


Skilled. Thriving. Connected.

Our Policy Direction for Skills
in South Australia



Government
of South Australia

Department for Education



We acknowledge that *Skilled. Thriving. Connected.* – *Our Policy Direction for Skills in South Australia* was developed on the traditional lands of South Australia's First Peoples, and we respect their spiritual relationship with their country.

In delivering skills in South Australia, we acknowledge the importance of understanding Aboriginal knowledge, languages, cultures, and voices which provide important contributions and value across our workplaces, training providers, partnerships, and communities.

We respect and appreciate the important input to this plan, including the feedback, advice and experiences provided from a broad range of Aboriginal learners, training providers, industry, and supporters.

Note: *The South Australian Government uses the term 'Aboriginal' to refer to people who identify as Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, or both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. This term is preferred by Aboriginal South Australians and the South Australian Government.*

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Ministerial Foreword

The Malinauskas Labor Government is driving skills reform in South Australia. The launch of *Skilled. Thriving. Connected.* Our Policy Direction for Skills in South Australia (*Skilled. Thriving. Connected.*) is a significant step forward for our state. It sets out a clear response to immediate skills needs and signals how we will support South Australians to engage in education and training and transition into secure, well-paid jobs.

South Australia faces persistent skills shortages, which are felt by industry, businesses, and the community. We know that we need people skilled in the areas that provide broad ranging benefits to our economy and community such as defence, early childhood education, clean energy, health, building and construction, and ICT.

In developing *Skilled. Thriving. Connected.*, we have worked with industry, unions, employers, learners, and providers to understand our state's skills needs, and have already invested \$13.7 million in immediate response initiatives based on that feedback.

In October 2023, we signed a landmark 5-year National Skills Agreement (NSA) with the Commonwealth Government to deliver a \$2.29 billion investment in skills for South Australia. The agreement confirms our commitment to TAFE SA as the centre of the training system, complemented by industry and community-based training providers. Providing extra support services for students and revitalising TAFE SA campuses will drive capacity and capability to meet our state's needs.

The vision, priorities and reforms described here will not be achieved in isolation. The vocational education and training (VET) sector plays a key role in providing strong economic and social outcomes for South Australians. We will implement *Skilled. Thriving. Connected.* in partnership with key stakeholders to drive successful outcomes for people, the economy and community.

South Australia's VET system must work for everyone. We will get that right so that South Australia capitalises on the opportunities we have before us.



Hon Blair Boyer MP
*Minister for Education,
Training and Skills*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B. Boyer'.

Current State

South Australia faces immediate skills challenges that need to be addressed as a matter of priority. South Australia is facing persistent skill shortages with 351 occupations currently in shortage, up from 149 in 2021¹ and 60 percent of recruiting employers reporting recruitment difficulties².

This comes at a time where we need more South Australians skilled for a range of government priorities. This includes the care sector, including early childhood education and care and in our hospitals; in our construction sector, on government projects and in commercial buildings and homes; and in our tech sector to support high tech work, cyber security and IT roles across all businesses. South Australia also needs to grow the workforce to support our transition to a green economy and to build defence capability.

South Australia has the lowest proportion of the working age population with a non-school qualification; the lowest percentage of young people fully engaged in employment or study in Australia³, and a completion rate for VET qualifications at 48.8 percent⁴. Some groups of learners have lower completion rates⁴ and poorer employment outcomes after training⁵ than average. This may be attributed to the complexity of the skills system and *Skilled. Thriving. Connected.* will seek to improve outcomes for these learners.

For too long, the requirements for TAFE SA as the public provider have not been appropriately recognised and funded, compromising its capacity to deliver what South Australians expect of it.

The constant push amongst the Australian population for students to attend university, rather than pursuing highly valuable vocational pathways have negatively impacted the reputation and perceived value of VET.

Lifting skill levels, enabling opportunities for young people through VET and supporting more people to complete their study is increasingly important. Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) is forecasting that 9 in 10 new jobs by 2033 will require post-school education. JSA also observe that 45 per cent of future jobs have VET as a primary pathway⁶.

We are aware of the challenges South Australia faces but also recognise there is a strong base to build on.

1 Jobs and Skills Australia, Skills Priority List 2023

2 Jobs and Skills Australia, Recruitment Experiences and Outlook Survey (REOS) Recruitment Insights Report – October 2023

3 Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) Education and Work Australia data for 2023

4 National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) VET qualification completion rates 2022 report

5 NCVER Student Outcomes 2023 Report

6 Jobs and Skills Australia, Towards a National Jobs and Skills Roadmap – Annual Jobs and Skills Report 2023

Each year over 200,000 people undertake some form of VET in South Australia. Of these around 70,000 are supported through a subsidy paid by government to a training provider to help reduce fees. Over the past year, around 12,500 students have had access to a fee free training place through Fee-Free TAFE and vocational education. The Australian and South Australian Governments have invested in an additional 15,000 places to be made available over three years from the start of 2024. This further commitment builds on the success of Fee-Free TAFE and vocational education to date.

South Australia's VET system has many strengths, reflected through consistently high levels of employer and student satisfaction, with 85 per cent of employers satisfied with nationally recognised VET⁷ and 89.9 per cent of government-funded South Australian qualification completers satisfied with their training⁸.

There have also been recent increases in students choosing to study VET, with South Australian Government-funded VET student numbers increasing by 9.5 per cent to 54,665 in the first six months of 2023 when compared to the same period the year prior⁹.

VET has a central role to play in enabling more South Australians to gain qualifications and take up well paid and valued jobs. Through careful and considered planning and providing support for learners to succeed, South Australia can access untapped potential within its population for the jobs most in demand and support South Australians to capitalise on the well paid jobs in our economy.

We haven't wasted a day in getting on with the job of rebuilding our TAFE and training system, including by:

- taking immediate action with \$13.7 million investment following engagement with stakeholders on the challenges and opportunities in the skills system,
- appointing a new South Australian Skills Commissioner and establishing 10 Industry Skills Councils,
- commissioning the TAFE SA Roadmap for the Future,
- undertaking an independent review of the Construction Industry Training Fund Act 1993, and
- launching a new Career Education and Pathways Strategy for public school students.

South Australia has also partnered with the Australian Government through the 5-year NSA which will provide a \$2.29 billion investment in skills for South Australians. This investment will address the challenges identified and deliver the reforms outlined in this document.

Skilled. Thriving. Connected. is the next step in the reform to ensure South Australians can get the skills they need to gain well-paid meaningful jobs.

7 NCVET Employers' use and views of the VET system 2023 Report

8 NCVET VET Student Outcomes 2023 report

9 NCVET Government-funded students and courses – January to June 2023



Vision and Ambition

Through the South Australian Economic Statement, we have outlined an ambition of an economy that is smart, sustainable, and inclusive¹⁰.

Skilled. Thriving. Connected. responds to that ambition through its vision to develop highly adaptable skilled people that contribute to a thriving South Australia and are supported by a connected skills system.

It outlines a reform agenda to achieve this vision and underscores the importance of partnerships and shared responsibilities for outcomes. All VET stakeholders have a role to play in improving completion rates and learner outcomes to address skills shortages and ensure value from public investment.

10 South Australian Economic Statement 2023, page 7

This means doing things differently. *Skilled. Thriving. Connected.* will drive changes for learners, providers and industry including:

- a stronger focus on learner wellbeing and completions, rather than only focusing solely on commencements, ensuring we can support more people to gain secure, well-paid jobs
- moving to a managed training system with greater government direction on investment in courses aligned to need
- establishing TAFE SA at the centre of the skills system to support delivery of government priorities and ensure all South Australians have access to a high quality, accessible, and inclusive public provider
- a greater emphasis on ensuring the quality and integrity of training providers and employers
- requiring employers, unions, and industry to actively engage and be embedded in the training system.

Key government agencies responsible for delivering *Skilled. Thriving. Connected.* include the Department for Education (Skills SA and Student Pathways and Careers), the South Australian Skills Commission (Skills Commission), the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) and TAFE SA.

These agencies will work with partners across government, industry and the community to deliver our vision and ambition.



We will have highly adaptable skilled people that contribute to a thriving South Australia and are supported by a connected skills system.



South Australia has a highly skilled workforce that is adaptable and responsive to current and emerging economic opportunities.



South Australians have the skills they need to engage in valued work and the community.



Skilled people

Learners make informed choices, progress skills development, gain meaningful work and can access tailored supports.

Thriving South Australia

Employers and industry actively engage and partner to build an adaptable workforce, informed by need and evidence.

Connected skills system

Learners access quality training providers, improve training delivery through flexible and responsive models that meet skills needs

Roles of Key Agencies



South Australian Skills Commission (Skills Commission)

The Skills Commission provides independent, industry-led advice to government on workforce development priorities, provides oversight of the skills system, advises the Minister on the quality and performance on VET and ACE, and promotes career pathways and lifelong learning.

The Skills Commission also regulates the apprenticeship and traineeship system in South Australia in line with the South Australian Skills Act (2008) (the Act) ensuring apprentices and trainees are provided with quality on-job training and supervision including through safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing and safety of apprentices and trainees, and through proactive information, educational initiatives and regulatory compliance activities.

Skills SA

Skills SA is the steward of the funded VET system to drive successful outcomes for people, the economy and community. Skills SA provides policy leadership for the South Australian VET sector, objectively assessing skill needs and managing public investment to maximise skills development.

Skills SA supports training providers to meet industry and learner needs, increase the capability of the VET workforce, including in foundation skills, and drive innovation and continuous improvement. This includes recognising the roles of different providers in the investment approach and system settings.

Student Pathways and Careers

The Student Pathways and Careers Division of the Department for Education provides policy direction, programs and support for VET delivered in government schools, ensuring school students engage in quality, industry-endorsed VET as part of the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) that prepares them for the labour market and in-demand careers in South Australia.

Student Pathways and Careers leads the roll out of the Technical Colleges and works with government schools to ensure students, parents and carers can make informed decisions about post-school pathways, knowing that VET is a valued option that leads to a rewarding career.

TAFE SA

TAFE SA is South Australia's largest VET provider – and is the state's public training provider delivering for the public interest. TAFE SA delivers job-focused training across a range of industries from entry-level certificates to bachelor degrees, at locations across the state.

TAFE SA is on the path to be at the centre of VET delivery to provide high quality VET services that meet economic and community needs and connect learners to work.

Through the provision of access to affordable, quality VET, designed with industry, TAFE SA will ensure all South Australians can participate equitably in new work opportunities and share the benefits of this employment with their families and communities.

TAFE SA works closely with Skills SA and provides leadership across the training system to lift the quality, capability and reputation of VET.

Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)

The CITB is a whole-of-industry led organisation that provides support to attract, train and retain South Australian building and construction workers by providing leadership in training and skills development.

The CITB promotes and supports careers in building and construction through providing more than \$20 million in financial support each year for the provision of funded industry training programs.

Skilled People





Skilled people are the central focus of *Skilled. Thriving. Connected.* It places an emphasis on learners making informed choices to engage and progress in skill development. Learners will have access to tailored supports and services that help them to achieve successful outcomes with priority skills needed to thrive in the workplace and community.

Skilled people drive productivity and competitiveness in established and emerging industry sectors such as construction, defence, renewable energy, information technology, advanced manufacturing, and space.

A learner's journey can be varied and there are pressures and expectations about career pathways. Whether learners are combining VET with their school studies to get a head start to a career, working towards an initial qualification, looking to upskill, reskill or transfer their skills and pivot into many varying pathways, or re-engage with learning after a break, it is important that supports are in place to assist decisions and overcome barriers to increase the likelihood of completion.

Apprenticeships and traineeships are a longstanding and important VET pathway, central to delivering a skilled workforce. Ensuring the safety and quality of on-job training and supervision is integral to our commitment to learners. We will work to safeguard and promote the wellbeing and safety of apprentices and trainees.

Skilled. Thriving. Connected. will support learners from diverse backgrounds, including apprentices and trainees, with opportunities for women, Aboriginal learners, and other underrepresented cohorts, strengthening the role of VET in driving greater social inclusion. This includes working with partners to focus on inclusive and safe work practices, ensuring access to training and supports for people that are disengaged or experiencing disadvantage, developing workplace-related skills, and supporting access to employment opportunities.

Skilled. Thriving. Connected. provides clear reforms to learner support to nurture learners prior to their commencement, and throughout their journey. It is important that we expand on what is currently being done to support learners at all stages of their journey, so that more learners can achieve their goals and transition into work or further study.

Supporting learners requires a coordinated approach from all stakeholders with consideration of all the stages and transition phases of the learner. This will complement existing regulatory requirements for training providers through the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015* to ensure that all learners are supported to achieve their goals.

To develop highly adaptable skilled people, we are working to ensure that learners can make informed choices to engage and progress in skill development with access to tailored supports and services, and that learners achieve successful outcomes with priority skills needed to thrive in the workplace and community.

Learner outcomes

Improving completion rates in underperforming courses and improving outcomes for learners as a result of their VET studies will contribute to addressing persistent skills shortages and meeting the skills needs of new and emerging industries.

At commencement, a clear understanding of the learner's purpose for study and the learner supports required, helps to achieve successful learner outcomes, including progression to employment or further education or training.

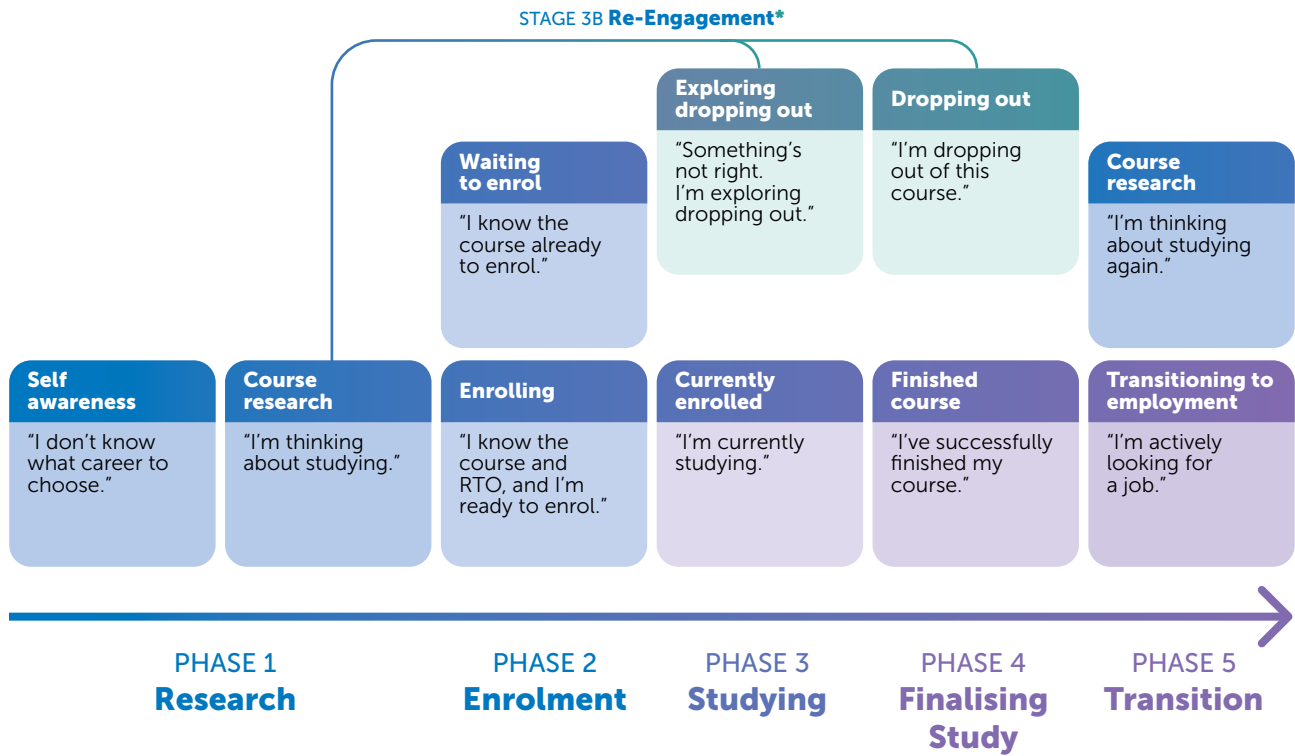
Skilled. Thriving. Connected. will trial, evaluate and scale innovative and best practice approaches to help more learners successfully complete their training and transition to employment and further education. This includes a focus on learners who are facing barriers and those historically underrepresented in the workforce, informed by the recommendations in the [National VET Completions report](#).

To improve learner outcomes, *Skilled. Thriving. Connected.* is focussed on:

- Career/course information and guidance
- Assessing learner needs
- Foundation Skills
- Learner wellbeing
- Closing the gap



The Learner Journey



MY TRAINING

Case Study

In early 2023, Skills SA set out to develop a new website that focused on improving the learner's experience, providing better access to career and training information, and empowering them to make informed decisions about their educational journey.

To ensure the learner was at the heart of the development of the website, Skills SA collaborated with current, and potential, students to capture valuable insights which were used to form content and the platform of the website.

The [My Training](#) website is intuitive and user friendly with an upfront, home page course search, engaging imagery, interactive maps and search tools, and an option to save user preferences.

Whether it's using tools like the career finder questionnaire and accessing information on high demand sectors and occupations to highlight new career pathways, finding course details and training providers to put learners on the right pathway to their dream job or accessing learner supports such as enrolment and course related support and help to secure a placement, the [My Training](#) website truly is a 'One Stop Shop' for South Australian learners.



Career/course information and guidance

We will focus on supporting learners to navigate potential VET pathways throughout their journey, and to make informed choices through access to trusted high-quality information and guidance that:

- is simple, personalised and aligned to aspiring learners' goals and aspirations and motivations,
- connects to further education and employment pathways, including from school and other entry points, and to higher education,
- links to support for aspiring learners who need it to enter training, and
- is engaging and relevant with inclusive and culturally appropriate settings for all learners.

We will do this through identifying and connecting trusted sources of information for learners and identifying gaps in current offerings. Where there are gaps in information or services, we will work with key partners to develop and provide high-quality information and guidance supports which assist learners to make informed career and course choices.

The implementation of the new Career Education and Pathways Strategy for public school students will be crucial in changing perceptions of VET and supporting young people to find the career of their choice.

Assessing learner needs

To better support learners to complete their training, we are reforming pre-enrolment assessments to better align courses to students' interests, capabilities and to identify any support needs learners may have. Key features include the assessment of:

- suitability of the course, considering the learner's pathway and current capabilities, including a clear understanding of the learner's purpose for study,
- the learner's foundation skills capabilities, and
- any vocational and non-vocational support needs.

Support for learners prior to commencing their training (including through foundation skills training, personal, and learning supports, where the learner needs them) will better equip learners throughout their training, leading to more successful outcomes. These supports will be made available throughout their training to aid successful transitions to employment or further study.



Foundation skills

Foundation skills (language, literacy, digital literacy, numeracy, and employability skills¹¹) are increasingly required to support workforce participation and mobility and are important for learners to succeed in their chosen qualification.

An enhanced focus on foundation skills for VET students and adult learners in community settings will contribute to the improvement of:

- retention in training and completion,
- workforce productivity, including employability skills, and
- social participation.

We will continue to ensure that foundation skills are available to support learners who have identified gaps in language, literacy, numeracy, and digital skills so that they can access and complete their training through their VET and/or Adult Community Education (ACE) provider.

11 Employability skills are a set of non-technical skills, knowledge and understandings that underpin successful participation in work.

Learner wellbeing

We will ensure that appropriate assistance is available to VET learners, including adult learners in community settings, to help remove barriers to skill development.

Physical, mental, and social wellbeing of learners throughout the learner journey is central to achieving successful study and work outcomes. *Skilled. Thriving. Connected.* enhances supports available from the beginning of the learner's journey through to completion.

We will deliver supports that help learners succeed in their training pathway that include:

- wellbeing support that is comprehensive, tailored to meet learner needs as identified at enrolment and monitored throughout the training,
- culturally appropriate training and supports for learners that have been co-designed with learners and communities,
- removing barriers to study to enable learners to develop skills that support lifelong learning, and
- advocacy and mediation in relation to disputes.

We will work with training providers, industry, and employers to ensure that the system and delivery approaches are responsive to learner's needs, purpose, and goals. This includes training that is high quality, adaptive and meets student and industry needs, including for learners who need additional assistance.

For apprentices and trainees, this also includes ensuring that on job training is in line with the quality standard set by the regulatory framework as well as strengthening supports for employers to provide safe and culturally appropriate workplaces.

Closing the gap

To provide more equitable access to skills development opportunities and outcomes for Aboriginal people, we will work closely with Aboriginal people, their communities and training providers to facilitate skill development that works for them and supports their career aspirations and opportunities.

Skills SA will work with Aboriginal communities and peak bodies to support training pathways for Aboriginal learners seeking to build, deepen or broaden their skills. This includes:

- developing culturally appropriate supports for Aboriginal learners,
- strengthening the Aboriginal Community Controlled RTO sector, and
- building capability of RTOs and employers to assist Aboriginal learners and apprentices and trainees to achieve successful outcomes.

The approach to delivering on Closing the Gap initiatives under *Skilled. Thriving. Connected.* will actively contribute to the four Priority Reforms of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Case Study

Every learner is different and some learners may require additional support to achieve their goals. Understanding this need, Skills SA offers Learner Support Services (LSS) to support students who face significant barriers to learning, or who are at risk of withdrawing from their course or falling behind.

Chayla Kaine-Gun's story is an example of the positive impact LSS is having on learners. Chayla was losing motivation to complete the training she had started, not because the course was too difficult, but because she was dealing with family issues whilst studying.

Instead of giving up, Chayla reached out for support and met with Ms Diane Cooper, an LSS Officer. Through this support, Chayla not only successfully completed her training, but started to work towards new goals she did not have the confidence to consider prior to her studies.

Learners like Chayla do not have to go through these difficult times alone and by accessing tailored, confidential support provided by LSS, learners are supported to successfully complete their training and follow their dreams.



Thriving South Australia





South Australia's workforce continues to be shaped by the development and deployment of new technologies, such as those being used in advanced manufacturing or renewable energy. These technologies will continue to increase the demand for highly skilled workers. We will continue monitoring and exploring emerging technologies to ensure the skills of our learners allow them to be successful in jobs for today, and into the future.

We will support employers and industry to actively engage in the training system to build a skilled and adaptable workforce in a thriving South Australia. Government and industry will work in partnership to meet skills needs based on evidence and data.

Economic growth is strongly linked to the skills of workers, and is supported by an education, skills and training system that can equip businesses with the skills they need to innovate, grow, and succeed.

We will work with industry and across Government to better understand South Australia's workforce needs and support the development and delivery of the workforce the state needs now and into the future.

The Skills Commission and CITB are central to understanding industry and workforce perspectives and informing Government policy and delivery in response to need.

To support a thriving South Australia, *Skilled. Thriving. Connected.* is focused on:

- planning for economic and social priorities,
- partnership approach,
- supporting employers and industry to engage in skills development,
- place based approach, and
- VET data and evidence.

Planning for economic and social priorities

We will take a long-term planning approach to inform the investment in skills and to understand and respond to industry needs and emerging economic opportunities.

Our investment in priority skills will be targeted to achieve social and economic priorities, and to ensure South Australia can deliver skilled workers in key industry areas to deliver major projects. This includes shipbuilding to deliver AUKUS, the north-south corridor and hydrogen jobs in the Upper Spencer Gulf.

We will take advantage of emerging economic opportunities, through digital transformation. Artificial intelligence (AI) will bring change to future jobs across a wide range of sectors critical to the South Australian economy. Planning for the future workforce must consider and be informed by these advances.

Our long-term planning approach will have a strong quantitative and qualitative evidence base, augmented by new data sets, the latest technology, and innovative approaches. We will establish a collaborative and respected process that includes industry, regional and cohort perspectives and is flexible and responsive to emerging needs.

Each year, Skills SA, and the Skills Commission, informed by the Department for Industry, Innovation and Science and the CITB, will release a [Skills Outlook](#) which will provide a focus on current and emerging skills needs across a 5-year period. This is one way of informing South Australians about the state's future skills needs for a smart, sustainable, and inclusive economy. The Skills Outlook will inform our Skills Investment Plan.

Partnership approach

Skilled. Thriving. Connected. has been developed based on engagement and partnerships with stakeholders across industry, community and government, and the voices of learners. This engagement has helped shape the vision, direction and focus areas of this policy, and partners have expressed strong interest in continuing to work collaboratively as the reforms outlined are implemented.

To implement *Skilled. Thriving. Connected.* we will:

- partner with industry to facilitate mutual benefit and obligation in recognition of the shared investment in skills,
- build capability and capacity of training providers to deliver high quality training in areas of need,
- proactively lead opportunities across government and with the broader community to identify and respond to learner and industry needs, and
- develop new approaches to engaging with learners to ensure their experiences inform our future policy development and service delivery approaches.

Supporting employers, unions, and industry to engage in skills development

Employer, unions, and industry engagement in skills development ensures that training products and delivery approaches are fit for purpose, and workforce needs are met, as employees have the skills required to contribute to their industry.

We will build on providing opportunities to support employers and partnering with industry to engage in skills development in areas crucial for South Australia through:

- development of training products and programs to support skill development,
- training delivery,
- providing safe and high-quality apprenticeships and traineeships,
- provision of work placements, and
- engagement with training providers to inform quality training delivery and learner outcomes.

The South Australian Skills Commission has established Industry Skills Councils to support its role in providing advice to the Minister, and other key legislative functions including the establishment traineeship and apprenticeship pathways and the preparation of Skills Standards.

Industry Skills Councils will play a key role in South Australia's participation in the work of national Jobs and Skills Councils in the development and review of nationally accredited qualifications. Industry Skills Councils ensure industry intelligence informs the training and skills system, including workforce, training and qualification needs

Place-based approaches

South Australia's regions play a crucial role in contributing to the future prosperity of the state, but too often regions are put in the 'too-hard' basket when it comes to delivering training and skills. We recognise that it is sometimes not financially viable to train in regions, which is why we are supporting delivery in regions and will continue to work with regional communities to ensure we have skilled people in regional and remote areas to contribute to regional development.

Place-based approaches concentrate on the economic opportunities of a specific location or community with the intention to maximise strengths or address specific skills challenges and/or needs that contribute to improved outcomes. We will work with local communities across South Australia to develop skills and training approaches that:

- recognise local stakeholders are best placed to co-design training approaches, programs and services that affect them,
- include industry and/or community-based partnerships that respond to local skill needs and improve outcomes, and

TAFE SA must play a central role in regions to ensure these communities get the skills they need.

VET data and evidence

We recognise that timely access to better-quality VET data and regular engagement with stakeholders and customers supports decision making and will lead to more effective responses to industry skill needs in the transition to a smart, sustainable, and inclusive economy.

Through *Skilled. Thriving. Connected.*, we will work to deepen insights and intelligence through stakeholder engagement and data, to help inform evidence to measure our impact.

Through the NSA, we are partnering with the Australian Government and other states and territories to improve the accessibility of accurate, timely and quality VET data. This will provide stakeholders with a richer understanding of VET activity to inform evidence-based decision making.

Case Study

To help shape this policy, Skills SA reached out to its network of key stakeholders for valuable input. A common theme was the need for better connections between learners, training providers and employers, particularly in regional areas.

As a result, Skills SA established the Skills Centres pilot, that will run over the 2023-24 financial year in five regional South Australia locations; Cleve, Mount Gambier, Port Augusta, Berri, and the Murraylands.

The Skills Centres aim to connect learners, training providers and employers and get more people into local jobs. Each Skills Centre responds to local needs through delivery of a physical space that will promote connection in an innovative and proactive way and respond to regional challenges such as addressing acute skills shortages across multiple industries, attracting training providers to deliver locally and improving VET completion rates.

The Port Augusta Skill Centre, which was officially opened in November 2023, is just one example of how these Skills Centres are providing support and addressing skill shortages in the local community, with outreach to Ceduna and the APY Lands. Focusing on the local community care sector the Port Augusta Skills Centre fosters partnerships that leverage services, resources, and expertise to directly benefit the region.

Learners and job seekers can access tailored learning programs, formal qualifications, career advice, work placements and intensive support to assist them in completing their studies and finding employment while existing workers can upskill to support their career progression, contributing to retention in the care sector.

Connected Skills System





Skilled. Thriving. Connected. will develop a connected skills system with quality providers that fulfil their role, innovate, and improve delivery of training.

Training providers work closely with other stakeholders and service providers including schools, higher education providers, employers, industry, unions, and governments to deliver a connected skills system.

A connected skills system works with learners at all stages including those in school who are seeking a head start to their career, learners embarking on pre-vocational training, entry level qualifications and those looking to reskill or expand on their initial qualification.

To ensure training providers can develop skilled and adaptive people ready for the jobs of today and tomorrow, training products must be innovative and transformative, with tailored approaches to respond to local and emerging skills needs.

To develop a connected skills system, *Skilled. Thriving. Connected.* is focused on:

- purchasing training,
- access to subsidised training,
- quality training,
- strengthening TAFE SA and the training sector, and
- flexible and responsive training

Purchasing training

We are determined to ensure our investment in the skills system maximises outcomes for South Australians and promotes a thriving South Australia.

We must invest in subsidised training that responds to identified economic, social, and environmental need, complemented by fee for service activity. Investment needs to be targeted to support social and economic priorities, occupations in demand, local and national skills needs and equity of opportunity, informed by the Skills Outlook.

Skills SA will purchase training through a managed system that targets and invests in a way that leverages the strengths and roles of providers and builds their capacity and capability to deliver high quality training aligned to need.

Through clearly defined roles for TAFE SA, not for profit and industry training providers, community-based education providers and private training organisations, and a targeted approach to investment, Skills SA will ensure that subsidised training is aligned to local and national needs and supports learners to engage in the economy and community.

All VET stakeholders have an important role to play in improving completion rates and enhancing learner outcomes to address skills shortages and ensuring value from public investment.

Access

Subsidised training reduces barriers for learners and supports the development of a skilled workforce.

We will provide access to subsidised training for individuals as they build their capability over time and eligible learners will have access to:

- short courses (including skill sets and clusters) or pre-vocational qualifications to inform decision making prior to embarking on entry level qualifications, as a pathway to an entry level qualification or job,
- entry level qualifications recognised by industry as the appropriate entry point for their sector (generally at Certificate III or IV level),
- fee free foundation skills training (where there is an assessed need, and the learner is below ASCF exit level 3),
- micro-credentials to support upskilling, re-skilling and skills broadening that are recognised by industry, and
- higher level qualifications in priority sectors facing workforce shortages.

Case Study

An initiative of the Commonwealth and state and territory governments, Fee-Free TAFE and vocational education is removing the fees for learners undertaking much-needed skills training and is helping to address skills shortages in key industry sectors.

Sok Tsoutouras is a learner benefiting from the chance to develop new skills and prepare for a career change without putting additional strain on the household budget. A mother of two, Sok, 38, is pursuing her passion for cooking through a Certificate IV in Kitchen Management at TAFE SA's Regency Campus.

Sok worked as a dental nurse prior to having her children, now aged 7 and 9, and says the training at TAFE SA is giving her new skills to re-enter the workforce.

"A lot of people are surprised by my age and ask me why I'm studying later in life and I say 'Why not? Fee-Free TAFE has given me a great opportunity'," she says.

The response from the community to Fee-Free TAFE across the state has exceeded expectations and enabled many new students to gain qualifications that they would otherwise have been unable to attempt.

Sok is looking forward to completing her qualification in 2024 and gaining some industry experience before considering a small business venture of her own.

Quality

Quality training providers are essential for developing a highly skilled workforce that is adaptable and responsive to current and emerging opportunities. We expect all training to be of the highest quality and won't hesitate to act when it isn't.

We will continue to work closely with the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) as the regulators of the national VET system to ensure quality and integrity of training providers in South Australia and having additional requirements for providers that deliver government subsidised training.

Through *Skilled. Thriving. Connected.*, we will strengthen contracting arrangements for government funded providers, and will take appropriate action where issues arise. Apprentices and trainees committed to their career deserve high quality training and support. We will strengthen the focus on employer behaviour and safety for apprentices and trainees.

We will purchase quality training from providers that:

- develop strong connections to industry and communities,
- respond to learner and employer need,
- monitor and value learner transition outcomes and learner engagement and satisfaction, and
- trial flexible and customised design and delivery approaches and share their learnings across the VET sector to support innovation.

Skills SA will lead opportunities to support training providers delivering government subsidised training to improve the quality of training products and delivery. It will also develop the VET workforce so that South Australians can access quality training options to increase skills and meet workforce needs.

TAFE SA will also take a leadership role in driving quality across the entire training system.

The South Australian Skills Commission will bolster safety for apprentices and trainees through the Apprentice and Trainee Training and Safety Committee which will ensure additional quality on-job training and safe workplace initiatives.

The opportunity the NSA provides will be used to lift the quality of VET and to strengthen the VET workforce. We are working closely with the Commonwealth and other states and territories to develop the VET Workforce Blueprint and with stakeholders to identify the actions we can take locally with a focus on workforce attraction, retention, building capability, supporting career development and succession planning.

Strengthening TAFE SA and the training sector

TAFE SA

We recognise the roles of TAFE SA, not-for-profit and industry-based training providers, and private training providers to inform investment levels and system settings.

TAFE SA is the public and primary provider of VET in South Australia, at the centre of VET delivery, complemented by not-for-profit and industry owned training providers and private training providers.

We invest in public education through TAFE SA to ensure equity of opportunity, minimise risk of meeting government policy objectives for a skilled workforce across regions and sectors, and meet emerging skills needs through research and innovation.

TAFE SA:

- aligns training delivery and services to government priorities, economic and community needs and connects learners to work,
- operates in areas of thin markets, including regional and niche sectors, playing a role in regional development, and contributing expertise to addressing to industry and government priorities,
- works with learners that may need additional support, including priority cohorts, to ensure equity of access and opportunity,
- shows leadership across the South Australian training system to share the benefits of public investment in VET and training infrastructure for all stakeholders, including providers, employers, and learners,
- works with government agencies to respond to skills and workforce needs across South Australia and takes a leadership role nationally as the South Australian public provider, and
- engages with stakeholders, including industry and community, to support the delivery of quality training that achieves learner outcomes

NOT FOR PROFIT AND INDUSTRY-BASED TRAINING PROVIDERS

Not for profit and industry-based training providers, including Aboriginal Community Controlled RTOs, play a valuable role by operating in close connection with their sector and community. These insights and relationships support successful training and employment outcomes.

They have a unique role to play in the South Australian training system and are recognised for this.

Not for profit and industry-based training providers:

- return a benefit to their community or industry sector over and above training delivery,
- deliver strong place based and local responses through geographical community connections, connections to specific learner cohorts and/or industry networks,
- offer specific expertise to support training completions, over and above ASQA quality training delivery, and
- although not publicly owned, offer public benefits that support economic, and community needs.

COMMUNITY BASED EDUCATION PROVIDERS

Community based education providers engage and re-engage learners with learning and have place-based connections that support further education and employment outcomes. They are driven by giving South Australians access to lifelong learning and providing students with skills to participate in further training, work, and life. The sector is diverse and unique and is strongly supported to help South Australians who need it most.

Community based education providers:

- deliver community-based learning programs through ACE,
- understand and support learners to address barriers and challenges that they may face on their learning journey,
- offer learning, including foundation skill development, in settings that engage learners with specific barriers, and
- support learners to successfully transition to further education and employment.

PRIVATE TRAINING PROVIDERS

Private training providers deliver training in areas of need and enable access for learners and employers. They complement the offerings of TAFE and not-for-profit and industry-based training providers and have a valuable role to play in the South Australian training system.

Private training providers:

- operate in areas of demand, including developing training in areas of emerging skills needs,
- offer quality training and responds to demand from their customers, often in fee for service for market,
- enable access for students and employers, with flexible training options, and
- respond quickly to training demand, including supporting training needs at scale.



Flexible and responsive training

We will ensure flexible training products and delivery approaches are strengthened, noting they play a strong role in ensuring equity of access to opportunity for learners with barriers including for those in regional and remote areas.

The South Australian Skills Commission plays a key role in this regard: promoting equity, participation in and access to the VET system. As the public provider, TAFE SA also has a role in working with industry and community to develop flexible training products and delivery approaches to meet local need.

Enhanced collaboration and connectivity between learners, industry and training providers are key to developing successful training solutions. These solutions support:

- building work readiness and pre-entry skills, and providing workplace experience to inform learner decision making on further training and/or employment,
- upskilling, reskilling and skills broadening and recognising/building on the skills learners have developed through experience and formal training to meet immediate needs of industry and learner career aspirations, and
- skills that strengthen workforce mobility and resilience across the labour market.

We will work with industry and training providers to develop flexible and responsive products and approaches that support learners to achieve successful outcomes and help industry to address local and emerging skills needs, including through:

- training pathways delivered in a combination of modes of delivery,
- integrated VET and higher education,
- higher apprenticeships (including degree apprenticeships),
- micro-credentials with strong industry connection and learner benefits, and
- school pathways to VET.

Case Study

Apprenticeships and traineeships have traditionally been associated with vocational education and training rather than occupational pathways and courses undertaken at universities / higher education institutions. Competition for talent, globally, has never been stronger and Higher Education Apprenticeships and Traineeships will help businesses develop the skills they need to thrive.

The South Australian Skills Commission has declared Australia's first degree apprenticeship in Software Engineering. The Software Engineering apprenticeship will see students study a Bachelor of Software Engineering (Honours) under apprenticeship conditions, combining university level theoretical studies with supervised on-job training, allowing them to earn while they learn. These apprentices will develop practical and technical skills that are critical to South Australia's skills needs.

The design of the apprenticeship was undertaken by UniSA and Ai Group, and supported by BAE Systems, Lockheed Martin Australia Pty Ltd, DXC Technology, ASC Pty Ltd (WA division), and the Defence Teaming Centre.

The state government has committed \$450,000 over three years to support the establishment of this higher apprenticeship, with the program to be delivered via a partnership between the University of South Australia, defence industry employers and peak national employer group, Australian Industry (Ai) Group.

This new higher education apprenticeship will help to address the short supply of software engineers in Australia and feed the growing defence sector workforce, ahead of the construction of nuclear-powered AUKUS submarines, while supporting other high-tech industries such as advanced manufacturing.

Delivery

The 5-year NSA provides a \$2.29 billion investment in skills for South Australians.

The NSA reflects a commitment by the Commonwealth Government, and state and territory governments to ensure that no Australian is left behind or held back as the economy transitions and adapts to structural change, including by providing opportunities for life-long learning and foundation skills development.

The NSA includes flexible funding to support state and territory skills sectors with capacity to deliver skills for critical and emerging industries.

Skilled. Thriving. Connected. informs and supports NSA implementation in South Australia and will be complemented by:

- **the Jobs and Skills Outlook**
a 5-year forecast of demand for skilled workers within all industry sectors in South Australia with sectors in focus highlighted, and
- **the Skills Investment Plan**
a 5-year outline of the government's approach to purchasing skills through TAFE and the training sector including the training profile, initiatives, and reforms.
- **the Skills Outlook and Investment Plan**
will be updated annually to reflect progress and emerging priorities.

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Jobs and Skills Outlook



The Skills Outlook is a 5-year forecast of the demand for skilled workers within all industry sectors in South Australia with sectors in focus highlighted (updated annually).

- Qualification Demand Modelling
- Workforce Planning (DIIS)
- Industry Insights (SASC)

2

Policy Direction



Our Policy Direction is a long-term strategic direction to achieve population and system outcomes. It identifies focus areas, sets the policy framework & defines roles of key agencies in delivery.

- National Skills Agreement (NSA)
- NSA Policy Initiatives
- Government Priorities

3

Investment Plan



The investment plan is a 5-year outline of government approach to purchasing skills through TAFE and the training sector - training profile, initiative and reforms (updated annually).

- NSA Flexible and PI Funding
- Government Priorities
- Skills Outlook

Measuring Success

Skilled. Thriving. Connected. sets bold population outcomes that will require collaborative effort from all stakeholders and interconnected service systems.

We will remain on track by working towards achieving the outcomes aligned to the three key elements: skilled people, thriving South Australia and a connected skills system.

Progress towards achieving the outcomes in *Skilled. Thriving. Connected.* will be monitored by Skills SA against a range of indicators as outlined below. Skills SA will work with stakeholders to determine targets and measures aligned to the indicators.

A strong partnership between government, industry, community, learners, and training providers will enable the impact.





Population Outcomes	South Australians have the skills they need to engage in valued work and the community	South Australia has a highly skilled workforce that is adaptable and responsive to current and emerging economic opportunities	
	<p>Increased skills capability and capacity for work and life</p> <p>Enhanced labour market outcomes for all South Australians</p>	<p>Decreased skills shortages</p> <p>Increased population of South Australia's workforce have relevant skills for their job</p>	
System Outcomes	Skilled people	Thriving South Australia	Connected skills system
	<p>Increased skills capability and capacity for work and life</p>	<p>Employers and industry actively engage in the training system to build a skilled and adaptable workforce</p>	<p>Learners access quality providers that fulfil their role, innovate and improve training delivery</p>
	<p>Improved perception of VET as a pathway to achieve successful outcomes</p> <p>More learners access training aligned with their interests and aptitudes, and priority areas</p>	<p>Improved perception of VET as a way of meeting skill needs</p> <p>Increased proportion of employers use VET to build their workforce</p>	<p>Improved quality of training and service delivery to meet skills needs alongside government priorities</p>
	<p>Learners achieve successful outcomes with priority skills needed to thrive in the workplace and community</p>	<p>Government and industry work in partnership to meet skills needs based on evidence and data</p>	<p>Innovative and flexible training products and approaches respond to local and emerging skills needs</p>
	<p>Increased VET completions</p> <p>Improved employment opportunities and personal benefits</p>	<p>Stronger alignment between VET activity and priority areas</p> <p>Increased government and industry co-investment to meet skills needs</p>	<p>Improved responsiveness of the skills system to local and emerging skills needs</p>





**Government
of South Australia**
Department for Education

Skilled. Thriving. Connected.

Our Policy Direction for Skills in South Australia