



Initial feedback on the Australian Government Jurisdictional Action Plan of the National Skills Plan

Date: 12 November 2024

Dear Miles,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide some initial feedback on the Commonwealth's Action Plan as part of the national Skills Agreement and National Skills Plan.

Given the timeframe, we have not completed a full review, but we believe the below highlights some of the areas regarding:

- The accuracy of the content
- Any gaps in content or other actions you want to include
- Future state case studies - designed to show what will be different when the actions are implemented for the learner, the employer, the provider
- Any additional narrative that would help articulate the ambition of the plan

We hope this is useful for you.

Data

On Slide 5 under Collaborative & Sustainable System, there is a reference to "enhanced VET data and evidence" - we would suggest that calling this "enhanced jobs and skills data" would better describe the role of JSA in data improvement, and cover some of the more important data gaps we are facing.

The key to VET

On slide 10, "provide access to education and training to Australians from all backgrounds" in our view should be the top priority, and on later slides (such as 11 on delivering outcomes) should be an explicit goal - a key message for industry is that we are working to ensure access to education and training at the right time, in the right places and for the right jobs.

There are a number of references to VET delivery being at the right time, but no references regarding at the right place. This is a concern, especially given the needs of RRR Australia and industry preferences for workplace-based training.

First Nations

The system diagram on slide 10 does not recognise First Nations RTOs as a distinct and critical part of the system (they are specifically identified on Slide 13). This may be because many are funded outside of the skills system. This is important as they may well be critical to the development of a VET Workforce blueprint, especially as it relates to delivery in RRR Australia.

As a general observation, the language around First Nations and Closing the Gap reflects a partnership and co-design approach to resolving First Nations issues and addressing First Nations skills gaps. We suggest that it is more appropriate to look at language that encourages First Nations ideas and experiences to deliver results for the Australian jobs and skills system, as well as addressing Closing the Gap priorities. We should recognise that we have been unable to address and resolve many VET issues over decades, and that part of the reason for this may be our inability to utilise the diversity that comes from First Nations leadership across the whole system.

To help provide context: There are major issues with delivery of training and skills across the whole of RRR Australia - could First Nations RTOs provide part of a broader solution to this by delivering on-country and in-workplace training across RRR Australia as a/the primary provider of training services in some or multiple regions? Could First Nations organisations assist with providing models for inclusive and culturally safe workplaces that could be adopted by non-Indigenous organisations?

We note on Slide 34 the key message: ***Building the Aboriginal Community controlled and First Nations owned training sector will support a more culturally responsive VET system, which delivers better outcomes for First Nations students.*** We'd suggest that it could deliver better outcomes for First Nations communities and better delivery of safe, effective and productive workers more broadly, particularly in RRR Australia.

We also note the Sector Strengthening sections: Should there be mention of how this may contribute to broader VET training delivery and workforce reform?

Training Packages and Products

On slide 24, the heading under Future is "Updated Training Packages." This may be a reference to events after qualifications reform. We are concerned that it gives the impression that current Training Packages have not been updated, whereas most have been substantially updated in the last few years. We suggest the heading should be Reformed Training Packages or Restyled Training Packages.

We are unsure about the accuracy of the wording on slide 26, which may be read to mean that a variety of training products require assurance or accreditation, rather than that those requiring assurance and accreditation go through a process

to ensure they meet nationally consistent standards. It may be beneficial for DEWR to review this wording.

Net Zero (National Priority)

The Paris Agreement recognises the fundamental priority of safeguarding food security and Art 2(1)(b) specifically refers to lowering emissions without threatening food production. We would suggest it is important for our JSC or food bodies to be recognised as key players in this space. Critically, the industries we cover are the major contributors to climate mitigation (including Forestry and ecosystem management) and will continue to be vital in net zero efforts.

First Nations enterprises should also be key bodies in the Net Zero space. On slide 37, there should be explicit recognition of the critical role that First Nations controlled land and water will play in the Australian ecosystem and the ability of our country to achieve Net Zero.

Slide 38 refers to the current cultural safety decarbonisation project with the original ToR terms relating to “participation in the decarbonisation workforce” – we suggest the word “workforce be removed” so that the sentence reads as participation in decarbonisation.

National Skills Portal or similar

We note that in the Action/Program Initiative section, there are no apparent mentions of what was previously referred to as the National Skills Passport proposal. This may now be included under a different program, given the concern that was expressed about using the term “passport” in this context by numerous consultation participants (including Skills Insight).

Thank you again for the opportunity to review the Commonwealth’s Action Plan, and we look forward to the approval of the plan in due course.

Wayne Jones
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