

VICTORIAN JURISDICTIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR SKILLS AND TAFE

2024-25





Acknowledgement

We acknowledge and pay respects to Elders and all First Peoples in Victoria. We honour and respect Traditional Custodians past and present and the strength of First Peoples in practicing the world's oldest living culture, which enriches our society more broadly.

We recognise the leadership of First Peoples in advocating tirelessly for future generations' rights to education in the face of injustice, and our responsibility to partner with First Peoples through Treaty and Truth-telling to support self-determination in post-secondary education and training.

Authorised by the Hon Gayle Tierney MP

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Minister's foreword



In 2023, the Victorian Government signed on to the National Skills Agreement, along with the Commonwealth Government and all of Australia's state and territory governments.

The landmark agreement demonstrates a shared commitment to strengthen Australia's vocational education and training sector – particularly TAFEs – and deliver high-quality, inclusive education and training that equips workers with the skills that modern industry and community need.

It is the responsibility of governments to foster a skilled and adaptable workforce, providing direction based on the identification of priorities both now and into the future. The National Skills Agreement establishes a new way for the Victorian and Commonwealth governments to work together to deliver on the nation's social and economic priorities. Underpinning the collaborative approach to reform are eight national priorities, including gender equality, delivering housing supply, supporting the Net Zero transformation and Closing the Gap.

By agreeing to these priorities in the National Skills Agreement, a strategic vision has been established with a renewed focus on ensuring skills and training plays a pivotal role in setting the economy up for success.

Victoria is well ahead on this extensive sector reform journey. Recognising that some of these priorities require immediate action in Victoria, the plan sets into motion initiatives to address them. We have invested more than \$4.6 billion into training, skills and higher education over the past 10 years. Initiatives like Apprenticeships Victoria's Big Build Apprenticeships program are helping to build up a workforce that can deliver on Victoria's ambitious housing targets. Through the establishment of Skills Labs to fast-track pathways into the clean economy workforce, we are supporting the Net Zero Transformation priority.

Our Victorian Skills Plan – which aligns with the National Skills Agreement – outlines Victoria's jobs and skills outlook and provides a clear roadmap for navigating current and future economic transitions. Many of the actions identified in Victorian Skills Plan pre-empt the National Skills Agreement national priorities.

The architecture is in place to further improve and integrate our post-secondary education sector, designed in consultation with the Victorian Skills Authority, Apprenticeships Victoria, Skills First contractors and Victoria's world-class TAFE network

Learners can access more than 80 qualifications and short courses through the Victorian Government's Free TAFE program. More than 170,500 students have benefitted from Free TAFE since it began in 2019, saving them more than \$460 million in tuition fees and boosting our pipeline of skilled workers in priority sectors including the care economy, construction, digital technology and cyber security, advanced manufacturing and clean energy.

Our government's ambitions to build a strong pathway from skills to jobs, grow the productive capacity of our economy and ensure an equitable state for all Victorians are driving our commitment to transform vocational education and training.

The challenges facing Victoria, while unique, fit neatly in the context of the national priorities. As such, the actions needed to address them also require tailored responses specific to Victoria's needs and its people. This Victorian Jurisdictional Action Plan outlines the Victorian Government's commitment to meet the National Skills Plan, which reflects the shared commitment of state, territory and national governments. It provides the strategic vision for addressing the priorities in a Victorian context, working in complement with the Victorian Skills Plan, highlighting the initiatives currently underway and the outcomes they intend to achieve.

What the world looks like now and what is currently a priority might not be the same in a year's time. That's why we're committed to a model of shared stewardship, working with key stakeholders, including First Nations peoples to ensure that this document is fit-for-purpose and evolves in line with changing needs and priorities.

I am pleased to present Victoria's first Jurisdictional Action Plan to support the implementation of the National Skills Agreement.

The Hon Gayle Tierney MP
Minister for Skills and TAFE

Background to the Victorian Jurisdictional Action Plan for Skills and TAFE

The Victorian Government is committed to a skills and training system which prioritises the delivery of high quality, responsive and accessible training that acts on national priorities and supports all Victorians to obtain the skills and capabilities they need to prosper.

While the National Skills Agreement (NSA) and National Skills Plan (NSP) provide the framework and identify key national priorities, the inaugural Victorian Jurisdictional Action Plan (Victoria's Action Plan) supports its implementation, detailing Victorian specific actions that will be taken to address national outcomes and priorities.

National priorities are areas that governments have agreed through the NSA that require focused national leadership to address critical skills and workforce shortages. These include:



Delivering housing supply



Gender equality



Closing the Gap



Supporting the Net Zero transformation



Sustaining essential care services



Developing Australia's sovereign capability and food security



Ensuring Australia's digital and technology capability



Delivering reforms to improve the regulation of VET qualifications and quality

Victoria has local needs and opportunities and while the Victorian Government has committed to acting on the national priorities, how this is actioned in Victoria will be specific to its requirements and people. Victoria has already identified some of the national priorities as state priorities and set in motion actions to address them. Through shared stewardship, Victoria can advocate for additional national priorities over the life of the NSA.

Victoria's Action Plan is one part of a larger skills planning strategy for the state and should be read in complement to the Victorian Skills Plan (Skills Plan). Working together, these Plans will help deliver the training and skills Victoria needs – now and into the future.

The Skills Plan sets the vision for Victoria's skills system and provides a roadmap to bring stakeholders in the skills and employment system together to build the workforce Victoria needs. This supports TAFEs and other training providers plan for courses, industries ensure they have the skilled workers they need, and Victorians with education and training pathway choices for success in work and life.

The Skills Plan is one of Victoria's key contributions to national skills reform and Victoria is well progressed in its efforts as one of the first jurisdictions to release a comprehensive Skills Plan. The national priorities outlined in the NSA align with the priority areas covered in the 2022, 2023 and 2024 Skills Plans. For each priority area, the series of Skills Plans identifies opportunities to strengthen the skills system in Victoria, with many of these opportunities already realised. The alignment between the Skills Plan and the national priorities is at [Appendix A](#).



Victoria's Action Plan represents the first step in a longer-term process and will be subject to ongoing review as local needs change and priorities shift. Victoria is committed to continuous improvement and ensuring responsiveness to a changing environment. The ongoing review of Victoria's Action Plan enables this to occur while building on a joint stewardship model wherever possible.

Victoria's Action Plan has been developed in line with requirements under the NSA in consultation with key stakeholders and is informed by the views and interests of First Nations Peoples.

TAFEs play a vital role in achieving this vision as the backbone of a trusted, high-quality and accessible VET system. With TAFE as the trusted public provider at the heart of the system, quality will be uplifted, integrity will be embedded in the system, and students will be better supported to succeed, generating substantial economic gains.

It should be noted that the actions outlined in Victoria's Action Plan complement other initiatives underway nationally, including through the Australian Universities Accord, to better connect the higher education and VET sectors and increase tertiary education participation and attainment.

There are several initiatives, including Free TAFE and the Priority Apprenticeships Model, that are cross-cutting and span different priorities. Best efforts have been made to align the initiatives to the priorities, listing them only once where most relevant. Similarly, the initiatives listed are not to be taken as a representation of the full suite of activity underway in the state as there may be some programs that are not listed due to many factors such as start date, end date, context, and similar conditions.

The skills system is a shared Commonwealth-state responsibility. While the Victorian Government is the majority funder of VET training in Victoria, the Commonwealth Government provides funding to the state through National Partnership Agreements, including the NSA and the Fee-Free TAFE Agreement.

The Commonwealth Government is also responsible for the management of apprenticeship and traineeship incentives, and loan programs such as VET Student Loans and Trade Support Loans.

Through the delivery of these programs, Victoria is contributing to the national priorities both directly and indirectly.

Initiative 1: Free TAFE for more Victorians

2019 - continuing

Priorities addressing all

The Free TAFE program aims to improve access to training by allowing eligible students to apply for fully subsidised courses in qualifications and short courses.

Since its inception in 2019, it has slowly expanded from 30 courses to over 80 courses in a range of priority industries and areas of workforce shortages.

Victoria's Free TAFE program is in complement to the Commonwealth's Fee-Free TAFE that also supports the delivery of subsidised training to eligible cohorts.

From 1 January 2023, the once-in-a-lifetime limit on Free TAFE was removed so Victorians can take multiple Free TAFE courses in priority training pathways.

Initiative 2: Priority Apprenticeships Model

2018 - continuing

Priorities addressing Housing and Gender Equality

Victoria's Big Build is stimulating economic growth and driving demand for more than 18,000 jobs, primarily for skilled workers in the construction sector and supporting services. Building on the Big Build Apprenticeships program, the Priority Apprenticeships Model will extend supports into housing, construction clean economy and other priority industries.

Projects include the Metro Tunnel, removal of 85 level crossings across Melbourne, the West Gate Tunnel, major road upgrades, Melbourne Airport Rail, Suburban Rail Loop and upgrades to every regional passenger line in Victoria.

The Victorian Government has invested in a range of industry and inclusive workplace training programs to address skills shortages and create a pipeline of workers to help deliver these critical projects; and new government arrangements for skilling in Victoria, such as Apprenticeships Victoria and the VSA, will help plan for skilled workers to be available for these projects.

The Government is increasing diversity and inclusivity of workers in rail and transport projects by providing earn-and-learn opportunities to disadvantaged students, creating pathways for youth to gain formal qualifications while working and supporting women to enter employment in the transport sector.





Delivering housing supply



Delivering housing supply in a Victorian context

Victoria is the fastest growing state in the country: Victoria's population is expected to reach 10.3 million by 2051. Melbourne is set to become Australia's biggest city by the end of the decade, with the population estimated to grow by an additional 2.9 million people over the next 28 years.

Housing affordability and availability in Victoria, like the rest of Australia, is at record lows. The latest data shows that in June 2024, housing affordability in Australia was at its lowest in 30 years. Demand for rental accommodation has increased sharply with vacancy rates at record lows. Rents across the country are rising at the fastest rate in 15 years. Housing affordability and availability is particularly acute in regional Victoria, where finding a place to live is one of the biggest challenges in attracting and keeping workers.

On the supply side, global and local factors have hampered the industry's ability to increase the stock of housing. Builders in Victoria and right across Australia are facing critical global economic challenges, including rising supply chain costs. Locally, the planning system has been too slow, with a backlog of planning permit applications sitting with councils and planning disputes taking too long to resolve.

In 2023, the Victorian Government released the *Victorian Housing Statement* that puts forward an ambitious plan to build 800,000 homes over the next decade, it will do this by embarking on a comprehensive set of reforms to address housing supply.¹⁹

Delivering on Victoria's housing target requires a skilled, diverse and flexible workforce. Victoria's vocational and education training system plays a critical role in preparing the workers for the range of jobs that will be in demand.

Drivers of change

- The construction workforce is the fourth largest in Victoria, employing 9% of the total workforce.²⁰ However, the workforce will need to grow further to sustain growing construction activity and to support the Victorian Government commitments relating to its housing targets and the Big Build.
- The industry is also facing challenges in retaining and attracting younger and more diverse workers, particularly women. Victoria's construction workforce is male dominated with a higher proportion of workers over 50 years of age—some of which are preparing to leave the industry or retire.²¹
- The industry has also identified changing skill needs with a need to instil newer, more productive ways of working. Adopting modern methods of construction requires upskilling the workforce through greater training and increasing the number of workers with VET qualifications.
- Vocational and education training is the primary pathway into and through the construction industry.

¹⁹ Victorian Government, *Victoria's Housing Statement The decade ahead 2024-2034*, 20 September 2023.

²⁰ Victorian Skills Authority, *Victorian Skills Plan: Construction Industry Insight*, Victorian Government, October 2022.

²¹ Victorian Skills Authority, *Victorian Skills Plan: Construction Industry Insight*, Victorian Government, October 2022.



Victorian focus areas and actions contributing to this National Priority

Given the Victorian Government's housing targets and other commitments in the Big Build, Victoria will remain focused on growing the pipeline of construction workers without compromising skill development by:

- Strengthening TAFE capacity to deliver modern, high-quality construction-related training.
- Support for apprentices to make it safer and more attractive to take up and complete an apprenticeship.
- Stronger commitments between government, TAFE and industry to improve workplace culture, job security, industry-relevant training and perceptions.
- Improving career access in construction to secondary school students and migrants.

The Victorian Government is also working to increase the flexibility and mobility of the construction workforce by:

- Developing and piloting new qualifications that provide the transferable knowledge and skills needed across an industry including for construction.
- Co-designing a new educational offering for the sustainable construction industry.
- Developing Recognition of Prior Learning toolkits for sectors experiencing high workforce demand and skills shortages, such as the construction sector.

Additionally, the Victorian Government has a suite of workforce and skilling interventions in place, such as Free TAFE and the Big Build Apprenticeships Program and is currently considering additional initiatives to support construction workforce needs.

Key Action	Rationale
<p>Future of Housing Construction Centre of Excellence</p> <p>Under the Economic Growth Statement, Victoria has committed to investing in a Future of Housing Construction Centre of Excellence at Melbourne Polytechnic. The Centre of Excellence will help Victoria remain at the forefront of new approaches to construction by training workers in modern construction technologies, such as prefabricated and modular construction.</p>	<p>The Centre of Excellence will increase the pipeline of skilled workers needed to ensure Victoria can meet growing housing and infrastructure needs.</p>
<p>Free and subsidised training</p> <p>Victoria's Free TAFE course list includes courses to support the <i>Housing Statement</i> e.g. Certificate II in Construction Pathways, Certificate III in Construction Waterproofing and Diploma of Building and Construction (Building). These courses are funded using a combination of Victorian and Commonwealth funding.</p> <p>These and a broader range of courses committed to building and construction, as well as infrastructure courses are included in Victoria's Training Needs List.</p>	<p>Free TAFE continues to remove barriers to training for Victorians and delivers a pipeline of skilled workers through easy access to priority vocational education and training courses.</p> <p>The inclusion of these courses on the Free TAFE and Training Needs lists provides pathways for students to undertake further study in the industry and increases the pipeline for the construction workforce supporting the delivery of Victoria's housing targets.</p>
<p>Priority Apprenticeships Model</p> <p>Supports and facilitates apprentices to participate in priority sectors including in the construction industry regardless of gender, age or background.</p>	<p>The Priority Apprenticeships Model is increasing the supply of apprentices which will be critical in meeting the skills requirements of the Housing Statement, Big Build and Clean Energy targets.</p>
<p>Improving apprentice wages</p> <p>Victoria advocates for improving apprenticeship wages to the Fair Work Commission through the Annual Wage review.</p> <p>Victoria is also contributing to the Commonwealth Government's Strategic Review of the Australian Apprenticeship Incentive Scheme to identify how payments for apprenticeships in priority occupations can be better placed.</p>	<p>Low wages are a key barrier to commencing and completing an apprenticeship. Working to improve apprentice wages will assist in increasing uptake and completion rates.</p>
<p>Co-design of sustainable construction qualifications</p> <p>The VSA is working with industry to co-design a new educational offering in the sustainable construction industry. Victoria has committed \$7 million for the development of new renewable energy VET certificates for sustainable construction and other qualifications to provide training and career pathways for the sustainable construction industry.²²</p>	<p>The creation of sustainable construction qualifications will assist in increasing the pipeline of workers needed <i>in the construction</i> industry, a key industry for delivering on housing supply needs.</p>

²² Victorian Skills Authority, *Victorian Skills Plan for 2024 into 2025*, Victorian Government, October 2024.



Gender
equality



Gender equality in a Victorian context

When it comes to gender equality, Victoria leads the nation. The Victorian Government has taken great strides towards making the state fairer and more equal for all.

The Victorian Government has laid the critical foundations to make Victoria a more equal place—for everyone. The Government has used all its available levers—legislation, policy development, investment, budgeting and public sector employment—to drive gender equality.

In 2020, Victoria became the first jurisdiction in Australia to enshrine public sector gender equality laws through the Gender Equality Act 2020. Then, in 2021, Victoria became the first state to introduce gender responsive budgeting. In August 2023, Victoria released the plan *Our equal state: Victoria's gender equality strategy and action plan 2023-27 (Our equal state)*. *Our equal state* is Victoria's second gender equality strategy and sets out a roadmap of action and investment in gender equality over four years. It takes a life course approach to gender equality – focusing on childhood and youth, adulthood and older age – to highlight the gendered gaps in choices and opportunities between women, men and gender diverse people at different ages. Through *Our equal state*, Victoria is building on its work to drive gender equality by setting out a blueprint for Victorians of all genders to live in a safe and equal society, with access to equal power, resources and opportunities.

A key action from *Our equal state* is to explore further ways to embed a gender equality focus across the VET-TAFE system to improve outcomes for women in vocational education and training, including strategies to increase participation and equity of women in sectors they have been historically underrepresented.

Historically, students' senior secondary education choices are correlated with their gender with a disproportionate number of male students enrolling in applied learning programs. In 2023, Victoria introduced the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) Vocational Major, a two-year applied learning program under VCE. Since its introduction, the number of female and gender-diverse students in applied learning certificates has increased. This universal access to VET offerings provides a unique opportunity to shift perceptions of VET, from being heavily concentrated in male-dominated trades, to a genuinely gender-inclusive pathway where students choose certificates based on interest and ability, free from outdated stereotypes.

The Victorian Government is implementing several industry strategies focused on supporting the attraction, retention and advancement of women in male-dominated sectors such as construction, transport, manufacturing and energy sectors. Additionally, the Victorian Government is committed to improving conditions and reducing gendered segregation in women-dominated sectors such as the care economy. Reducing gendered segregation across all industries helps build resilience against skills shortages, improves pay equity, and boosts economic growth and productivity.

As highlighted in the inaugural Skills Plan, strong progress has been made in attracting women into VET in areas of occupational demand, particularly through Free TAFE. The VSA's Victorian Student Satisfaction Survey 2023 shows that women are increasingly successful in achieving their main reason for training (74.5% in 2023 compared to 72.6% in 2022) and that more than 80% of women were employed post-training in 2023, compared to 78.3% in 2022.



Gender equality

Drivers of change

- Women in Victoria, like the rest of Australia, are significantly underrepresented in the trades. Currently women only make up 12% of the Victorian construction industry. Conversely women are overrepresented in Healthcare and the Community Services industry making up 75% of the workforce.¹
- More generally, workforce participation rates for women still lag that of males: women's participation is 62% and male participation is 72%.
- As of June 2023, women were 25% of apprentices and trainees in-training in Victoria. Of these, 69% were in non-trades jobs, like early childhood education and care, hospitality and retail. Indigenous women accounted for 1.4% of all women who completed an apprenticeship or traineeship in Victoria in June 2023.²
- Gender segregation is a key reason why women earn less than men on average and are less financially secure. Gender segregation in industries and jobs accounts for around 24% of the gender pay gap.³
- Addressing inequality and lifting women's participation goes beyond the education and training sector. It includes eliminating violence against women and ensuring affordable and accessible childcare, transport and housing⁴. Additionally, the retention of women in the workplace must be supported through access to flexible working arrangements, paid parental leave, promoting an inclusive workplace culture, and preventing and responding to sexual harassment, sexism and gender discrimination.
- There are a range of benefits for a diverse and gender balanced workplace that go beyond greater access to opportunities for women. These benefits include improvements in productivity, economic growth, and organisational reputation, to name a few.

¹ Victorian Skills Authority, *Victorian Skills Plan for 2022 into 2023 A shared vision for skills-led solutions*, Victorian Government, August 2022

² National Centre for Vocational Education Research 2023, 'Apprentices and trainees 2023: June quarter', accessed 26 June 2024, <<https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/apprentices-and-trainees-2023-june-quarter>>.

³ KPMG 2022, *She's price(d)less: The economics of the gender pay gap*, accessed 8 March 2024, <<https://kpmg.com/au/en/home/insights/2022/07/shes-priced-less-gender-pay-gap-economics.html>>.

⁴ Victorian Skills Authority, *Victorian Skills Plan Update for 2022 into 2023*, Victorian Government, October 2023

Victorian focus areas and actions contributing to this National Priority

The Victorian Government will remain focused on driving inclusive employment practices through identifying and driving opportunities to attract and remove barriers for women to undertake vocational education and training, and support and encourage them to prepare for jobs traditionally seen to be for men, and vice versa.

The low numbers of women in construction and in other trades and in the IT industry continues to be a focus for the Victorian Government.

Through the Skills Plan, the Victorian Government will:

- Monitor the education and employment outcomes of women who enrol in training
- Identify barriers to participation in education and training for women from diverse backgrounds
- Partner with agencies to address gender-based barriers to training and employment
- Work with industry to reduce gender segregation across industries.

The Victorian Government remains focused on using its government owned TAFE network as a primary lever to drive change and address gender inequality in the skills and training system. The Government has enacted a Respect and Equality in TAFE program to strengthen the TAFE network's approach to gender equality and preventing gender-based violence. This program supports TAFEs in building an environment where staff and students feel safe, respected, and valued and focuses on taking actions across five key domains: workplace, students, teaching and learning, communications, and industry and community.

Similarly, the Victorian Government will continue to leverage off its procurements for the Big Build to address low participation by women in non-traditional trades through the Priority Apprenticeships Model. To the end of June 2024, 21.3% of apprentices employed through the (former) Big Build Apprenticeships Model were women, which is significantly higher than the 15.2% employed in the construction industry in Victoria.

Victoria is also delivering a range of other programs and initiatives to address this national priority, some of which are set out in the table below.

Key Action

Rationale

The Apprenticeship Support Officer program

This program provides apprentices, including women apprentices, with tailored support and/or referrals, including help with training and employment, safety and workplace concerns, mental and physical wellbeing, housing or financial difficulties and drug and alcohol issues.

The program provides an avenue for apprentices, including women, to obtain tailored support and/or referrals to assist them with training, employment, financial and health and wellbeing matters.

Free and subsidised training

The Free TAFE list includes: 'Course in Identifying and Responding to Family Violence Risk' and 'Course in Gender Equity'. These courses are funded using a combination of Victorian and Commonwealth funding.

In addition, women have access to a range of subsidised training courses or skill sets allowing them to train in areas of high demand.

The inclusion of the 'Course in Identifying and Responding to Family Violence Risk' and 'Course in Gender Equity' onto the Free TAFE course list builds the capacity and capability of workforces responding to gender-based violence.

There are also more opportunities for Victorian women to upskill or reskill, with the removal of the once-in-a-lifetime limit and 'upskilling rule' on Free TAFE. Women account for 62% of students who have utilized the changes to eligibility – supporting them to re-enter the workforce for an in-demand career.

Free TAFE continues to remove barriers to training for Victorians and delivers a pipeline of skilled workers for Victoria's in-demand industries.

Since its commencement in 2019, Free TAFE has improved access to training for women. In 2023 women accounted for more than half (57%) of the Free TAFE students.

Training for Respect

This program is a recipient of the WorkSafe Victoria's WorkWell Respect Fund.

WorkSafe Victoria's WorkWell Respect Fund offers grants for evidence-based projects to support respectful workplaces and to combat gendered violence in the workplace.

Training for Respect delivers a range of resources for Victorian Registered Training Organisations to improve the capacity, capability and confidence of the sector to prevent and respond to work-related gender-violence. Resources include an industry-wide awareness campaign, in-person and online training and a resource hub, and more.

Respect and Equality in TAFE (RET) initiative

This initiative helps the Victorian TAFE Network prevent violence against women, build safe environments for learners and staff and address barriers to female participation in education, training, and employment.

In 2024, the RET at TAFE Week was launched with all 16 TAFEs and dual sector universities campaigning and contributing to the RET Network.

Helps prevent violence against women, build safe environments for learners and staff and address barriers to female participation in education, training and employment.

Key Action

Rationale

Trade and Tech Fit expo

The Victorian Government's annual Trade & Tech Fit expo helps female and gender diverse secondary school students better understand the career pathways available in the trade and technology industries and introduces employers to emerging female talent.

Helps school-aged girls and gender diverse students to be aware of the exciting and varied careers available in trade and STEM-based roles. It also helps improve the visibility of women already working in these sectors, which can help encourage girls to consider pathways into trade and tech roles.

Skilling the Bay

This initiative is a place-based and school-based education program in the Barwon area. Skilling the Bay gives students hands-on exposure to vocational careers.

It is led by The Gordon Institute of TAFE, in partnership with Deakin University.

The initiative includes:

- industry immersion programs in clean energy
- Girls Leading Advanced Manufacturing, which encourages young women into male-dominated fields.

Because of deeply held gender stereotypes, girls and young women often do not get the same casual exposure to trades and hands-on skills as boys when growing up.

Girls may limit their career goals to familiar fields if they do not get opportunities to learn about and try different skills, jobs and subjects.

This program gives girls the opportunity to try new skills in safe spaces.

Addressing gender bias in careers education and pathways options

The Victorian Government is developing and implementing an approach to address gender bias in careers education and pathways options in the implementation of the Senior Secondary Pathways Reforms. This will include more explicitly addressing gender bias through:

- career initiatives that support student decision-making and school career planning
- addressing barriers to girls' participation in STEM education, and barriers to boys' participation in the care industries.

Teachers and career counsellors play an important role in identifying the factors that may be shaping gendered decisions about career choices and helping young people to consider a wider range of job options.

This program aims to ensure that career advice and initiatives are not limited by gendered norms and stereotypes.

Key Action

Women in Energy and Manufacturing funding program

This grant program supports initiatives boosting women's participation and equity in energy and manufacturing sectors by focusing on:

- clear and attractive career pathways
- access to education and training
- economic equity and leadership opportunities
- accountability for workplace culture, diversity and wellbeing.

Several of the funded initiatives include a skills and training component to foster a more inclusive training environment or address barriers to female participation. For example, the Nice Work if You Can Get It project delivered by Women's Health in the South East is focused on improving women's retention and employment outcomes in manufacturing apprenticeships at Chisholm TAFE.

Another training focused grant initiative includes the Women and Their Trade (WaTT) and WaTT Edge project delivered by NECA Education and Careers. This project supports electrical apprentices in their leadership aspirations and provides gender equality training to its educators to foster a safe and respectful learning environment for women trainees.

These grant initiatives form part of the Victorian Government's women in energy and manufacturing strategies. In October 2024, Making it equal: Victoria's women in manufacturing strategy was released. The women in energy strategy is anticipated to be released in 2025 as part of the Victorian Energy Jobs Plan.

Rationale

This grants program aims to boost women's participation and equity in the Victorian energy and manufacturing industries.





Closing the Gap



Closing the Gap in a Victorian context

First Nations learners and communities bring unique strengths and potential to the vocational education and training experience, yet there remain systemic barriers that hinder access, participation, and completion of VET courses. First Nations participation and self-determination in partnership with government is addressing barriers and expanding opportunities in VET to increase employment in more highly skilled and better paid industries.

Barriers such as reduced opportunities to meet literacy, numeracy and digital skill requirements; study-related costs; complex enrolment processes; and limited cultural capabilities of training providers can impede First Nations people from aspiring to or completing training that can unlock better employment opportunities. Many First Nations learners demonstrate resilience and determination in overcoming these challenges, but the system needs to be better for First Nations students and staff so we must continue to build on the strengths and successes across the sector.

In 2023, First Nations participation in accredited VET training was 13% with year-to-date enrolments (to September 2024) showing:

- 12% increase in enrolments at TAFEs
- 14% increase in enrolments at Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation-led Registered Training Organisations (ACCO-led RTOs).

In September 2024, First Nations enrolments were up 9% from September 2023, which has been supported by the introduction of the Aboriginal Access Fee Waiver initiative.

Between 2023 and 2024 enrolments also increased across the Victorian Government's priority areas for skills and workforce in the care economy and housing and clean energy.

First Nations VET completion rates for 2023 were:

- 76% for pre-accredited subject completions
- 48% for apprenticeships
- 37% for non-apprenticeships.

ACCO-led RTOs running a curated selection of courses reported significantly higher completion rates than non-ACCO-led RTOs and TAFEs running a broader selection of courses in a mainstream context with a larger student population. The way ACCO-led RTOs operate in their cultural context and the systems they have in place for learner support provide positive learning environments to First Nations learners, leading to high completion rates, and in some cases better completion rates compared to First Nations students studying at TAFEs. The structure and systems in place at Bubup Wilam have led to a 96% completion rate for students studying the Certificate III and the Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care. The Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO)'s effective support services have led to a completion rate of 68% in qualifications in Social and Emotional Wellbeing and Health.

Reporting on the First Nations' workforce in the VET sector in 2023 found:

- 101.7 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions were filled by individuals identifying as First People across the 12 Victorian TAFEs
- 3% of Victorian TAFE board members identified as First Peoples.

The Victorian Government is committed to advancing First Nations' communities and addressing the barriers, demonstrated through its nation-leading Treaty work and underpinned by state and national strategies, plans, and frameworks. It has implemented strategies designed to build the First Nations workforce within VET providers and to increase First Nations learners' participation and completion rates in VET, while also supporting their transition into culturally safe, meaningful employment to help combat entrenched inequalities.

Principles of Aboriginal Self Determination are enacted through ensuring that strategies and frameworks are developed in genuine partnership with First Nations' communities and organisations. The Victorian Government has partnered with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI) – the peak state-wide Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation for education and training in Victoria – and the Victorian First Nations VET Alliance comprising of three ACCO-led RTOs.



Closing the Gap

VAEAI, established in 1976, represents the Koorie Community in relation to self-determination in education and training policy development and strategic programming at the local, state and national levels. VAEAI is the peak body for Koorie education in Victoria and represents the community through 32 Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (LAECGs) throughout the eight VAEAI regions. It supports the provision of education and training that reinforces its community's cultural identity and increases awareness in the wider community of Koorie culture and aspirations in education and training, particularly in overseeing accountability for TAFE Wurreker Implementation Plans.

VACCHO is recognised as the peak representative organisation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing in Victoria since 1996 and has a membership of 33 Aboriginal Community Controlled organisations. VACCHO's ACCO-led RTO, Yagilaith Djerring, is the largest ACCO-led RTO in Victoria. Over 95% of its students identify as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent. It has a completion rate of around 68% for First Nations students in Social and Emotional Wellbeing, and Health qualifications, which is significantly higher than First Nations students' completion rates in TAFEs for similar qualifications.

VACSAL (Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Ltd) is a state-wide agency established in 1984 that provides advice to the Victorian and Commonwealth governments on a range of community development issues as well as being a major provider of extensive services to the Aboriginal community, in metropolitan and some regional communities. Its Victorian Aboriginal Community Training Centre has been delivering quality accredited and non-accredited training for over 10 years. It has supported over 370 students to complete qualifications and access or maintain employment.

Bubup Wilam meaning 'Children's Place' in Woi Wurrung language was established in 2012. The early years educational centre provides Aboriginal children, families and community with programs to strengthen children's Aboriginal identity, esteem and foundations for lifelong learning, health and wellbeing. It has provided training of its workforce since 2014 through partnerships with other RTOs, achieving a 96% success rate in retainment and completion, and building a sustainable Aboriginal workforce in the Early Childhood Education and Care sector. It is a newly recognised ACCO-led RTO and one of only 38 registered early childhood education centres nationally to be awarded as a Centre of Excellence by the Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority, the governing body of the national early childhood sector.

With the right investments and support, VAEAI leading TAFEs and the ACCO-led RTOs forming the Victorian First Nations VET Alliance, Victoria will continue to increase the First Nations learner numbers, provide enrolment assistance, course advice, and cultural support. Continued and deepening engagement of VAEAI and the ACCO-led RTOs is key to building trust and ensuring that educational pathways and opportunities reflect the diverse needs and aspirations of communities, now and into the future.

Through its partnership with the Victorian Government on the Wurreker Strategy and 10-year Marrung Education Plan 2016-2026, VAEAI provides information and advice to the mainstream education and training sector – particularly to TAFEs – on cultural inclusion in VET, curriculum development and effective service models for First Nations communities.

The Wurreker Strategy is a partnership agreement between the Victorian Government and VAEAI to improve educational, training and employment outcomes for First Nations people. As the primary provider of VET to First Nations students in Victoria, TAFEs have played an integral role in Wurreker. Every Victorian TAFE and dual-sector training provider maintains a Wurreker Implementation Plan that is consistent with the objectives of the Marrung Strategy. The TAFE sector is funded to undertake Wurreker Implementation Planning. This includes Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (LAECGs) and Koorie Liaison Officers (KLOs), who provide a range of support and other on-campus services direct to First Nations students.

This partnership ensures a high degree of community engagement, participation, and self-determination in VET policy design and training delivery through forums such as the Marrung Central Governance Committee (MCGC) and the Koorie Skills Working Group (KSWG). These networks support partnership with First Nations organisations including VAEAI and other ACCOs in MCGC, to enable collaboration on strategies including the Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan (Marrung Plan) and Wurreker Strategy. Importantly, they identify emerging issues and actions to improve VET outcomes for First Nations learners.

The Wurreker and Marrung Plan strategies require review with First Nations partners to ensure they remains effective in improving First Nations learners' skills and training outcomes, while staying responsive to the changing needs and aspirations of First Nations communities. The Marrung Plan is due for review before 2026 and work on the next iteration will begin thereafter. The Victorian Department of Education is developing an evaluation strategy for the next education plan that aligns with evolving community needs and aspirations.

Elements of the Marrung Plan and Wurreker Strategy address data development and sharing, but these could be further developed. The Victorian Government shares data and statistics with First Nations partners during MCGC and KSWG meetings to promote evidence-based decisions and actions grounded in up-to-date, relevant information. By improving access to and use of data, collaboration can strengthen informed decision-making and help drive better outcomes for First Nations learners. Further development of institutional relationships and technical systems is needed, with Aboriginal Data Sovereignty needing to be central to these actions.

ACCO-led RTOs note that the Wurreker Strategy and Marrung Plan do not recognise or financially support the work of ACCO-led RTOs, nor do they adequately address all operational and compliance needs, which are vital for sustainability. ACCO-led RTOs are considered private providers and do not receive the funding subsidies available to public RTOs (TAFEs).

As community-led organisations, ACCO-led RTOs have service obligations to their members, and provide culturally safe and responsive learning environments where First Nations learners can thrive by strengthening identity and connections, in a setting where training and workforce development takes place in tandem. ACCO-led RTOs report that they have achieved completion rates nearly triple that of the mainstream RTO sector. These vocational services reflect the Aboriginal definition of health – encompassing more than physical wellbeing to include social, emotional and cultural wellbeing, in which each individual is able to achieve their full potential and contribute to the total wellbeing of the community.

The Victorian First Nations VET Alliance launched in October 2024 to advocate for the long-term sustainability and growth of Victorian ACCO-led RTOs, as individual organisations, and collectively. Their aim is to secure and enhance vocational education provided by ACCO-led RTOs across early childhood, health, wellbeing and community services qualifications. The Victorian First Nations VET Alliance seeks flexible funding from the NSA for ACCO-led RTOs to deliver and steward national priorities under four NSA focus areas.

With VAEAI leading the TAFE's work and ACCO-led RTOs providing tailored learning options, Victoria aims to foster an environment where Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and RTOs have the agency to shape VET policies and programs and deliver services to their people that create meaningful and lasting change with positive impacts on their lives.



Drivers of change

Making progress towards Closing the Gap priorities and targets for First Nations people involves addressing eight key drivers of change, identified by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and stakeholders:

- Effective policy and governance frameworks focused on self-determination of First Nations people to drive systemic change.
- Adequate funding and resources for safe and effective learning environments, support systems, and successful transitions between skills and employment.
- Meaningful community engagement that aligns skills and training opportunities to diverse and evolving community strengths, needs and aspirations.
- Public trust in the training sector as culturally safe, respectful, and inclusive.
- Cultural competence in educators and administrators and clear understanding of educational barriers that exist.
- Culturally informed and appropriate support services for learners.
- Strong cultural connections for learners and teachers, supporting educational as well as health and wellbeing outcomes.
- Quality programs with clear pathways to quality employment.

Focusing on these drivers will enable Victoria to address the key barriers faced by First Nations learners in VET, including low participation and completion rates, limited representation of First Nations people in leadership roles, and the need for more culturally safe learning environments.

In collaboration with First Nations partners, Victoria has identified the drivers of change, and areas of opportunity that lead to closing the gap. Some of these include increasing First Nations representation across VET leadership, enhancing the visibility of First Nations culture within training institutions, supporting organisational capability of training providers including ACCO-led RTOs, and ensuring clear communication around fee-free training for First Nations learners. By leveraging these opportunities, we can work toward closing the gap in vocational education and ensuring equal opportunities for First Nations learners to thrive.

Victorian focus areas and actions contributing to this National Priority

Key focus areas emerged from NSA Closing the Gap workshops held in July 2024 in partnership with First Nations stakeholders, as well as from meetings with ACCO-led RTOs. These were:

- **Funding and resourcing** Review funding and resources for VET delivery and student support, including funding for VAEAI to work with TAFEs and ACCO-led RTOs to invest in support services and capacity building specifically related to First Nations learners.
- **Achieving cultural safety in skills and training** Overcome the lack of culturally safe work and study environments to ensure opportunities for learning and working effectively with First Nations learners, using culturally relevant curriculum and teaching methods that respect and incorporate Indigenous knowledge and perspective.
- **First Nations access to teaching and learning** Address cultural safety, improve and simplify complex enrolment processes, and review overwhelming student eligibility requirements.

- **First Nations VET workforce**
 - Recruitment TAFE and ACCO-led RTOs face challenges in recruiting First Nations people in VET due to requirements for the Certificate IV Training and Assessment, a lack of cultural safety, a greater risk of isolation due to limited First Nations employment numbers, insufficient awareness of job vacancies, and job descriptions that discourage qualified applicants.
 - Retention First Nations TAFE and ACCO-led RTO VET staff face heavy workloads, burnout, and job classifications and remunerations that do not adequately reflect their knowledge and lived experience. These issues need to be addressed to retain staff.
 - Progression RTOs in the VET system need to address a lack of visibility in leadership and career progression and professional growth opportunities for First Nations people employed in TAFEs, both within their current roles and into higher positions.
- **Pathways from VET to Employment** Identify and scale up best practice in Closing the Gap for First Nations people between completing VET qualifications and securing employment.
- **Data capture and sharing** Access to up-to-date, relevant data for informed decision making and the development of evidence-based strategies that improve VET outcomes and Aboriginal Data Sovereignty.
- **Recognition of training provider achievements** highlight successes of training providers in delivering the National Skills Agreement framework and acknowledge the success rate of ACCO-led RTOs in student retainment and course completion.

The drivers of change, focus areas, and NSA priority reforms for Closing the Gap are reflected in Victoria's actions under this plan.

- Priority Reform 1 Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision-Making
- Priority Reform 2: Building the Community-Controlled Sector
- Priority Reform 3: Transforming Government Organisations
- Priority Reform 4: Shared Access to Data and Information at a Regional Level.



Key Action

Rationale

Aboriginal Access Fee Waiver (commenced 1 January 2024)

State Government funding means First Nations learners can enrol in any *Skills First* VET qualification at *Skills First* providers without paying tuition fees.

To increase the number of First Nations learners in the VET sector by removing tuition fees for *Skills First* courses.

Wurreker Brokers and Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (LAECGs)

Strengthen partnerships between training providers and First Nations communities through VAEAI and Victorian Government partnership on Government-funded, VAEAI-based positions to ensure VET and employment pathways are culturally relevant and appropriate.

Victoria's VET workforce has been designed to better support First Nations learners, with 8 Wurreker Brokers and one Wurreker Manager employed by VAEAI via Wurreker funding. The Brokers are embedded in Victoria's TAFE Network through their partnership/collaborative approach of connecting TAFEs to local First Nations communities – supporting cultural inclusivity, advancing self-determination, providing advice and opportunities for First Nations learners to succeed.

Through the Wurreker Strategy VAEAI reports on the identified training needs of the First Nations community. VAEAI promotes training opportunities to First Nations communities and industry groups, VAEAI is also consulted in the development and endorsement of relevant training curriculum and products.

Increase First Nations learners in VET by providing culturally informed advice about access to training and tertiary education opportunities.

Build trust in culturally safe, respectful, and inclusive practices.

Aligns to Priority Reforms 1, 2, 3

Koorie Liaison Officers (KLOs) and Koorie Learner Support Officers (KSSOs)

Work with training providers and communities to support First Nations VET learners, ensuring culturally inclusive education, better outcomes, and support transition to employment through partnership between TAFEs and State Government. The initiative has employed 17 Koorie Liaison Officers and 32 Koorie Student Support Officers

To increase rates of participation and completion by providing support to First Nations VET learners with enrolment, course advice and cultural support.

Build trust in culturally safe, respectful, and inclusive practices.

Aligns to Priority Reforms 1 and 3

Key Action	Rationale
<p>Koorie Units</p> <p>Dedicated services within TAFEs that provide culturally inclusive environments, offering support and guidance to First Nations learners to enhance their education and promote employment pathways through partnership with the Victorian Government.</p>	<p>To increase rates of participation and completion by providing a safe space for First Nations learners in VET.</p> <p>Build trust in culturally safe, respectful, and inclusive practices.</p> <p>Aligns to Priority Reforms 1 and 3</p>
<p>ACCO-led RTOs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACCO-led RTOs are achieving higher completion rates for First Nations learners than public providers, supported by services such as student mentors, which deliver high-quality education and merit-prioritised funding. • ACCO-led RTOs, such as VACCHO, play a pivotal role in conducting extensive community engagement to assess and address the unique needs of First Nations learners. • Regional ACCOs, like Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation and Bendigo & District Aboriginal Co-operative facilitate meaningful engagement beyond public education providers such as TAFEs. They contribute to training pathways aligned with local workforce needs and a VET system responsive to evolving community goals and aspirations. 	<p>To increase rates of participation and completion by ensuring relevance of learning environments and programs.</p> <p>Build trust in culturally safe, respectful, and inclusive practices.</p> <p>Aligns to Priority Reforms 2, 3</p>
<p>Cultural Safety/Awareness Training</p> <p>First Nations-delivered training to build cultural competency in organisations, fostering informed, respectful, and collaborative relationships with First Nations communities through Partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and training providers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TAFEs provide Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training to staff with introductory knowledge of First Nations cultures in Victoria and respectful ways of working with First Nations students, colleagues and partners and pave the way for creating more inclusive learning spaces and workplaces. • VACCHO delivers Introduction to Aboriginal Cultural Safety training which encompasses and builds on cultural awareness content by providing advice to implement cultural safety considerations into practice. 	<p>To instil understanding and respect for First Nations people and culture, creating culturally inclusive and safe environments where First Nations people feel respected, valued, free from discrimination, and able to express their cultural identity safely.</p> <p>Aligns to Priority Reforms 2, 3</p>

Key Action

Rationale

Teaching and Strengthening First Nations languages and VET courses

Develop and deliver formal qualifications designed to preserve First Nations languages and foster cultural identity.

- Certificates in Teaching and Learning First Nations languages.

Deliver VET courses in partnerships with Traditional Owners of Country in Victoria; First Nations peak bodies such as VAEAI; TAFEs; Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations; and the Victorian Government, to prepare First Nations learners for employment or further education while strengthening personal connections and exploring First Nations cultures and communities

- Certificates I, II, and III in Mumgu-dahl tyama-tiyt.

An expression of interest to deliver the courses in 2025 is underway. Three proposals have been received to date. The sector is engaged in growing the pool of First Nations language teachers trained in delivering language courses to meet growing demand and protect Victorian First Nations languages.

To preserve and promote the teaching and learning of First Nations languages and increase the number of First Nations teachers delivering language courses.

To foster cultural connection while equipping learners with literacy, numeracy, and vocational skills that strengthen cultural connection and prepare them for future employment or education pathways.

Aligns to Priority Reforms 1, 2, 3

Key Action

'Earn and Learn' Model

Offer First Nations people interested in pursuing a career within the health services and community sector the opportunity to work full time while developing essential workplace skills.

Work across the Victorian Government to fund and support the operational compliance requirements and the cultural work that ACCO-led RTOs deliver in provision of high-quality, culturally aligned education and training particularly in vital sectors like early childhood education and care, community services and health.

- VACSAL's targeted statewide employment program facilitates educational pathways into education support and teaching qualifications for First Nations people. It includes wrap-around support services for First Nations students studying a Certificate IV in School-Based Education Support while working in schools across Victoria. This 'earn and learn model' enhances outcomes for sustainable employment in the school workforce for First Nations people.
- Partnership with Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) and Skills and Employment in the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions 2024-25 have provided wrap-around supports to transition students through training enrolment, course completion and into paid employment.
- Rumbalara and Kaiela Institute partner with local employers to identify current and future job vacancies in the Goulburn Murray region and match them with the skills available in First Nations job seekers (including school leavers and adults who are unemployed, under-employed or looking for career progression). They support individuals into direct employment or pathways to employment, co-designed with employers. Rumbalara is building a pipeline of talent through schools, TAFE and higher education that is targeted to meet employer demand, and Kaiela is coordinating a regionally integrated educational ecosystem through a Centre of Excellence.

Rationale

To increase rates of completion and employment transition in First Nations learners by providing targeted, culturally appropriate guidance, support and mentoring to Students, Trainees, and their employers, pre- and post-employment.

Build trust in culturally safe, respectful, and inclusive practices.

Aligns to Priority Reforms 2, 3



Supporting the Net Zero transformation



The Net Zero transformation in a Victorian context

Victoria was one of the first jurisdictions in the world to put a Net Zero emissions target in law. The Victorian Government brought forward the commitment to achieve Net Zero from 2050 to 2045.

Victoria beat its first target to reduce emissions 15-20% below 2005 levels by 2020 with a cut of almost 30%.

Building on this success, the Victorian Government has set targets that provide a clear path to Net Zero emissions.

Victoria is progressing towards Net Zero emissions and workforce impacts are anticipated across all industry sectors. The clean economy pillars—climate change mitigation and adaptation, renewable energy and circular economy and carbon sequestration—are rapidly evolving to create and transition jobs that demand sustainable technologies, ongoing innovation and adaptation of skills.

The clean economy transition will transform thousands of existing jobs through new skills needs and emerging technologies. This provides Victorians with opportunities to re-skill, up-skill and move into new sectors where their qualifications will be highly valued. Victoria's transition is expected to create around 10,000 additional jobs per year from now until 2030 and transform more than 500,000 existing jobs through new skills training.⁵

These new roles range from energy auditing to environmental certification, solar technicians, climate change analysis and more. Targeted training and skills programs will be key in addressing the increased skills demand in key sectors including manufacturing, engineering, electricity, construction, offshore operations, logistics and supply chain management to name a few.

To support this transition the 2023–24 State Budget allocated \$26.6 million to expand VET Delivered to School Students (VDSS), providing Victorian students with work-based learning in high-demand industries like clean energy. This includes \$7.6 million for 10,000 students to gain work experience in clean energy and in-demand sectors, and \$7.5 million to develop a clean energy pathway as part of a Core Offering of VDSS certificates and implement an information-sharing portal for schools and TAFEs to improve access to VDSS. In 2024, school student enrolments in Renewable Energy and Engineering VET courses increased by 28% from 2023.

In June 2023, the Victorian Government released its *Clean Economy Workforce Development Strategy 2023-2033*, setting out the transformation needed in Victoria's approach to skilling to prepare for a Net Zero future. This Strategy provides a 10-year framework to guide government, industry, and the workforce, as the need for skilled workers increases.

The Gippsland Region is supported in transition by two key documents. The first, the *Latrobe Valley and Gippsland Transition Plan* (the Plan) was developed in 2023. The Plan has been developed through a partnership approach representing the region's aspirations for a positive future and is widely supported by key stakeholders and the community. It presents opportunities to bring education, training and employment to Gippsland to create a pipeline of skilled workers for the clean economy. Second, the *Gippsland Regional Plan* (GRP) identifies a range of economic, liveability and enabling opportunities to diversify and transition the regional economy.

⁵ Premier of Victoria (2023) *Victoria's Clean Economy Workforce Driving Net-Zero*, June 2023.



Supporting the Net Zero transformation

Drivers of change

- The time-limited nature of the Victorian Government's climate targets increases the urgency to develop Victoria's clean economy workforce.
- Job vacancies in Victoria remain elevated and higher than they were in February 2020, whilst unemployment remains low. Growing priority sectors without drawing workers from other industries will require attracting people from outside the current labour force.
- 'Earn and learn' employment initiatives have proven effective in supporting industries facing workforce shortages to create new, entry-level jobs and provide effective pathways for disadvantaged jobseekers.
- Research shows that men make up almost two thirds of the clean energy workforce in Australia.⁶
- Victoria's Clean Economy Workforce Development Strategy identified several occupations in high demand. Demand for these occupations is expected to intensify as more projects come on stream, particularly the construction skills associated with clean energy infrastructure.
- As highlighted in the 2022 Skills Plan, the workforce impact of clean energy projects points to new skills being required across Victoria, particularly in regional areas as new forms of energy generation, transmission and distribution are put in place.
- The Victorian labour market is already seeing growing industry demand for clean economy related skills.⁷

⁶ Commonwealth Minister for Skills and Training (22 January 2024) 'Boosting women's participation in our clean energy workforce vital to green future', *Minister's Media Centre*.

⁷ Victorian Skills Authority, Victorian Skills Plan Update for 2024 into 2025, Victorian Government, November 2024



Victorian focus areas and actions contributing to this National Priority

The Victorian Government will remain focused on the implementation of Victoria's Clean Economy Workforce Development Strategy (the Strategy). The Strategy is anchored around 3 clean-economy pillars—climate change mitigation and adaptation, renewable energy, and the circular economy—and is built on 5 strategic priorities:

- reimagined skills model
- flexible education and training product design
- timely provision of education and training
- enhanced workforce planning and attraction
- stewardship of the skills transition.

To further support Victoria's nation-leading target on renewable electricity generation, the Victorian Government is developing the Victorian Energy Jobs Plan, to be released in early 2025. This plan will lay the path to develop the workforce for renewable electricity generation, and drive investment confidence to enable the energy transition. The Plan will:

- support more people to enter and excel in the energy workforce, including transitioning workers
- increase diversity in the energy workforce by supporting underrepresented groups to enter, such as women, people with disabilities and First Peoples
- identify how Victoria's education and training sector can support current and future energy workforce needs
- support local communities across Victoria to benefit from energy sector jobs and skills development
- improve industry confidence and increase renewable energy investment in Victoria.

Several initiatives are already being actioned to facilitate the transition to a clean economy. The VSA through the Skills Plan provides an update on the implementation of the strategy. The VSA in consultation with its Clean Economy Industry Advisory Group also provides advice on future skills needs and key clean economy projects including developing a Victoria-wide workforce planning tool for providers to inform skills delivery. The VSA work also involves working with the Victorian TAFE Network and other stakeholders through clean economy Skills Labs to co-design a new educational offering for the sustainable construction industry.

The Victorian Government will continue to work with its TAFE network to ensure it is best placed to respond and adapt to the anticipated training needs. For example, in developing new VET Certificates in Renewable Energy the VSA is working with Victoria's Office of TAFE Coordination and Delivery (OTCD) and the Victoria's State Electricity Commission's (SEC) Centre of Training Excellence (CoTE) to ensure industry and TAFE perspectives are embedded in course design and opportunities are explored to co-deliver renewable energy training courses.

Victoria is also delivering on a range of programs and initiatives to address this national priority, some of which are set out in the table below.



Supporting the Net Zero transformation

Key Action	Rationale
<p>TAFE Clean Energy Fund</p> <p>The Fund will support the development of new state-of-the-art facilities which includes specialised equipment to help learners develop the skills they need for careers in renewable energy.</p> <p>TAFE Gippsland is revitalising its Morwell Campus to establish a Clean Energy Centre.</p> <p>Federation University is delivering Stage 2 of the Asia Pacific Renewable Energy Training Centre at its Mt Helen Campus in Ballarat.</p> <p>South West TAFE in Warrnambool is being expanded to develop specific trade buildings. This will accommodate students from several existing trades sites across Warrnambool and include additional capacity in preparation for a proposed South West Victoria Clean Energy and Technologies Hub.</p> <p>A portion of the funding from the Fund will also be used towards specialist TAFE infrastructure to train the clean economy workforce.</p>	<p>Centres will deliver training in regional Victoria to respond to the skills needs for the energy transition of the Victorian economy.</p>
<p>VSA's Clean Economy Skills Labs</p> <p>Victoria has established 3 TAFE Network Clean Economy Skills Labs to develop training in offshore wind, circular design and residential building and construction and to meet net-zero emissions targets. These Skills Labs bring together leading education and training providers, industry/business, workers and their representatives, learners, and government to co-design new approaches to skills development. Melbourne Polytechnic and TAFE Gippsland are leading these Skills Labs, in partnership with support TAFEs, for the benefit of the whole Victorian TAFE Network.</p>	<p>These Skills Labs facilitate a coordinated training response to address the needs of Victoria's clean economy workforce.</p>
<p>The Victorian TAFE Network Clean Economy Prospectus</p> <p>The prospectus is a resource for business and industry that shows the TAFE Network's capacity (current and potential) to support skills and training for the clean economy. It covers TAFEs capacity in renewable energy, circular economy, and climate change mitigation and adaptation.</p>	<p>This prospectus is intended to facilitate new connections and partnerships between Victoria's business community and Victoria's TAFEs and dual-sector universities to develop solutions for emerging workforce and skill needs.</p>
<p>Priority Apprenticeships Model</p> <p>The model supports regionally based teams including a team based in Gippsland to work with industry to increase the number of apprenticeships and traineeships in clean economy sites.</p>	<p>The aim of the Priority Apprenticeships Model is to increase the number of apprenticeships in the clean economy.</p>

Key Action

Rationale

The State Electricity Commission (SEC) Centre of Training Excellence (CoTE)

The SEC CoTE will support workforce development and address current challenges with attraction and training of the renewable energy workforce, including to help build the next generation of renewable energy workers.

Increase the number of apprentices and build practical work-ready skills.

Support and boost quality training that aligns with the needs of industry.

Build awareness and excitement of renewable energy jobs.

Wind Worker Training Centre and Renewable Hydrogen Worker Training Centre

The training centres will support industry in the long term by developing a pipeline of young and emerging workers to address the ongoing need for specialised skills (e.g. through industry-led apprenticeships, on the job training, or accredited qualifications).



Sustaining essential care services



Essential care services in a Victorian context

The care economy provides the critical infrastructure and support that develops and maintains people's capabilities, independence, safety and quality of life. Across a person's lifetime, this includes health, education, justice and social services, and both paid and unpaid care.

The care economy impacts the performance of every other sector by enabling labour force participation. An aging population, population growth and community expectations have contributed to its expansion. Victoria's healthcare workforce, for example, has grown by 33% since 2011.⁸

Workers are needed to deliver on the Victorian Government's reform agenda including Best Start, Best Life, hospital precincts and 50 new Early Learning Centres.

The care economy is now the largest employer in Victoria, currently accounting for 15% of the Victorian workforce,⁹ with 1 in 10 working Victorians employed in medical, nursing, allied health, social services, administration, corporate or operational healthcare roles. Nearly one-quarter of these workers live in rural or regional Victoria – helping to ensure access to healthcare and providing economic opportunities that keep our regional communities strong.

Drivers of change

- The VSA forecasts around 22% of all new Victorian workers entering the workforce between 2024 and 2027 will be in the care economy.¹⁰
- Out of all industries in Victoria, the care economy has the highest proportion of women. It is also a key enabler of women's workforce participation. However, gender segregation limits labour mobility and exacerbates shortages.
- Reducing health and wellbeing risk factors through early intervention can reduce demand for more intensive critical services.

Victorian focus areas and actions contributing to this National Priority

The Victorian Government will remain focused on identifying and driving opportunities to deliver the right skills for the care economy jobs of today and tomorrow, including in areas such as family violence, child protection, disability support and mental health. In fact, Victoria is already delivering a range of programs and initiatives to address this national priority, some of which are set out in the table below

⁸ Department of Health, *Victorian Health Workforce Strategy*, Victorian Government, February 2024.

⁹ Jobs and Skills Australia, *Towards a National Jobs and Skills Roadmap: Annual Jobs and Skills Report 2023*, Australian Government, October 2023.

¹⁰ Victorian Skills Authority, *Victorian Skills Plan for 2024 into 2025*, Victorian Government, November 2024.



Sustaining essential care services

Key Action

Rationale

Free and subsidised training

Victoria offers fee-free access to 30 qualifications and skills sets for jobs in the care economy, including Diploma of Nursing, Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care and Certificate III in Individual Support. These courses are funded using a combination of Victorian and Commonwealth funding.

The 2024 Training Needs List (TNL) reports the courses and skill sets subsidised by the Victorian Government under Skills First. There are 78 courses on the TNL that directly relate to the Care Economy industries.

Free TAFE continues to remove barriers to training for Victorians and deliver a pipeline of skilled workers for Victoria's in-demand industries.

Pilot higher apprenticeship model

In 2021, Victoria contracted RMIT to pilot a higher apprenticeship model in the social services sector, funding new approaches to skills acquisition in the workplace.

Approximately 300 workers enrolled in the Advance Diploma of Community Sector Management and 100 workers in the Certificate IV in Disability. The program also reported 297 enrolments in the Advanced Diploma of Community Sector Management and 108 in Certificate IV in Disability.

The program was established in response to the growing demand for high quality services in the social service sector and the need to grow and upskill its workforce.

Victorian Health Workforce Strategy

This 10-year Strategy sets out Victoria's plan to bolster the healthcare workforce's capacity and capability. It acknowledges existing pressures and provides a roadmap for how we will support our workforce to deliver high-quality healthcare for all Victorians, and ensure they have the workplaces, systems, careers pathways, training, and capacity so that all people across the health system can continue to do their best work.

Implementation of the Strategy will increase the supply of priority roles, strengthen rural and regional workforces, improve employee experiences, build future roles and capabilities, leverage data and digital technology solutions.

Building Better TAFE Fund: A Victorian Centre of Excellence in Disability and Inclusion

The Centre is being developed at The Gordon in Geelong through co-creation with local community and people and organisations with lived experience of disability. The Centre will showcase leading education and inclusion practices, support employers to build their inclusion approaches for people with disability and create a seamless journey for learners with disabilities to advance their education to employment pathways and outcomes.

A Centre will provide support for learners with disability to participate in training. It will bring together industries, TAFE networks, learners and graduates with disabilities, researchers and the disability sector to improve training and employment pathways to enhance employment outcomes for people with disabilities.

It will also assist in building capabilities and a culture of disability equity and inclusion in and across the TAFE network to improve transition, participation, retention and completion of learners with disabilities.

Key Action

Care economy industry practice network

The Adult, Community and Foundation Education Board funds a care economy industry practice network that facilitates training provider engagement with care economy businesses. It provides non-accredited care economy contextualized courses to support students to attain the skills to transition to accredited courses and jobs in the care economy.

Rationale

The program creates a workforce pipeline towards accredited training and jobs to meet industry demand.



Developing Australia's sovereign capability and food security



Australia's sovereign capability and food security in a Victorian context

The National Skills Plan *Building a skilled Australia through Vocational Education and Training* defines Australia's sovereign capability broadly. It is the capability to deliver against areas of national interest using industrial, economic, agricultural, logistical, research and educational capabilities.

In supporting this priority Victoria has focused on its manufacturing and agricultural sectors.



Manufacturing

Victoria has a vibrant manufacturing sector. Victoria is home to more than 23,000 manufacturing firms, employs more than 260,000 people and provides 30% of the nation's manufacturing output.¹¹ A well-functioning manufacturing industry is critical for the success and growth of other industries.

Maintaining a vibrant manufacturing sector is a long-term endeavour of the Victorian Government and requires sustained and targeted support to build essential capabilities and internationally competitive businesses. The availability of the workforce is a key determinant in attracting manufacturers to Victoria.



Food Security

Victoria is a net exporter of food. It provides food for Victorians and drives significant export value both interstate and internationally. In 2021 to 2022, Victoria, accounted for 24% of all farm businesses in Australia¹² and is a major contributor to the nation's economy.

The sector employs 1.9% of the total Victorian workforce¹³, with around 80% of employment in agricultural production in regional Victoria. Modelling suggests that for every Victorian job in agriculture or food processing, there are an additional 1.2 jobs generated elsewhere in the economy (Agriculture Victoria RISE model 2021-22).¹⁴

In addition, to ensure a sustainable channel of skills within priority industries, the Victorian Government has expanded access to VET for school students focusing on high-demand sectors including agriculture and environment. In 2024, school student enrolments in Agriculture and Environment VET course increased by 10% from 2023.

¹¹ *Made in Victoria 2030– Manufacturing Statement*, Victorian Government, October 2022

¹² The Department of Transport and Planning, *Submission to the Legislative Assembly Inquiry into securing Victoria's food supply*, Victorian Government, May 2024

¹³ Victorian Skills Authority, *Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing Industry Insight for the Victorian for Skills Plan for 2022 into 2023 A shared vision for skills-led solutions*, Victorian Government, October 2022

¹⁴ The Department of Transport and Planning, *Submission to the Legislative Assembly Inquiry into securing Victoria's food supply*, Victorian Government, May 2024



Developing Australia's sovereign capability and food security

Drivers of change

- Victoria's manufacturing workforce and its agriculture, forestry and fishing industry workforce are both male-dominated with a higher proportion of workers over 50 years of age.
- While the manufacturing workforce is expected to grow driven by investment in advanced manufacturing the workforce will need to adapt to the increasing use of technology.
- The agriculture sector also requires a skilled, adaptive, and productive workforce to ensure a resilient food supply. However, securing an appropriate workforce faces several challenges, including housing availability, skills shortages, remote work locations, and working conditions.

Victorian focus areas and actions contributing to this National Priority

The Victorian Government will remain focused on attracting new and more diverse workers into these sectors.

The Victorian Government will also develop a broader 'Women in manufacturing strategy' in late 2024 that identifies actions needed from all parts of the manufacturing industry to break down the barriers to women's participation, including access to education and training.

To support the manufacturing sector in growing and upskilling their workforce the Victorian Government will continue to invest in its TAFE Network. This investment will support TAFEs in partnering with industry and provide high quality and innovative training to meet the needs of the manufacturing sector.

Similarly, the Victorian Government will continue to invest in its regional TAFE Network which are anchor institutions for education and training in their region and are key players in supporting regional development, including in manufacturing and agriculture.

Key Action

The Local Jobs First Policy & Major Projects Skills Guarantee

Local Jobs First Policy supports Victorian businesses and workers by ensuring that small to medium size enterprises are given opportunities to compete for large and small government contracts, helping to ensure a pipeline of work for local supply chains, supporting a wide range of manufacturing businesses, from construction materials to medical equipment.

The Major Projects Skills Guarantee under the *Local Jobs First Act 2003* provides opportunities for Victorian apprentices, trainees and cadets to work on high value (\$20 million or above) government construction projects. This initiative can help to kickstart careers and support future industry capability, for example, by helping to train the next generation of skilled workers and exposing local apprentices, trainees and cadets to workplace practices, technologies and innovations.

SuniTAFE SMART Farm development

The SuniTAFE SMART farm is being further developed to increase its capacity to lead SMART Horticulture farming in Victoria. The development includes construction of new shedding (~750sqm); the redevelopment of 3ha to 5ha of research farm, including citrus, avocados, dates; and upgrades to staff facilities and student training spaces. The SuniTAFE SMART Farm utilises automation and technology and is due to be completed by February 2025.

Rationale

These initiatives create job and training opportunities for Victorians in the manufacturing sector.

The SuniTAFE SMART Farm is investing in training in Sustainable, Manageable, Accessible, Rural Technologies (SMART) farming equipment, technologies and best practice processes, to develop the workforce of tomorrow.



Ensuring Australia's digital and technology capability



Digital and technology capability in a Victorian context

In our increasingly digitalised society, digital and technology skills are critical for the vast majority of workers. Victoria is home to one of the nation's leading digital economies, built on the state's digital infrastructure, research and development capabilities, technology precincts and talented workforce. From 2014 to 2022, the Victorian technology workforce has increased by 100,000 to reach 279,000 employees, making up 30% of the national technology workforce. 54% of the Victorian workforce work outside of the ICT industry, highlighting its importance to the broader economy.¹⁵

Digital skills are in demand and critical for Australia's future economic growth, necessitating a workforce that is not only digitally skilled but digitally literate. Victoria's VET sector needs new approaches to curriculum and qualifications design that develop digital capabilities as the learning outcome. This reflects the fact that digital skills and literacy apply across industries and occupations and are needed to engage with a wide range of technologies in both work and life.

¹⁵ Department of Jobs, Skills Industry and Regions, *Victorian Digital Technology Sector Factsheet 2023*, Victorian Government, May 2024.

Drivers of change

- Economic transformation and rapid technological advancements are driving the need for a newly skilled workforce that can respond to changing needs in emerging and high-growth industries and deploy new technologies.
- Skills shortages are a critical constraint on realising the economic benefits of digital technology. Over three-quarters of Victorian digital technology businesses face skill and capability gaps, compared to 38% of businesses in the Australian economy.¹⁶
- The increased use of artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning and generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI) tools are impacting skills needs and reshaping IT occupations. Around 39% of Victorian IT businesses use AI and Machine Learning.¹⁷
- Given the rapid changes in skills needed to keep pace with emerging technology in IT jobs, learners and IT businesses are increasingly using internal or industry specific training, in addition to formal qualifications.
- There is limited coverage of digital skills in non-IT VET qualifications, despite almost 90% of the workforce, including in health, retail, manufacturing and agriculture industries needing a base level of digital skills.¹⁸
- With an economy that is increasingly digitalised, Victorians may face barriers to accessing the social and democratic inclusion that comes with material economic participation if they don't have basic digital literacy.

¹⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Characteristics of Australian Businesses 2021-2022*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, June 2023.

¹⁷ Department of Jobs, Skills Industry and Regions, *Victorian Digital Technology Sector Factsheet 2023*, Victorian Government, May 2024.

¹⁸ Victorian Skills Authority, *Victorian Skills Plan for 2024 into 2025*, Victorian Government, October 2024.



Ensuring Australia's Digital and Technology Capability

Victorian focus areas and actions contributing to this National Priority

With digital and technology skills being an important enabler for participation in today's economy and society more generally, the Victorian Government will remain focused on implementing initiatives to ensure Victorians have access to pre-accredited and accredited training. The Victorian Government is continuing to make significant investments to boost the digital skills of the state's workforce both within the technology sector and across the workforce more broadly. Some of these range of programs and initiatives are set out in the table below.

Key Action	Rationale
<p>Free TAFE</p> <p>Victoria offers fee-free access to a number of qualifications, including the Certificate IV in Cyber security and Certificate III in Information Technology. These courses are funded using a combination of Victorian and Commonwealth funding.</p>	<p>Free TAFE continues to remove barriers to training for Victorians and deliver a pipeline of skilled workers for Victoria's in-demand industries.</p>
<p>Digital Jobs</p> <p>The Digital Jobs program is supporting over 5,400 mid-career Victorians to complete 12 weeks of industry-backed digital skills training, access career coaching support, and to apply for a 12-week paid work placement with a business in Victoria's technology sector.</p>	<p>The Digital Jobs program is continuing to build Victoria's digital workforce by upskilling mid-career Victorians so they can transition into digital careers.</p>
<p>Women in Security Program</p> <p>Victoria is partnering with the Australian Women in Security Network to deliver the Women in Security Program. Through comprehensive training, certification opportunities, and personalised mentorship, we will provide up to 90 ambitious women in Victoria with the skills, knowledge, and confidence needed to thrive in cybersecurity roles. This program builds on the success of the pilot which supported 24 women.</p>	<p>The program contributes to addressing the increasing demand for workers in cybersecurity and gender imbalance in the technology sector by providing women with pathways to transition into cyber jobs and cyber leadership roles.</p>
<p>Learn Local courses</p> <p>Victoria funded over 220 Learn Local providers that offer a wide range of low-cost pre-accredited training in 2024. This training provides Victorians with the skills they need for work, study and life. These Learn Locals offer over 600 digital skills courses to assist Victorians to develop foundational digital skills and represent more than 25% of all pre-accredited courses designed to reduce barriers to accessing accredited training and employment.</p>	<p>Learn Local courses enable students to develop their skills in a wide range of areas, opening up employment and further education possibilities, and helping them to better connect with their community.</p>

Key Action

The Skills Solutions Partnerships (SSP) program

This grant program is designed to encourage collaboration between industry and education providers to quickly address skills gaps through industry responsive short courses in 5 priority sectors including digital.

Supported projects receive funding to co-design training solution and successful projects are eligible for further funding to develop, deliver and evaluate the pilot.

Rationale

Co-designed short training aims to upskill, re-skill or develop new workers and include an on-the-job learning model (such as a placement or work-integrated learning component) to support training participants' employment and/or progression outcomes.



Delivering
reforms to
improve the
regulation
of VET
qualifications
and quality



Regulation of VET qualifications and quality in a Victorian context

The related reforms of VET qualifications and of national regulation of RTOs are both Victorian Government priorities associated with our commitment to TAFE.

The VSA has led the development of innovative approaches to VET qualifications through the collaboration of its Skills Labs with Victorian TAFEs.

The Victorian Government has supported national regulatory reforms, including the revision of the Standards for RTOs, while advocating for differentiated regulation of TAFEs in recognition of their established governance and leadership, their mature self-assurance functions, and effective oversight by the state and territory governments. In Victoria, the quality of teaching and learning in our TAFEs has been led by the OTCD's coordination of an Academic Senate.

Drivers of change

- There is a history of training providers that are rorting the VET system and/or delivering poor quality training to Victorian students
- Existing VET qualifications are constructed with a one-size-fits-all competency model that can atomise learning and put people at a disadvantage
- Across the economy, workers are expected to undertake more cognitive and non-routine tasks, increasing the need for quality training to better knowledge and complement existing skills
- Current accreditation processes may be impacting the responsiveness of national and state training systems.



Delivering reforms to improve the regulation of VET qualifications and quality

Victorian focus areas and actions contributing to this National Priority

Victoria is already delivering a range of programs and initiatives to address this national priority, some of which are set out in the table below.

Key Action	Rationale
<p>Reform to the Standards for registered training organisations</p> <p>Victoria has contributed to the development of revised, outcome-based Standards for RTOs, along with revised compliance requirements.</p> <p>The revised standards and associated policies are to be enacted in January 2025 and take full regulatory effect from July 2025.</p>	<p>A shift in regulatory supervision from input controls to outcomes monitoring should enable the national regulator to focus upon ensuring that RTOs provide improved outcomes for students.</p> <p>The development also supports a greater focus on self-assurance in RTOs and support for continuous improvement.</p>
<p>Pilot higher apprenticeship model</p> <p>The Victorian Government through Apprenticeships Victoria is currently working with the Commonwealth through the Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council to resolve issues that impede the development of a fit-for-purpose model including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A lack of integrated pathways between the VET and higher education sectors• Skills gaps and challenges for workforce developing in Victoria’s evolving industries.• Inflexible entry, exit and assessment points in education programs for diverse learner needs.• Inconsistent and confusing terminology.	<p>In establishing its Higher Apprenticeship pilots, the Victorian Government recognised that the Higher Apprenticeship model, with its combination of on-the-job training and formal qualifications, can be used to attract potential workers and address skill gaps and shortages in key industries.</p> <p>Establishing a combined qualification consisting of formal and on-the-job training at the Australian Qualification Framework, Level 5 or above may create opportunities for education providers to meet genuine and emerging demands for new skill sets.</p>
<p>Skills First Contract</p> <p>Through the Skills First program, the Victorian Government is committed to providing high quality training that aligns with industry and community demands and workforce needs. Skills First sets a high benchmark for training quality.</p>	<p>The Skills First Contract assists in ensuring value for money in taxpayer-funded training and broadly aligns with regulatory requirements.</p>

The Victorian Government will remain focused on identifying and driving opportunities to improve regulation of VET qualifications and quality by:

- Working with the Commonwealth and Australian Skills Quality Authority to consider options to enable TAFE self-accreditation that would enable selected TAFEs to develop new, industry-valued qualifications in advance of the current system
- Contributing to the work of the Qualification Reform Design Group to investigate new models for VET qualifications
- Supporting the Victorian Industry Advisory Groups to work with the national Jobs and Skills Councils to develop broader based qualifications
- Commencing work to develop a more consistent, coordinated approach to curriculum development for the Victorian TAFE network and, in due course, the National TAFE Network.





Victorian Outcomes Framework

An Outcomes Framework is under development for inclusion in the NSP. It will describe what success looks like through a 'balanced scorecard' of national targets. A 'balanced scorecard' approach recognises the VET sector's complexity, and will present progress against a range of indicators, targets and cohorts for each outcome to provide a view of the entire VET system.

The Outcomes Framework identifies and unpacks population and system level outcomes as set out in the NSA and is comprised of:

- Population outcomes are high level outcomes we desire to achieve for the population.
- System outcomes reflect outcomes we can achieve through the VET sector. The achievement of system outcomes contributes to the achievement of the higher-level population outcomes.

The Outcomes Framework is expected to be finalised by the end of 2024.

The Victorian specific outcomes aim to detail the indicators and targets, setting out the Victorian Government's ambitions for the skills system. It will link actions taken with the shared goals or objectives through outcomes, indicators and targets. As Victoria's outcomes are directly linked to the national outcomes framework, this section will be further detailed as the national outcomes framework becomes available.

National priorities



Population outcomes



System outcomes



Key stakeholders and systems



National Skills Plan



Victorian Jurisdictional Action Plan

Population outcomes

Population outcomes are aimed at whole of economy considerations that are influenced by the VET sector, among a range of other factors and systems²³.

Productivity: Productivity growth is improved by a better skilled workforce well matched to labour demand.

Labour Supply: Industries, including in critical and emerging areas, can access and develop the skilled workforce they need.

Wellbeing and Inclusion: All Australians, including priority groups, are able to build the skills needed for well-paid, secure work aligned to their interests.

Resilience: All Australians, including priority groups, have the skills that allow them to adapt in their work and life now and in the future.

Population outcome	Indicator	Aspiration
Productivity	Productivity growth for sectors where VET pathways are critical to total sector employment	Victoria strives to increase productivity growth for sectors in which VET pathways are critical to driving economic prosperity
Labour Supply	Growth in VET qualified workers in critical sectors	Victoria endeavours to drive increased growth in VET qualified workers entering sectors of critical importance in Victoria and nationally
	Increase in the pipeline of people undertaking VET courses that are linked to Victorian and national priorities	Victoria aims to increase the number of Victorians undertaking VET courses in areas of priority in Victoria and nationally
Wellbeing and Inclusion	Completion rates for women, people with disability and First Nations people	Victoria seeks to improve the rates of completion for priority groups, including women, people with disability and First Nations people
Resilience	Victorians have the opportunity to participate in VET to reskill and upskill throughout their careers	Victoria endeavours to improve rates of employees participating in further training beyond their initial qualification to gain skills required by an evolving economy

²³ Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council, *National Skills Plan: Building a skilled Australia through Vocational Education and Training*, October 2024

System outcomes

System-level outcomes are aimed at areas where the VET sector has more direct control. Achieving system outcomes will help drive improvement in population-level outcomes²⁴.

Industry Needs: VET activity is aligned to workforce demand.

Student Needs: VET learning supports and pathways are accessible and effective, and meet the diversity of learner needs and objectives, including for priority groups.

Responsive Courses: VET courses are trusted, relevant and available at the right time.

Quality Delivery: VET delivery is of a consistently high-quality and provides a positive learner experience, including for priority groups.

Collaborative and Sustainable System: VET system governance advances stewardship of an effective and efficient national VET system, strengthens partner participation, and ensures system sustainability

System outcome	Measure	Aspiration
Industry Needs	Employer satisfaction	Victoria aims to increase the level of employers' satisfaction with training
	Course completions that are linked to relevant occupations for Victorian and national priorities	Victoria seek to improve the number of course completions linked with occupations relating to Victorian and national priorities
Student Needs	Student satisfaction with training	Victoria strives to improve levels of student satisfaction with training
	Achieved main reason for training	Victoria endeavours to ensure students are able to achieve their main reason for training
	Access to foundation skills training	Victoria seeks to ensure foundation skills training is available to students who require it
	Main reason for leaving study	Victoria aims to reduce the number of students reporting their main reason for leaving study being "course was not as expected", "not happy with the training organisation" or "problems with the placement component"
Responsive Courses	Employer satisfaction	Victoria aims to increase the level of employers' satisfaction with training
	Training provides students with improved skills for their job	Victoria seeks to increase the number of students who report obtaining improved skills for their job through VET training
	Enrolments aligned to occupations in Victorian and national shortage	Victoria endeavours to increase the number of course enrolments aligned to occupations experiencing shortages in Victoria and nationally
Quality Delivery	Employer satisfaction	Victoria aims to increase the level of employers' satisfaction with training
	Student satisfaction with training	Victoria strives to improve levels of student satisfaction with training
	Improved employment circumstances	Victoria seeks to increase the number of students reporting improved employment circumstances from their training
Collaborative and Sustainable System	Strengthened partnerships and participation in stewardship of the Victorian and national VET system	Victoria aspires to strengthen partnerships with industry, training providers, and priority groups including First Nations people. Victoria also seeks to ensure their increased participation in stewardship of the Victorian and national VET system

²⁴ Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council, National Skills Plan: Building a skilled Australia through Vocational Education and Training, October 2024

Appendix A

National Skills Plan Priority	Alignment with Victorian Skills Plans	Victorian Skills Plan recommendations
<p>Delivering housing supply</p> <p>Early national actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BuildSkills JSC delivers its Workforce Plan. • 15,000 Fee-Free TAFE and VET places, and 5,000 pre-apprenticeship places for housing/construction workforce. • Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Systems revised. • Australian Skills Guarantee. 	<p>2024 Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-design VET qualifications to better meet the needs of learners and industry. • Better recognise the existing skills of workers. • Work with the Commonwealth Government to expand the financial support available to VET learners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions and the Victorian Skills Authority work with Jobs and Skills Councils to develop and pilot new qualifications that provide the transferable knowledge and skills needed across an industry. • The Victorian Skills Authority continues working with the Victorian TAFE Network and other stakeholders through clean economy Skills Labs to co-design a new educational offering for the sustainable construction industry.
<p>Gender equality</p> <p>Early national actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Women’s career Program to drive structural and cultural change • Australian Skills Guarantee 	<p>2022 Plan</p> <p>Bridge the Gender Gap</p> <hr/> <p>2024 Plan</p> <p>Build the digital capability of Victoria’s workforce</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an annual Gender Impact Assessment of the Skills Plan • Monitor the education and employment outcomes of women who enrol in training • Identify barriers to participation in education and training for women from diverse backgrounds • Partner with agencies to address gender-based barriers to training and employment • Work with industry to reduce gender segregation across industries <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore options to improve gender diversity in IT qualifications and jobs

National Skills Plan Priority	Alignment with Victorian Skills Plans	Victorian Skills Plan recommendations
<p>Closing the Gap</p> <p>Early national actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interim First Nations Partnership committee • Sector Strengthening Plan for ACCOs 	<p>2023 Plan</p> <p>Empower self-determination for First Nations people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect cultural inclusion and First Nations knowledge systems in VET • Work with training providers to foster a culturally safe learning environment for First Nations learners • Encourage training providers to increase the diversity of their workforce to enable a First Nations voice in decision making
<p>Supporting the Net Zero transformation</p> <p>Early national actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Powering Skills Organisation JSC delivers its Workforce Plan • Eligibility criteria for the New Energy Apprenticeships Program expanded • \$50 m capital and equipment investment fund • \$30 m for the clean energy teacher, trainer, assessor workforce • Supporting SMEs to access apprentices through GTOs • Canberra Institute of Technology EV Centre for Excellence • TAFE Clean Energy Skills National Centre for Excellence in WA 	<p>2022 Plan</p> <p>Build skills to support Victoria's clean economy intentions</p> <hr/> <p>2024 Plan</p> <p>Re-design VET qualifications to better meet the needs of learners and industry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Victoria-wide workforce planning tools for providers to inform skills delivery • Embed clean economy workforce priorities in the Skills Plans • Deliver programs for new clean economy skills with the OTCD <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Victorian Skills Authority continues working with the Victorian TAFE Network and other stakeholders through clean economy Skills Labs to co-design a new educational offering for the sustainable construction industry.

National Skills Plan Priority	Alignment with Victorian Skills Plans	Victorian Skills Plan recommendations
<p>Sustaining essential care services</p> <p>Early national actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HumanAbility JSC delivers its Workforce Plan • JSA & HumanAbility finalise ECEC capacity study • Commonwealth Prac Payment 	<p>2024 Plan</p> <p>Work with the Commonwealth Government to expand the financial support available to VET learners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions advocates to the Commonwealth Government to improve financial support for students undertaking mandatory unpaid placements, including through the upcoming Commonwealth Government Prac Payment.
<p>Developing Australia’s Sovereign Capability and Food Security</p> <p>Early national actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant JSCs deliver their Workforce Plans • JSA Food Supply Chain Capacity Study will be delivered by September 2024 • Fee-Free TAFE and VET places for sovereign capability • Building Women’s Career program 	<p>Sovereign capability and food security are not explicitly covered in the Victorian Skills Plans given the national aspect of these policy areas.</p> <p>However, the Victorian Skills Plans align with many of the specific elements that sit under this national priority. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing workforce participation of women and First Nations people • Supporting innovation and high-quality training in the VET sector • Providing Free TAFE in areas of priority. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify barriers to participation in education and training for women from diverse backgrounds • Partner with agencies to address gender-based barriers to training and employment • Work with industry to reduce gender segregation across industries • Reflect cultural inclusion and First Nations knowledge systems in VET • Work with training providers to foster a culturally safe learning environment for First Nations learners • Encourage training providers to increase the diversity of their workforce to enable a First Nations voice in decision making • Develop approaches and principles to embed applied research in VET

National Skills Plan Priority	Alignment with Victorian Skills Plans	Victorian Skills Plan recommendations
<p>Ensuring Australia’s digital and technology capability</p> <p>Early national actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future Skills Organisation JSC delivers its Workforce Plan • Expanding access to foundation digital skills training through the SEE program • FSO progresses earn and learn pathways • JSA foundation skill study will gather insights • Skills Ministers 10-year foundation skills strategy agreed by end of 2024 • Australian Skills Guarantee 	<p>2022 Plan</p> <p>Create innovative solutions to support future skills development</p> <hr/> <p>2024 Plan</p> <p>Build the digital capability of Victoria’s workforce</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead work to identify digital skills needed across occupations • Develop innovative approaches to address Victoria’s digital skills needs <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting up new cross industry digital advisory group • Collaborating with the FSO • Exploring options to improve gender diversity in IT qualifications and jobs • Continuing to support the delivery of digital micro-credentials

National Skills Plan Priority	Alignment with Victorian Skills Plans	Victorian Skills Plan recommendations
<p>Delivering reforms to improve the regulation of VET qualifications and quality</p> <p>Early national actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised Standards for RTOs. • VET Workforce Blueprint actions rolled out. • Work with ASQA to uplift and build its digital and data capability. • Establish a National TAFE Network. • JSCs are road testing an approach to national qualifications reform • Implementing a suite of initiatives to drive tertiary harmonisation incl. VET/HE student pathways, improving regulation for dual sectors, piloting delegating ASQA's course accreditation function to select TAFEs. 	<p>2022 Plan</p> <p>Align qualifications to new needs.</p> <hr/> <p>2023 Plan</p> <p>Deliver the skills Victoria needs through an integrated post-secondary school system.</p> <hr/> <p>2024 Plan</p> <p>Redesign VET qualifications to better meet the needs of industry.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through national skills bodies, progress qualification reform to support future skills. • Use local accreditation to quickly produce accredited micro-credentials. • Explore new curriculum models and modes of delivery with the OTCD in critical niche occupations. <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The OTCD considers developing a proposal for self-accreditation for the Victorian TAFE Network. • DJSIR and OTCD advocate for a regulatory framework that lessens the burden for the Victorian TAFE Network. • The OTCD and Victorian TAFE Network establish partnerships with universities and higher education institutes that recognises the unique value of VET. • Advocate to the Commonwealth for learners to have access to higher education subsidies where TAFE acts as an access point for higher education. <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department of Jobs, Skills Industry and Regions and the Victorian Skills Authority work with Jobs and Skills Councils to develop and pilot new qualifications that provide the transferrable knowledge and skills needed across an industry. • The Victorian Skills Authority continues working with the Victorian TAFE Network and other stakeholders through clean economy Skills Labs to co-design a new educational offering for the sustainable construction industry.



