

VET Workforce Blueprint Steering Group

Terms of Reference

Background

In 2021 the vocational education and training (VET) workforce was responsible for skilling and upskilling over 4.3 million Australians, demonstrating the vital role it plays in educating and skilling Australia's workforce. Like many industries across Australia, supply and retention issues are a significant concern facing the VET workforce, with registered training organisations under increasing pressure to attract and retain a skilled workforce, whilst building and supporting the capability of their existing workforce.

In recognition of these issues, following the September 2022 Jobs and Skills Summit, the Australian Government announced the development of a comprehensive VET Workforce Blueprint (the Blueprint), undertaken in collaboration with states and territories. At the Skills Ministers meeting on 7 October 2022, Skills Ministers agreed to proceed with the development of the Blueprint.

Objectives of the VET Workforce Blueprint

The Blueprint will examine and identify effective strategies for:

- **Growing and diversifying the workforce** – projecting workforce supply and demand, including regional distribution, the shortage of specialist roles and encouraging workforce diversity.
- **Attraction** – how to attract a high-quality VET workforce, including industry-experienced professionals, dual professionals and adult educators, as well as examining the barriers in place for entry to the VET workforce, and avenues to promote becoming a VET practitioner.
- **Retention** – identifying effective retention strategies, including examining the barriers to retention.
- **Capability and career development** – mapping career pathways and strategies to support career development and career progression, including support for building capability for a high-quality VET workforce, noting the diverse range of registered training organisations in the sector as well as the dynamic nature of employment in the VET workforce and the range of potential entry and exit points.
- **Succession planning** – support for the sector in the context of an ageing workforce, including methods to provide, and improve, continued opportunities for experienced industry professionals to enter and move between the VET workforce as a second or co-career, and potential changes in labour market needs.

The Blueprint will identify immediate, medium, and long-term strategies to address issues facing the VET workforce. Early actions will be identified to provide immediate relief while more work on the comprehensive Blueprint is being undertaken to address the longer-term sustainability of the VET workforce.

Establishment of the VET Workforce Steering Group

To guide the development of the Blueprint, it was agreed by Skills Ministers that a steering group would be established. The primary focus of the VET Workforce Blueprint Steering Group (the Steering Group) is to provide strategic guidance, support, and high-level oversight to inform the development of the Blueprint, and it is not a decision-making body. The Steering Group will:

- consider and recommend immediate actions as well as longer term solutions to help alleviate pressures on the VET workforce in line with the scope of the Blueprint
- identify issues and risks that may have implications for the Blueprint's success and how the impact of these could be reduced
- draw upon and consider the learnings and analysis from commissioned work undertaken to support discussions around the development of the Blueprint
- take into account the outcomes and discussions from consultations and roundtables to inform the Blueprint
- seek input from membership base to determine appropriate solutions to the issues facing the VET workforce
- consider appropriate links with other education workforce strategies being developed
- consider the interaction between the relevant provisions of the Standards for RTOs and the VET workforce
- consider linkages with the Foundation Skills Framework
- consider linkages with industry and the importance of industry currency
- reflect the varying workforce needs of the diverse range of RTO types in the sector, including TAFEs, private and independent RTOs, dual sector institutions, enterprise RTOs, RTOs with a volunteer workforce, community-based RTOs, Aboriginal Community Controlled RTOs, and RTOs delivering training to senior secondary students, as well as consideration of the varied breadth and types of qualifications offered between RTO types
- advise on additional opportunities that may increase the Blueprint's exposure and impact
- review the draft Blueprint and advise on any changes that may be needed prior to release of the consultation draft
- promote the finalised Blueprint within each representative's respective organisation, the wider VET sector and across industry.

The Steering Group will have the opportunity to draw on relevant expertise as needed.

Membership

The Steering Group includes representation from the Commonwealth, states and territories, VET sector stakeholders, unions representing the VET workforce, and employer and union peak bodies.

Governance

The Steering Group will meet approximately every two months during 2023. Meetings will be held online. Participation in the Steering Group is voluntary and members will not be remunerated. Members and the organisations they represent will be required to meet their own costs.

Members who are unable to attend meetings may nominate a suitable proxy attendee.

The Australian Government will chair the Steering Group and provide secretariat and administrative support.

All members of the Steering Group and any proxy attendees will be required to sign a Deed of Confidentiality.