

Smart and Skilled

SMART AND SKILLED UPDATE – NO. 281

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1. TRADE PATHWAYS FOR EXPERIENCED WORKERS (TPEW) – OTHER CRITICAL AND SIGNIFICANT SKILLS

The Trade Pathways for Experienced Workers (TPEW) Program recognises the skills of experienced workers and provides a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) pathway to trade qualifications.

TPEW specifically targets experienced unqualified trade workers to increase RPL and gap training. It is different to other Smart and Skilled programs that fund RPL as there are different student eligibility criteria and additional incentive payments for participating Smart and Skilled training providers.

The program will be expanded under the National Skills Agreement. It will fund an additional 320 students in trade and trade-like qualifications that support agriculture, hospitality (commercial cookery and baking), automotive and other skills.

a. Changes to the TPEW Program

The expansion of the program includes the following changes;

- I. Inclusion of additional qualifications to support other critical and significant skills – refer to *section e* of this Update.
- II. Specific timelines for enrolments, commencements and delivery of training for these additional qualifications – refer to *section b.ii* of this Update.
- III. Inclusion of student eligibility criteria for any student enrolment under Food, Beverage and Pharmaceutical (FBP) training packages – students must be currently working in the industry.

b. How the program operates

i. TPEW payments and incentives

Training subsidies for training delivery are as per the Smart and Skilled subsidies. Additional incentive payments are payable to TPEW-approved providers for the delivery and reporting of a TPEW Performance Outcome.

A TPEW Performance Outcome is a TPEW eligible student who completes an approved TPEW qualification **and** has 3 or more Units of Competency (UoCs) delivered and reported as RPL.

TPEW incentives include a \$1,500 payment (for eligible qualifications) and coverage of the price difference between RPL and the full Smart and Skilled UoC rate. This ensures Smart and Skilled training providers receive 100 per cent of the UoC price for units reported as RPL.

Approved TPEW qualifications are listed and TPEW Performance Outcomes are defined in the *Trade Pathways for Experienced Workers Program – Policy (May 2026)* (TPEW Policy) available in STS Online > Smart and Skilled Contract Management > Support Documents.

ii. Program operation

Providers must have a current Smart and Skilled Contract (and have accepted the contract renewal for the 2026-27 Activity Period) and have the qualification on contract. Training under the program is managed via a supplementary Approved Qualifications Activity Schedule (AQAS).

Submissions for training are through a Training Needs Identification (TNI) submission.

Training providers are initially paid the standard Smart and Skilled UoC price for gap training at the standard rate, i.e. 50%, for UoCs reported as RPL. Only when the student enrolment status is 'Finalised', and relevant performance criteria are met, will the incentives be calculated and paid. Please refer to the TPEW Policy (May 2026) for further details.

All students will need to be enrolled by **30 April 2027** and commence by **31 May 2027**.

All training under the program must be completed by **30 September 2028** and reported by **30 October 2028**.

iii. Student eligibility

Unless otherwise agreed by the department, students **must** meet the Smart and Skilled eligibility criteria **and** all the following additional TPEW program requirements:

- be aged 21 years or older at the time of enrolment
- have a minimum of 3 years work experience in the trade they will be undertaking training in, including at least 12 months' work experience in Australia
- be currently working in the industry associated with the qualification, or have worked in the industry within the last 5 years
- if undertaking a qualification from the Manufacturing and Engineering (MEM), Utilities, Electrotechnology and Electrical (UEE) or Food, Beverage and Pharmaceutical (FBP) training packages, be currently working in the industry related to that qualification
- not be a current apprentice or trainee, or if a cancelled apprentice, cancellation must have occurred more than 6 months prior
- be assessed as capable of achieving at least 3 UoCs as an RPL (outcome code 51) outcome.

c. Next steps – Expressions of Interest (EOI)

Eligible Smart and Skilled providers will receive an invitation from the department this week to express their interest in participating in the expanded TPEW program.

EOIs must be completed by **COB Friday 12 June 2026**.

i. Provider eligibility

Eligible providers must:

- have a current Smart and Skilled contract
- have one or more TPEW qualification(s) on their Smart and Skilled contract
- have a satisfactory (or above) Smart and Skilled performance assessment and monitoring status as determined by the Department of Education (the department)
- not have any sanction(s) in place under the Smart and Skilled contract and/or with the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)
- have a thoroughly documented Training and Assessment Strategy, RPL policy, RPL toolkit and tools that have been validated in the last 5 years, updated in line with the 2025 Standards for RTOs and aligned to the training package requirements.
- where a qualification leads to a licence, be able to demonstrate previous experience delivering RPL for the relevant qualification in line with the training package requirements to ensure RPL assessment is consistent, compliant and defensible.

ii. Assessment criteria

Provider EOIs will be assessed on the following criteria:

- Meets the Provider eligibility criteria.
- Able to provide evidence of a current Training and Assessment strategy, RPL policy and toolkit for each qualification that has been updated and validated to confirm alignment to 2025 Standards for RTOs and tracking package rules.
- Where a qualification leads to a licence, be able to demonstrate previous experience delivering RPL for the relevant qualification in line with the training package requirements to ensure RPL assessment is consistent, compliant and defensible.
- Ability to train students across NSW (metro and regional/remote).
- Previous Smart and Skilled Financial Caps performance (if applicable) and performance in other department initiatives including Trade Skills Recognition.

Successful providers will be notified of the outcome via email.

d. Enquiries

For enquiries regarding the initiative, please email TPEW@det.nsw.edu.au.

e. TPEW qualifications list – Additional qualifications

Qualification	NATCODE
Certificate III in Advanced Wool Handling	AHC33125
Certificate III in Agricultural Mechanical Technology	AUR30420
Certificate III in Agriculture	AHC30122
Certificate III in Aircraft Surface Finishing	MEA30118

Qualification	NATCODE
Certificate III in Arboriculture	AHC30824
Certificate III in Asian Cookery	SIT31121
Certificate III in Automotive and Marine Trimming Technology	AUR32320
Certificate III in Automotive Body Repair Technology	AUR32120
Certificate III in Automotive Electric Vehicle Technology	AUR32721
Certificate III in Automotive Electrical Technology	AUR30320
Certificate III in Automotive Glazing Technology	AUR32220
Certificate III in Automotive Manufacturing Technical Operations – Bus, Truck and Trailer	AUM30218
Certificate III in Automotive Refinishing Technology	AUR32420
Certificate III in Automotive Underbody Technology	AUR32518
Certificate III in Baking (*)	FBP30521
Certificate III in Beekeeping	AHC31824
Certificate III in Bicycle Workshop Operations	AUR30220
Certificate III in Bread Baking (*)	FBP30421
Certificate III in Cake and Pastry (*)	FBP30321
Certificate III in Catering	SIT30921
Certificate III in Commercial Cookery	SIT30821
Certificate III in Dairy Production	AHC30224
Certificate III in Drilling Operations	RII31820
Certificate III in Engineering – Fixed and Mobile Plant Mechanic	MEM31419
Certificate III in ESI – Rail Traction	UET30721
Certificate III in Feedlot Operations	AHC33325
Certificate III in Heavy Commercial Vehicle Mechanical Technology	AUR31120
Certificate III in Horticulture	AHC30722
Certificate III in Irrigation Technology	AHC32424
Certificate III in Light Vehicle Mechanical Technology	AUR30620

Qualification	NATCODE
Certificate III in Marine Mechanical Technology	AUR30520
Certificate III in Meat Processing	AMP30622
Certificate III in Meat Processing (Boning Room)	AMP30116
Certificate III in Meat Processing (Retail Butcher)	AMP30815
Certificate III in Meat Processing (Slaughtering)	AMP30516
Certificate III in Meat Processing (Smallgoods – Manufacture)	AMP31016
Certificate III in Mobile Plant Technology	AUR31220
Certificate III in Motorcycle Mechanical Technology	AUR30820
Certificate III in Nursery Operations	AHC31124
Certificate III in Outdoor Power Equipment Technology	AUR30720
Certificate III in Parks and Gardens	AHC31024
Certificate III in Patisserie	SIT31021
Certificate III in Permaculture	AHC33822
Certificate III in Pork Production	AHC30422
Certificate III in Poultry Production	AHC30522
Certificate III in Production Horticulture	AHC30624
Certificate III in Rail Infrastructure	TLI37122
Certificate III in Recreational Vehicle Service and Repair	MSM31022
Certificate III in Resource Processing	RII30420
Certificate III in Rural Operations	AHC32822
Certificate III in Saw Technology	FWP31021
Certificate III in Shearing	AHC32925
Certificate III in Sports Turf Management	AHC31324
Certificate III in Swimming Pool and Spa Service	CPP31218
Certificate III in Telecommunications Technology	ICT30524
Certificate III in Timber and Wood Products Operations	FWP30622
Certificate III in Track Protection	TLI32721

Qualification	NATCODE
Certificate III in Upholstery	MSF30722
Certificate III in Wood Machining	FWP31121
Certificate IV in Farriery	ACM40818

(*) NB. All students enrolled under the Food, Beverage and Pharmaceutical (FBP) Training Packages are required to be working in the industry of the qualification being undertaken.

Where a qualification is superseded, the new qualification must be delivered if it is on the provider's scope.

Unless otherwise directed in the information above, please refer enquiries regarding specific operational matters such as Financial Caps and programs/initiatives to your Regional Provider Support Manager.

Please contact Training Services Customer Service & Operations at TSCust.Service@det.nsw.edu.au for:

- technical support with issues such as system/information access and functionality and reporting
- further information for students or employers (unless otherwise directed).

Please note that this update is for the information of approved Smart and Skilled Providers only.