p>Notes</p>

<p>Recommendation 22</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments to explore measures to increase consistency across jurisdictions as to the qualifications that are offered as apprenticeships. This should include consideration of expanding apprenticeships to new sectors and industries where this is warranted.</p>	<p>Supports in Principle</p>
<p>Recommendation 23</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments, Jobs and Skills Australia, academic and policy experts, and the vocational education and training (VET) and university sectors to design and implement a national policy framework for micro-credentials, including the following key elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear definition of a ‘micro-credential’ to inform policy decisions. • A clear default principle that micro-credentials cannot be undertaken in lieu of full qualifications and cannot, on their own, ‘stack’ into full qualifications. • Clear guidance on the circumstances in which micro-credentials can be recognised as credit towards full qualifications—for example where a person is seeking to transition to another industry or return to the workforce. • Clear guidance on the circumstances in which government funding will be available in relation to micro-credentials, including that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ as a default principle, micro-credentials only receive Commonwealth funding where they are portable and targeted to identified areas of skills shortage, and where the student already possesses a full VET or university qualification; and ○ micro-credentials which relate to occupational licensing or other job-specific requirements should typically be funded by the employer or the individual, with exceptions made for people in financial hardship. 	<p>Notes</p>
<p>Recommendation 24</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government expedite the development and implementation of the vocational education and training (VET) Workforce Blueprint, and ensure the Blueprint considers measures to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lift pay and conditions for VET educators, including measures to reduce short-term and casual contracts and make the sector attractive to trainers of all genders and backgrounds. This should include consideration of ring-fenced funding for Technical and Further Education (TAFE) to underpin more competitive pay and conditions. • Enable various entry pathways to the teaching workforce, including pathways which encourage entrants with significant experience in industry and with advanced qualifications. This should include exploring measures to allow people who do not hold a specialised VET teaching qualification such as the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE) enter the teaching workforce. • Reduce cost and red tape associated with completing the TAE. This should include consideration of fully subsidising the TAE and of expanding fast-track pathways such as the ‘Pay to Learn’ program. • Ensure educators are able to provide a supportive learning environment for students. This should include consideration of including units on culturally competent and trauma-informed pedagogy in qualifications for VET educators; and ensure that reliable, accurate data on the teaching workforce is gathered to enable continuous improvement. • Enhance the capacity and expertise of the VET workforce to apply an intersectional lens and analysis across VET policies, programs, and initiatives, with particular reference to barriers facing women. 	<p>Supports in Principle</p>
<p>Recommendation 25</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government ensure that the ongoing process of skills reform include measures to encourage and support partnerships between technical and further education (TAFE) institutes and high-performing not-for-profit and industry-led providers.</p>	<p>Notes</p>

<p>Recommendation 26</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments to explore options to separate vocational education and training (VET) into ‘education’ and ‘training’, including funding and governance arrangements to support high-performing independent providers to deliver shorter and industry-specific courses and to prioritise the delivery of longer courses and qualifications through technical and further education (TAFE) institutes.</p>	<p>Notes</p>
<p>Recommendation 27</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments and with the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) to rationalise and improve regulation in the vocational education and training (VET) sector, including by better targeting regulatory and compliance action to deliberately or persistently noncompliant providers. This should include the following key measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The removal of duplicative administrative and reporting requirements. • Giving ASQA greater flexibility in terms of how it prioritises, considers, and makes decisions in relation to applications for regulation. • Strengthening registration requirements to prevent providers from changing the scope of their registration whether they have been operating for less than two years. • Providing that a provider’s registration automatically lapses when that provider has not delivered training or assessment for a period of 12 months. • Resourcing and supporting ASQA to focus its regulatory approach on lifting the quality of training in the sector, enhancing VET student outcomes, and building and maintaining a culture of continuous learning and improvement. 	<p>Supports</p>
<p>Recommendation 28</p> <p>The Committee recommends that as part of the ongoing process of skills reform, the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments and with the vocational education and training (VET) sector to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore aligning fees and subsidy amounts for VET qualifications insofar as this is possible. • Review the VET Student Loans (VSL) scheme and investigate its relationship with Fee-Free TAFE. 	<p>Notes</p>
<p>Recommendation 29</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments to ensure that the lived experiences of individuals involved with or impacted by the vocational education and training (VET) sector are prioritised in advisory and governance mechanisms.</p>	<p>Notes</p>
<p>Recommendation 30</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to upgrade and modernise facilities on technical and further education (TAFE) institute campuses, including to ensure that physical and digital spaces are accessible for students with disability. • Improve key support services on TAFE campuses, and ensure that students have access to counselling, career advice, legal services, health services, and disability support. • Establish robust mechanisms for student and staff representation. 	<p>Supports</p>
<p>Recommendation 31</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with State and Territory Governments and the sector to increase engagement by technical and further education (TAFE) institutes with students early in their training pathway, to ensure students fully understand the demands of the qualification and can make informed decisions about their training and career pathway. This should involve the development of tools to assess students’ aptitude for the units and qualifications they are looking to pursue and supporting tailored advice.</p>	<p>Supports in Principle</p>

<p>Recommendation 32</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government ensure that the skills reform agenda includes specific measures to boost access to vocational education and training for people in regional, rural, and remote areas, informed by local skills need.</p>	<p>Supports</p>
<p>Recommendation 33</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government implement the recommendations of the Australian Universities Accord Final Report, and work with State and Territory Governments and other key stakeholders to define a roadmap to a genuinely integrated tertiary education system. This roadmap should include the following key elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated funding arrangements which support lifelong learning. • Clearly defined guidelines for the qualifications that can be offered by vocational education and training (VET) providers and by universities. • Clearly defined guidelines and targeted funding for dual qualifications which align with current and emerging skills needs, including advanced apprenticeships. • Clear pathways between VET and university courses and qualifications, with defined entry points and processes for credit transfer. • An adaptive, user-friendly framework for the recognition of prior learning. • Service-level agreements between the regulators responsible for the VET and university sectors to reduce duplication and streamline process. <p>The development of the roadmap should be led by a coordinating council, with representatives from Commonwealth and State Government, and from both the VET and university sectors.</p>	<p>Supports in Principle</p>
<p>Recommendation 34</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government, through the Jobs and Skills Councils, work with State and Territory Governments, peak bodies, experts, employers, employment service providers, and other key stakeholders to develop sector-level guidance on the skills requirements of individual roles. This guidance should support better-targeted recruitment focused on skills requirements over qualifications.</p>	<p>Notes</p>