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Industry Training Advisory Committee Meetings

ITACs play a key role in providing industry-led advice about vocational education, training and skills related matters to the NSW Government. The ITACs meet twice per year to discuss skills needs, industry challenges and workforce development opportunities in their relevant sectors.

The Food, Beverage and Pharmaceutical Processing ITAC met this month. The challenges related to ongoing supply chain disruptions caused by COVID-19 were discussed. Other key topics of discussion focussed on initiatives to attract workers to regional areas, TAE trainer currency and vaccination status, flexibility in training and the backlog of NSW trainees as result of COVID-19 restrictions.

The Amenity Horticulture, Landscaping, Conservation and Land Management ITAC also met this month and discussed career initiatives, licensing, training delivery issues, difficulties for employers in accessing funding, continuing professional development, the rise in interest in green spaces and an increase in enrolments in conservation and land management qualifications. While COVID-19 restrictions impacted this industry and RTOs in different ways, they have been able to continue to operate during restrictions.

The Animal Care and Management ITAC met at the end of October, where they discussed the impact of COVID-19 on future training activity, the need for greater regulation in the industry, the mental health of those working in animal care and promoting the various sectors through career initiatives. The AFAM ITAB will work with the animal care and management industry in running a career showcase early in the new year.

We look forward to continuing the discussions with industry and being able to identify opportunities where the AFAM ITAB can support industry and government skills initiatives.

We work with MINTRAC to support a meat industry roundtable, which met in October. The Agriculture and Production Horticulture ITAC, which met in September, will next meet in March/April 2022.

'Land to Lunchbox' Program

In preparation for next year's school programs, AFAM is working with Regional Industry Engagement Partnership Officers (RIEP) in South Western Sydney to explore a 'Land to Lunchbox' program. The program will be designed around the school curriculum and give students the opportunity to learn about farms and farm careers and their role in the agribusiness sector.

Building partnerships with industry and schools is important, not only to promote potential careers to school students, but also to improve students' understanding of the processes and interactions that make up the food and fibre supply chain.

If you are working in the agriculture or meat processing industries in South Western Sydney and would like to provide ideas on the program, please contact Jess at jjcleary@skillsimpact.com.au

Register for Western NSW Regional Roundtable

The regional roundtables, planned to start this month, are designed to draw insights from participants on the real-world operations of regional workforces. They will enable AFAM to identify and report workforce shortages, support industry access funding opportunities and bring together industry, training providers and schools to discuss regional-led initiatives on training and workforce development.

There is still time to register for the Western NSW Regional Roundtable on Friday 26 November 2021, from 10am - 12pm.

If you are interested in attending, please contact Jess at jcleary@skillsimpact.com.au.

We encourage stakeholders that are from and work alongside the following industries to attend:

- agriculture, horticulture, conservation and land management
- animal care and management
- meat processing (supported by MINTRAC)
- food and beverage processing
- pharmaceutical manufacturing
- racing and breeding
- seafood, aquaculture and wild catch fishing.

Due to uncertainties around travel between regions throughout NSW, any regional roundtables hosted this year will be held virtually. This will be reviewed for 2022, as AFAM's preference is to travel to regions to host these events.

Summer Skills 2021/2022 Update

The [Summer Skills](#) website is now live. The NSW Department of Education has launched the website for students, offering fee-free courses for people aged 16-24, giving them a head start when entering in-demand industries. The website enables visitors to explore the wide range of courses offered across NSW and contact training providers to enrol. Potential learners can search for courses by keywords and filter them by region to find the training and locations which best meet their needs.

[Visit website](#)

COVID-19 Smart and Skilled Provider Webinar

The recording of the last COVID-19 Smart and Skilled Provider Webinar with Minister Lee (held on Friday 17 September 2021) is [available for viewing](#). You can also access the [answers to providers' questions](#) raised at this webinar.

There is a dedicated COVID page on the [Training Services NSW website](#) which is regularly updated. The FAQs on this page are broken down by audience as follows:

- Registered training organisations (RTOs)
- Apprentices and trainees
- Organisations employing apprentices and/or trainees
- Students

Please check the FAQs for RTOs at [Training Services NSW](#) for the latest responses to common provider questions.

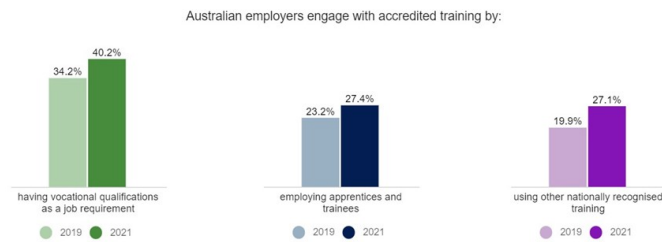
New NCVET Report - Employers' Use and Views of the VET System 2021

The results of the survey of [Employers' Use and Views of the VET System](#) were released at the end of last month. The biennial survey of Australian employers collects information on the various ways employers use the VET system to meet their skill needs. A total of 5,615 employers responded to the survey conducted between February and June 2021.



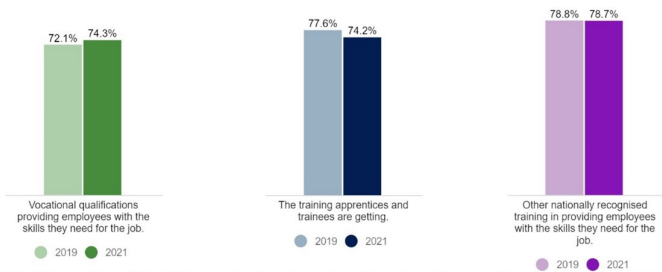
Employers' use of accredited training

56.6% of employers used accredited training through the VET system to meet their skill needs in 2021, up 5.7 percentage points from 2019.



Employers satisfied with accredited training as a way of meeting their skill needs

Australian employers were satisfied with:



Statistically significant differences between 2019 and 2021 were not found for employers satisfied with: vocational qualifications as a job requirement, apprentices and trainees, and other nationally recognised training.

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

44.0% of Australian employers had new training requirements due to COVID-19.

Of these:

83.6% had new training requirements to effectively or safely operate in the COVID environment.

70.8% had new training requirements in health and safety and **68.0%** in infection control skills.

55.5% used informal or ad hoc training.

52.1% chose the form of training due to an immediate need to respond to rapidly changing needs.

Research Project: Understanding the Experiences of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Students in VET

The Department of Education, Skills and Employment, in conjunction with the GO Foundation, has commissioned a research project, Understanding the Experiences of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students in VET, which is being conducted by the Indigenous-owned consultancy, Two Point Co. The project will also be supported by UNSW Sydney Centre for Social Impact. The research is being led by Shiralee Lawson, Senior Consultant and Wonnarua and Kunja woman, and Tiffanie Ireland, Director and Kamilaroi woman.

Evidence shows that VET is a critically important pathway for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, with overwhelmingly greater engagement in comparison to higher education.

The purpose of this research is to understand:

- Current and past VET students' experiences studying VET courses
- The role that culture plays as part of the experience
- The support services offered to Indigenous VET students, and
- The gaps or opportunities for the future development of a scholarship program for Indigenous students.

Providers who have staff or students that may be interested in participating in the research project, are asked to contact Shiralee Lawson on 0400 270 730 or via email at shiralee@twopointco.com.au.

National Training Package Projects

The following projects are underway to review and update national qualifications and skills standards, by the relevant Industry Reference Committees supported by Skills Impact. Follow the links to find out more and to provide input.

Project scoping Underway

- [Respect for Country Job Skills Project](#)
- [Sugar Milling Project](#)

Development underway

- [Small Companion Animal Incident Management Project](#)
- [Trainers of Assistance Dogs Project](#)
- [Ag & Horticulture Core Skills Project](#)
- [Permaculture, Organic Production & Composting Projects](#)
- [Pig & Poultry Farming Project](#)
- [Water Allocation and Entitlement Skills Project](#)

Draft skills standards available for feedback:

- [Australian Native and Bush Food Project](#)
- [Meat Processing, General, Quality and Safety Skills Project](#)

Being considered for endorsement:

- [Animal Reproduction Project](#)
- [Crops, Pastures and Seeds Project](#)
- [Dairy and Milk Harvesting Project](#)
- [Horse Care Project](#)
- [Landscaping Project](#)
- [Pulp and Paper Manufacturing Review Project](#)
- [Parks and Gardens Project](#)
- [Skills for Land Rehabilitation \(Mined Land\) Project](#)

Endorsed and published on the national training register:

- [Meat Rendering Project](#)
- [Meat Slicing Project](#)

For the November update on these projects from Skills Impact, [click here](#).

National AgDay - 19 November 2021

National Agriculture Day, on 19 November, is a day for industry to celebrate the fabulous and fulfilling career opportunities available in agriculture.

This year there are many ways to get involved and Australians everywhere are encouraged to participate by:

- Attending the Careers Expo - [Join here](#)
- Hosting or attending an AgDay event - [Find events here](#)
- Downloading and sharing favourite farm facts on social media #AgDayAU - [Find them here](#)
- Entering the #AgVenture Photo competition. Entries close at 5pm, 19 November - [Find details here](#)



Celebrate the everyday extraordinary efforts of our farmers and all that is good about Australian agriculture. To find out more about the day, visit agday.org.au.

VET Reform Announcements

The Federal Minister for Employment, Workforce, Skills, Small and Family Business, Stuart Robert, [announced](#) the implementation of Industry Clusters for future Skills and Training development on 28 October.

The new Industry Clusters model will be responsible for driving greater industry engagement and leadership in processes to improve VET qualifications and skills standards. They will replace the current model of 67 Industry Reference Committees and six Skills Service Organisations. They are expected to be fully operational by 1 January 2023. Minister Robert has said 'The new Industry Clusters will strengthen employer leadership and engagement, giving industry a broader, more strategic role ensuring Australia's VET system addresses skills and workforce challenges across the economy, including labour demands, as we reopen strongly.'

Nine Industry Clusters are proposed, including an Agribusiness and Food Production Industry Cluster. This cluster comprises industries involved in agriculture and related sectors, including primary production, forestry, food and beverage manufacturing and working with animals, as well as land, water and environmental management.

For more information on the structure and groupings of industry clusters, visit the [Skills Reform website](#).

AVA Veterinary Wellness Stakeholder Research Report

The Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) recently released a final report bringing together results from whole of profession stakeholder research into the wellness of the veterinary profession. The report provides an in-depth analysis of the current state of mental health in the veterinary profession and the workplace impacts on mental health.

The findings of the report confirm the concerns which have previously been reported by the Animal Care and Management Industry Training Advisory Committee and the national Industry Reference Committee around the causes of poor mental health in workers: high workload, long hours, compassion fatigue, poor remuneration and staff shortages.

For more information and to read the full report and/or watch the webinar presenting the report visit the [AVA website](#).



NSW Grants, Opportunities & Scholarships

Training Services NSW is offering the following grants, opportunities and scholarships to employers and vocational learners. Follow the links to find out about more.

Aboriginal Business Advisory Initiative: support for existing Aboriginal owned and operated businesses to grow and diversify their business. [More details](#)

Barrangirra: to provide end to end support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners through culturally appropriate mentoring to ensure successful retention and completion of training and improved post-training employment outcomes. [More details](#)

Resources to Assist in Supervising Your Apprentice or Trainee: a series of videos and resources are available. [More details](#)

Free Training for Veterans: to broaden their career opportunities and help transition to civilian life after service, veterans and their partners will have access to free training. [More details](#)

Skills Brokers: sixteen skills brokers are located across NSW to help employers locate new staff who are trained and ready to fill roles with specific skill requirements; find ways to upskill existing staff; redeploy existing staff who have been stood down; and respond rapidly to skills needs. [More details](#)

Other support and opportunities:

Skilling for Recovery - JobTrainer: this is the NSW program supported by the Australian Government's JobTrainer Fund. Skilling for Recovery offers fee-free and low-fee training options for school leavers, young people and job seekers. [More details](#)

Free Support to Help Create Mentally Healthy Workplaces: SafeWork NSW has a range of programs, tools and resources available to help on the journey to create mentally healthy workplaces. [More details](#)

COVID-19 Support

Services NSW is working with federal, state and local government and the private sector to bring together all the COVID-19 support and services for businesses on the [Services NSW website](#).

TAFE NSW has developed [a website](#) that collates information and programs to assist small businesses in the recovery period from COVID-19.

The pandemic has brought about new challenges and your mental wellbeing is important. If you are feeling stress, anxious or negatively impacted by COVID-19, there are resources and services available to help on the [NSW government website](#).

Please feel welcome share this newsletter with anyone you think might be interested.

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