# Understanding the Vocational Education and Training (VET) System

The Vocational Education and Training (VET) system delivers practical, work-based learning that leads to nationally recognised qualifications. VET connects employers, apprentices, Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), and the government to make sure Australia’s workforce develops the skills each industry needs.

# To understand how it all fits together, it helps to know who does what:

## Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR)

DEWR is the Australian government department that is responsible for the national skills policy and funding for apprenticeships and training.

DEWR supports the vocational education and training sector by offering apprenticeships and traineeships to help address skill demands and drive better outcomes through an agile skills sector aligned with market demands.

They oversee all apprenticeship programs; they fund national initiatives and set up the national frameworks that guide how training is delivered.

## Skills Insight and the Job and Skills Councils

Skills Insight is one of 10 **Jobs and Skills Council (JSC)** which are industry-led, not-for-profit bodies established by the Australian Government to align vocational education and training (VET) with workforce needs.

Each of the 10 JSCs represents a key sector of the economy and is responsible for workforce planning, developing and updating training products, supporting training delivery, and advising on policy.

By collaborating with industry, government, unions, and training providers, JSCs ensure that training programs are relevant, responsive, and help equip Australians with the skills needed for current and future jobs.

## Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)

Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) is the national regulator for the VET system  
ASQA ensures Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) deliver quality, compliant training and with fair assessment that meets industry standards.

ASQA regulates about 90% of all Australian training providers, including:

* RTOs that deliver VET qualifications in Australia or overseas
* Providers training to international students on student visas
* Some English language (ELICOS) providers

ASQA monitors and audits training providers against the 2025 Standards for RTOs.

These standards ensure that RTOs:

* Deliver quality, industry-relevant training and assessment
* Employ qualified trainers and assessors
* Provide accurate information and fair support to their learners
* Maintain compliance with national legislation and data requirements

***ASQA ensures RTOs deliver trusted, nationally recognised training that meets the industry needs.***

## State and Territory Training Authorities (STAs)

Each state and territory has a Training Authority that manages apprenticeship contracts, funding, and employer support.  
These agencies make sure training runs smoothly at the local level and that apprentices, employers, and RTOs all meet their responsibilities.

Role of State Training Authority:

* Manage and register apprenticeship and traineeship contracts
* Oversee funding and subsidies for training providers and employers
* Support employers and apprentices with advice and information
* Monitor quality and compliance in partnership with ASQA
* Work with industry and government to keep training aligned with workforce needs

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| **State / Territory** | **Authority** | **Website** |
| Victoria (VIC) | Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) | <https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au> |
| New South Wales (NSW) | Training Services NSW | <https://www.training.nsw.gov.au> |
| Queensland (QLD) | Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT) | <https://desbt.qld.gov.au/training/apprentices> |
| South Australia (SA) | Skills SA - Department for Industry, Innovation and Science | <https://skills.sa.gov.au> |
| Western Australia (WA) | Apprenticeship Office -Department of Training and Workforce Development | <https://www.dtwd.wa.gov.au/apprenticeshipoffice> |
| Tasmania (TAS) | Skills Tasmania - Department for State Growth | <https://www.skills.tas.gov.au> |
| Australian Capital Territory (ACT) | Skills Canberra - Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate | <https://skills.act.gov.au> |
| Northern Territory (NT) | Department of Tourism, Industry and Trade - Apprenticeships and Traineeships | <https://business.nt.gov.au/training-and-skills/apprenticeships-and-traineeships> |

## Apprenticeship Connect Australia Providers (ACAPs)

Apprenticeship Connect Australia Providers (ACAPs), **previously known as Australian Apprenticeship Support Network (AASN) providers**, act as the main link between employers, apprentices, and the government.

ACAPs support businesses through every stage of the apprenticeship. From sign-up to completion and they also help ensure both the employer and the apprentice have the tools, information, and support they need to succeed.

**The role of ACAPs:**

* Sign up apprentices and register training contracts with the relevant State Training Authority
* Help employers access any government incentives and wage subsidies
* Provide mentoring and in-training support to apprentices who may need extra help
* Offer advice to employers about managing apprenticeships, their obligations, and dispute resolution
* Check in regularly with apprentices and employers to monitor progress and engagement
* Work with RTOs to make sure training plans and workplace learning are on track

## 5.Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)

Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) are approved training providers that deliver nationally recognised qualifications.

RTOs are responsible for developing and managing the Training Plan for each apprentice, delivering structured training, and confirming when the apprentice is competent in each unit of their qualification.

**Role of RTOs:**

* Develop and maintain the Training Plan in consultation with the employer and apprentice
* Deliver and assess the training units linked to the qualification
* Provide access to learning resources and trainers for support and feedback
* Report progress and completions to the relevant State Training Authority
* Issue nationally recognised qualifications once all units have been achieved

To find an RTO – Speak with your local ACAP or go to <https://training.gov.au/training/details/MSF/rto>

**Y*our RTO is your training partner - they handle the formal side of the qualification while you provide the hands-on/practical workplace learning.***

## 6. Employers

Employers are the backbone of the apprenticeship system.  
They provide the working environment, supervision, and support that turns theory into skill.

While RTOs manage the formal training and assessment, it’s in the employment workplace/job site where apprentices truly learn their trade.

**Role of an Employer:**

* Is to provide a safe, supportive, and inclusive workplace where apprentices will develop their skills
* To give apprentices hands-on experience that matches the units in their Training Plan
* Work closely with the RTO to monitor the apprentice’s progress and confirm when competencies are achieved
* Ensure that each apprentice has access to a qualified supervisor/ tradesperson for guidance and mentoring in the workplace
* Allow reasonable time during work hours for completing training and study, or assessment activities
* Support apprentices through challenges - whether it is learning a new task, managing their workload, or balancing study and life.

***Employers don’t just teach the skills, but they shape the next generation of tradespeople who will carry the industry forward***

## 7. Industry Associations

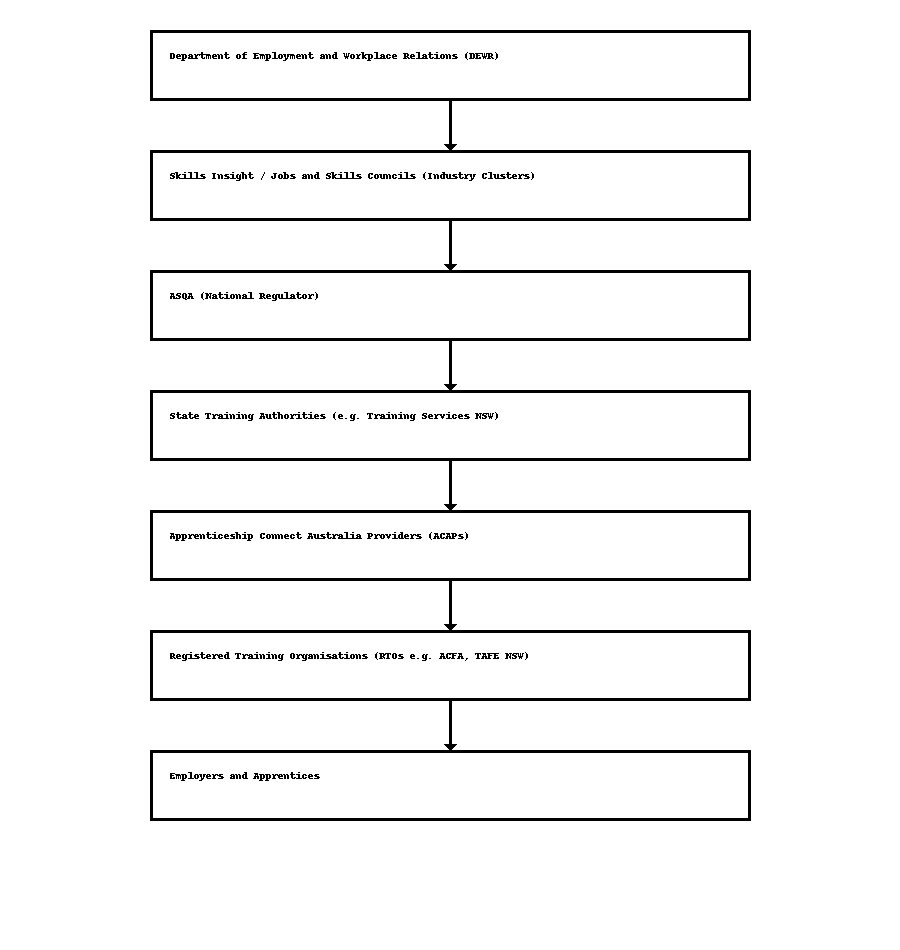
Industry associations play an important role in supporting and promoting the furnishing, cabinet making, glass and glazing, upholstery and related industries. They act as the voice of the sector, representing members in both government and policy discussions, ensuring decisions reflect the real needs of business and industry tradespeople.

**Role of an industry Association:**

* Advise on training design and qualifications so learning will stay relevant to workplace skills and needs
* Advocate for the industry in government, training, and policy decisions
* Provide HR (Human Resources), IR (Industrial Relations), and business support to assist employers meet legal and award obligations
* Offer mentoring and practical guidance for both employers and apprentices
* Deliver relevant workshops, industry updates, and networking opportunities to keep members connected and informed
* Promote best practice in the areas of safety, sustainability, and inclusion within the trade
* Recognise excellence and innovation through awards, events, and industry celebrations
* Collaborate with training providers and relevant government bodies to ensure qualifications and programs reflect workplace standards

To contact your relevant industry association – **Please refer to – Quick Reference Guide – Industry Association Contact List**

## VET System Flowchart



## Common Acronyms

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| **Acronym** | **Meaning** | **What It Refers To** |
| VET | Vocational Education and Training | The National system for skills-based learning and qualifications |
| RTO | Registered Training Organisation | A Government approved training provider |
| ASQA | Australian Skills Quality Authority | The National regulator that ensures training quality and compliance |
| ACAP | Apprenticeship Connect Australian Provider | The organisation that signs up apprentices and manages contracts |
| DEWR | Department of Employment and Workplace Relations | The Federal department responsible for training and funding |
| UoC | Unit of Competency | A component of a qualification describing a specific skill or area of knowledge |
| CT | Credit Transfer | Recognition for units already completed elsewhere |

**8. Understanding Training Packages:**

A training package is a set of nationally endorsed standards and qualifications used across Australia’s Vocational Education and Training (VET) system.  
It describes whatlearners need to know and what they must be able to do to be considered competent in a particular industry or occupation.

Training packages make sure apprentices from all states will learn the same core skills to the same national standard, whether they are training in a small workshop or in a large manufacturer.

**What is included in a Training Package**

Each training package will include the following:

* Qualification Code- for example, *MSF30322 Certificate III in Cabinet Making and Timber Technology.*
* Units of Competency (UoCs) - the skills and knowledge areas that make up the qualification (e.g. operate machinery, assemble furniture, or apply finishing techniques etc.).
* Assessment Requirements - what evidence a learner must provide and/or demonstrate to prove they are competent.
* Skill Sets - these are short groups of units designed for targeted skills or upskilling.
* Companion Volumes / Implementation Guides - these are supporting documents that explain how the training should be delivered and assessed.

***Think of a training package as the blueprint for how skills are taught, assessed, and recognised across the industry.***

A screen shot of a diagram

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