

Skilled. Thriving. Connected.
Investment Blueprint 2024-25

Investing in South Australia's economic future



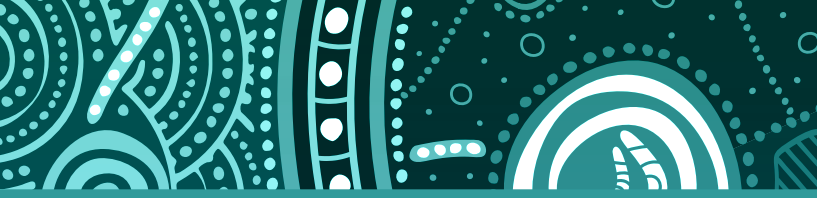
Skills SA

skills.sa.gov.au



Government
of South Australia

Department of
State Development



We acknowledge that this Investment Blueprint 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.*



Ministerial Message

South Australia is committed to a high- quality, responsive and accessible VET system.

Building on our achievements to date, I am pleased to release the Skills Investment Blueprint, the final volume of our Skills Plan.

Guided by **Skilled. Thriving. Connected.** Our Policy Direction for Skills in South Australia, the Skills Investment Blueprint targets training activity to capitalise on the strategic economic opportunities identified in the 2024-25 Jobs and Skills Outlook.

Together the Blueprint, Outlook and Skills Direction form South Australia's Jurisdiction Action Plan which is injecting \$2.3 billion into our skills system over the next five years.

Under the historic National Skills Agreement, the South Australian Government is investing \$1.44 billion with \$880 million from the Australian Government to strengthen vocational education and training (VET) - the most significant skills investment in the state's history.

This investment will support our shared vision for VET guided by the National Skills Plan. Recently released with my skills ministerial colleagues, the Plan outlines our collective actions to achieve our shared goals, ambitions and priorities in the landmark Skills Agreement.

We know there is high demand for qualified job ready workers across the nation.

We also know that strong employment presents real opportunities to get more South Australians into training linked to priority areas in the economy - delivering jobs to communities and building the skilled workforce needed for the future.

We are implementing a range of measures that address the mismatch between the qualifications people have and skills industry need in key sectors by:

- improving information about course and job choices.
- offering more support and wellbeing services for students.

- developing opportunities to improve course completion rates.
- tackling skill shortages in priority trades.

Building on initiatives such as:

- \$9m Equipment and Capital Grants to strengthen VET workforce and sector capability.
- \$8.8m for Skill Shortage Solutions grants tackling trade and technician demand.
- \$34.5m federal funding supporting around 16,500 Fee Free TAFE and Vocational Education places removing barriers to accessing training.
- \$2.9m per annum for the TAFE SA Regional Skills Development fund to support increased regional skills delivery.

We continue to remove barriers to training providing more access to courses and skills.

We are growing workforce diversity to ensure we have the people, infrastructure, and technology necessary for accessing quality qualification delivery in a safe and modern training system no matter where they live.

With significant priorities like:

- construction and supply of affordable housing.
- hydrogen power generation.
- renewables and net zero transformation.
- universal 3- year-old preschool.
- deepening our sovereign capability in response to AUKUS.
- digital and technology.

We are positioning South Australian to meet the current skills challenge and embrace emerging economic opportunity.



Hon Blair Boyer MP

Minister for Education, Training and Skills



Vision

The South Australian Government has a bold vision for the state. An ambition for a smart, sustainable, inclusive economy - fit for the future - that delivers benefits for all South Australians .

At the core of this vision is a future where skilled people and communities thrive. Accessing skills and training no matter where they live enjoying a real share in prosperity.

We know a smart economy is built by a smart workforce.

A smart workforce is underpinned by deliberate investment in the development of vocational education and training (VET) system that operates at a system and economy level as a critical enabler of workforce skills development.

At a community and individual level VET plays a key role in supporting people to access training from the pre- vocational level to industry entry, supervisory, technical specialisation and adaptive capability. Equipping people with access to the skills and qualifications they need for work at the level they are starting their training journey.

Skills boost productivity, drive innovation, underpin local economies and support the wellbeing of South Australian communities and business.

1 *Smart. Sustainable. Inclusive.* An economy fit for the future, improving the wellbeing of all South Australians. [South Australian Economic Statement | Premier of South Australia](#)

Skills change lives

That is why we are working with our Australian, state and territory government partners as joint stewards of the national VET system to deliver our vision. We need to ensure we get the strategic settings right to support more South Australians to get the skills industry want for the jobs in demand.

South Australia's Skills Plan

Our plan for the state VET system is set out in three volumes.

The annual Jobs and Skills Outlook captures the state's skill needs which informs the annual Investment Blueprint guided by the strategic objectives of Skilled. Thriving. Connected. Our Policy Direction for Skills in South Australia.

Together South Australia's Skill Plan form the state's Jurisdictional Action Plan for delivering the requirements of the historic \$2.3 billion National Skills Agreement investment in the skills of South Australians.

Joint stewardship

The South Australian Government is working in partnership with the Australian, state and territory governments to deliver shared priorities under the National Skills Agreement which aims to:

- deliver a high-quality, responsive, and accessible national VET system to boost productivity.
- support people to gain the skills needed to secure jobs.
- ensure Australia has a skilled workforce now and in the future, with TAFE at the core of the VET sector.

South Australia's Skills Plan is closely aligned to the Agreement, which complements our priority state investments and strategic delivery locally.

Measuring success and driving outcomes

The Investment Blueprint is updated annually. It is informed by ongoing evaluation and evidence to ensure it is contemporary and responsive to current and emerging skill needs.

Future releases will also showcase innovative initiatives and include a summary report card of our progress towards key deliverables including population and system outcomes, Our Policy Direction implementation milestones and South Australia's key achievements in contributing to delivering national priorities and outcomes including Fee Free TAFE, and Policy Initiative Implementation Plans.



National Skills Agreement Investment priorities areas

In 2024-25 South Australia will invest a total of \$463.3m in the state's VET system to deliver critical training for skilled jobs supported by \$183.5m from the Australian Government through the five-year National Skills Agreement and the Fee Free TAFE Skills Agreement, including the Fee Free TAFE places in Construction available from January 2025.

Guided by Our Policy Direction and our commitment to progress the eight agreed National Priorities locally, over the course of the year, we will:

- target investment to align with Government priority areas including trade apprenticeships and strategic workforce demand to address key challenges, maximise impact and opportunity.
- prioritise funding for training, initiatives and services that strategically position the state to deliver the estimated 78,000 VET qualifications needed across the state's economy by 2028².
- develop six South Australian Implementation Plans to unlock National Skills Agreement Policy Initiatives funding for the delivery of innovative evidence-based responses to critical skill and workforce challenges and opportunities to improve productivity and participation across the state.

The South Australian Government will continue to work collaboratively across jurisdictions to support the South Australian Minister for Education Training and Skills to showcase South Australian VET sector excellence and contribute to the shared VET reform agenda in joint stewardship with Australian, state and territory governments.

National Priorities

1. Gender equality
2. Closing the gap
3. Supporting the net zero transformation
4. Sustaining essential care services
5. Developing Australia's sovereign capability and food security
6. Ensuring Australia's digital and technological capability
7. Delivering housing supply
8. Delivering reforms to improve the regulation of VET qualifications and quality

National Skills Agreement Policy Initiatives Implementation Plans

1. Improved completions - Especially for priority groups
2. Enhanced VET data and evidence
3. Measures to strengthen the VET workforce
4. National TAFE network
5. TAFE centres of excellence
6. Closing the gap
7. Ensuring access to foundation skills training

² Jobs and Skills Outlook 2024, <https://skills.sa.gov.au/assets/uploads/downloads/skillsHub/DSD779-Jobs-and-Skills-Outlook-FAv2-WEB.pdf>

2024-25 priority areas for action

The Investment Blueprint targets priority areas for action aligned to the key pillars in Our Policy Direction, the National Skills Agreement and the National Skills Plan to deliver on the state's critical skills needs and boost productivity.

Top five strategic priority areas for action:

1. Targeting priority skills
2. Supporting learners to start and finish training
3. TAFE at the centre
4. Quality, safe and inclusive training
5. Lifting skill levels



PRIORITY AREA 1

Targeting priority skills

Investment: \$225 million in 2024-25

Pillar 3 Connected Skills System

Focus areas

- **Purchasing training**
- **Quality training**
- **Building TAFE and the training sector**

Each year around 30,000 people commence a VET course subsidised by the South Australian Government. On average the subsidy paid by government to training providers reduces the cost of training for students by around 80 per cent.

With the introduction of Fee Free TAFE and VET places, the Australian Government is paying the student fees for South Australian Government funded courses in identified priority areas.

Foundation language, literacy, numeracy and digital skills and Success and Wellbeing Supports continue to be completely free for every South Australian.

About half of all learners in subsidised places go to TAFE SA. The other half will study with a not for profit, industry or community-based provider or private training organisation.

In addition to supporting students to start training, annually government funds around 45,000 students already enrolled in a course to finish their qualification. For some courses, like those in critical trade apprenticeship areas, completion can take over four years. So the state's investment in training is balanced between those students at the beginning of their training journey and those working through the training pipeline to course completion.

Maximising impact

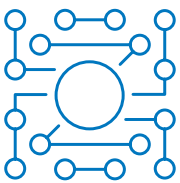
To grow our smart economy, we need to support more working age South Australians to start training to get the skills employers are looking for now and into the future.

To better meet the state's skill needs now and into the future, we are realigning the training courses that government subsidise to better meet government priorities and economic demand.

Priority actions:

- investment in new government subsidised training places will be targeted to state and national government priorities including housing and construction, net zero transformation, essential care services, sovereign, digital and technological capability and training linked to occupations in high demand across key industry sectors.
- continue to tackle trade skill shortage challenges with priority supports to:
 - improve outcomes for apprentices and trainees.
 - fund apprenticeships in critical trades on demand.
 - deliver Skill Shortage Solutions grants addressing long-term and emerging shortages in trades and technical occupations.
- re-establish TAFE SA at the centre of a diverse high-quality training system, to support the delivery of quality learning, complemented by delivery from high-quality not for profit, industry, community-based providers and private training organisations contracted by the South Australian Government.

- build the capacity of not for profit, industry and community-based providers in parallel with its VET Workforce capability and capacity building initiatives.
- commence implementing place focused approaches including regular engagement across regions to build qualitative and quantitative evidence about performance, supply and demand.
- improve the Skills SA investment planning model for identifying local skill needs by establishing stronger connections with communities statewide to better understand community insights about skills and training needs specifically including Aboriginal communities, regional, and remote residents.



Over the next 5 years government will support delivery of 160,000 new training places. Investment will target key trade apprenticeships and traineeships to deliver critical state and national skills:

Defence and manufacturing

The AUKUS submarine and shipbuilding programs will be major drivers of skills needs over the next decade. Demand for trade and technical skills at the apprentice and post-trade level is high. The Australian Government's 'Made in Australia' initiative will also drive the need for advanced manufacturing skills, as will the South Australian Government's focus on increasing product diversity and complexity. The Defence Industry Pathways Program established in South Australia, with entry-level trainees will be embarking on a Certificate III qualification with TAFE SA and defence industry placements.

Agreed National Priority 5. Developing Australia's sovereign capability

Construction and infrastructure

There are major construction works underway across the state including to support the AUKUS program, a world-leading hydrogen power station, electrolyser and storage facility in the Upper Spencer Gulf, housing construction through the South Australian Government's 'A Better Housing Future' initiative, and a new women's and children's hospital. The National Skills Agreement prioritises housing supply and the Australian Government is investing \$5.9m in Fee Free TAFE Construction places from 2025 to support pathways into the industry and priority apprenticeships, existing workers in trades and administration. The T2D project alone is expected to create an average of 5,500 jobs per year over the next decade, with many of those supported by apprentices and trainees.

Agreed National Priority 3. Supporting the net zero transformation 5. Developing Australia's sovereign capability 7. Delivering housing supply

Clean energy

The clean energy sector is growing rapidly in South Australia through projects such as the Hornsdale Power Reserve, the largest per capita roll-out of home battery systems, 22 wind farms, four utility scale solar farms and an emerging hydrogen sector. While many traditional skills are needed, new skills and training is required to keep pace with emerging technologies.

Agreed National Priority 3. Supporting the net zero transformation

Education

The South Australian Government has committed to implementing all recommendations from the Royal Commission into Early Childhood Education and Care. This will generate a substantial increase in the need for early childhood teachers and carers as preschool is extended to all 3- year-olds expanding the opportunities for traineeships in both the early child and after-school care sectors. We will also focus on improving VET educator capability - our educators are fundamental to delivering high quality training and supporting development of excellence in training design, delivery and assessment across the profession.

Agreed National Priority 4. Sustaining essential care services 8. Delivering reforms to improve the regulation of VET qualifications and quality

Health and care

The health and care sector continues to grow rapidly across Australia, with many related occupations experiencing strong demand and skill shortages including the Aboriginal health workforce.

Agreed National Priority 2. Closing the Gap 4. Sustaining essential care services

Technology and AI

Advanced technologies, cyber security and AI are impacting the global economy, occupations, industry and society.

Developing the skills needed to leverage these technologies is essential to remain competitive globally in this emerging and frontier sector. Poor digital literacy makes it difficult to navigate the modern workplace, inhibiting productivity and participation.

New Engineering Degree Apprenticeship pilot programs will be supported by an additional \$2.5 million in joint South Australian and Federal Government funding, as a key commitment of the SA Defence Industry Workforce and Skills Action Plan.

Agreed National Priority 5. Developing Australia's sovereign capability 6. Ensuring Australia's digital and technological capability

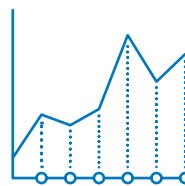
New subsidised training places – targeting priority skills

In 2024-25 Government will support up to 32,300 new training places, with over 75% aligned to government priorities. New training places will shift over time to support skill needs of industry and community. Our understanding of skill needs will be informed by regular statewide engagement with communities and evidence-based quality and performance analysis.

Chart 1: New subsidised training places in 2024-25

Care	8,100
Building and Infrastructure	4,200
Education	4,200
Defence and Manufacturing	3,650
Food, Wine and Hospitality	2,000
Clean Energy	1,800
Technology and AI	1,600
Foundation Skills	1,500
Other	5,200

* Other category includes delivery across multiple areas such as: Sport and Recreation, Arts, Transport and Logistics and Property Management, Business and Retail, Agriculture and Horticulture, Personal Services, Animal Management.



PRIORITY AREA 2

Supporting learners to start and finish training

Investment: \$35 million in 2024-25

Pillar 1 Skilled people

Focus areas

- **Course and career information**
 - **Assessing learner needs**
 - **Learner wellbeing**
 - **Foundation skills**
 - **Closing the gap**
-

Improving outcomes

Despite historically low unemployment and an increasing demand for skilled workers to drive generationally significant economic growth, 1 in 2 South Australians starting VET do not finish.

If we are to deliver on our ambitions, we must do more to improve the qualification profile of our ageing workforce. The increased demand for skilled workers and rapid pace of economic transformation means that the state cannot afford for South Australians to lock themselves out of the skilled labour market.

Approximately 20 per cent of working age South Australians are not in the labour force. Still more are underutilised. Non-school qualification attainment sits below national average while the number of young people 16-24 not in fulltime learning or employment continue to be over represented in unemployment and under employment figures.

This waste of talent and opportunity cannot go unaddressed. If the state is to achieve its ambition for a smart, sustainable, inclusive economy - fit for the future we must find ways to reform the skills system, so it meets a broader range of learner needs.

Building a smart workforce

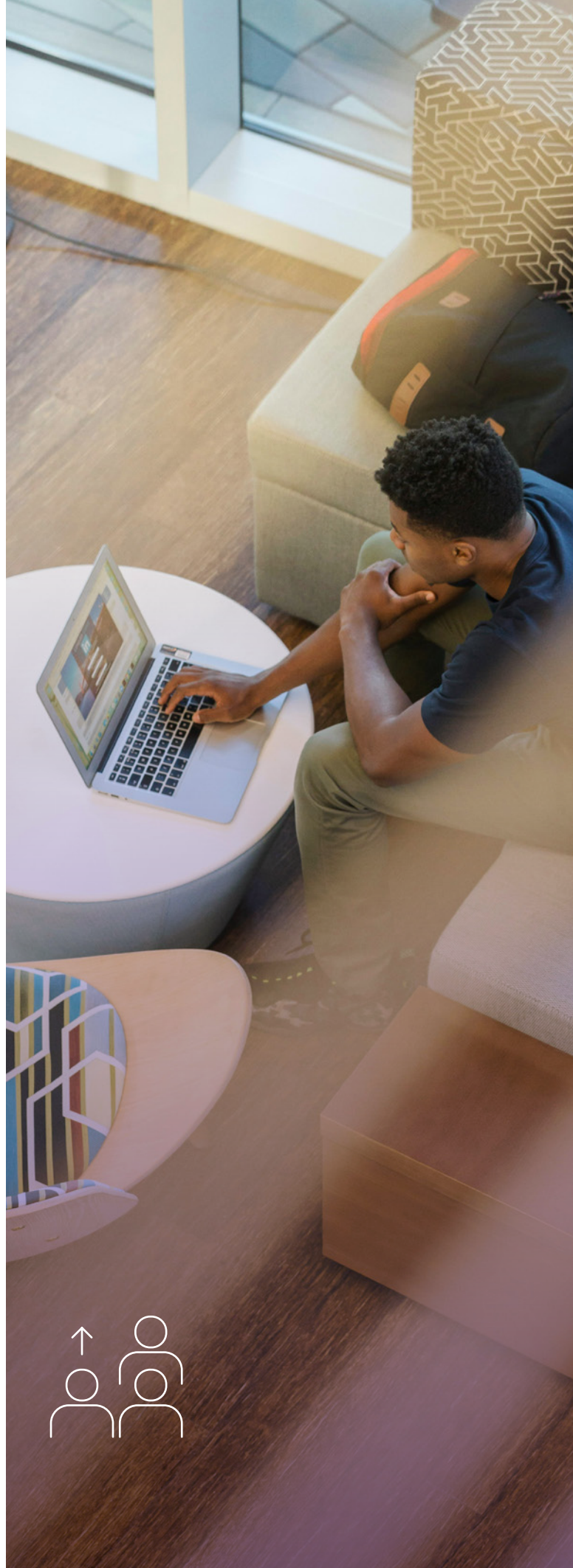
The National Completions Project led by South Australia highlighted a range of factors that impact participation and completion outcomes. Critically it identified that support is required along the whole learner journey - from career information, to commencement to active interventions when students are at risk of dropping out and transitioning to work.

That's why we are investing in services and supports to help people start training, get a qualification and achieve their goals.

Priority actions:

- implement priority initiatives to connect learners with quality career information, enhanced entry to training experiences and improved access to expanded wellbeing services and supports to complete training and transition to work
 - \$9.5m for tailored information and career resources through improved online career tools.
 - \$13.4m to deliver wellbeing services and support more students to access specialist providers free, and confidential services including support for mental health, learning challenges, support with emergency accommodation and financial counselling.
 - \$2.7m to identify and help students develop their literacy and numeracy capabilities, including digital skills, to ensure they have the necessary foundation skills and supports to successfully complete training.

- ensure students who start training have access the supports they need to finish a qualification by improving learner awareness about the free customised training supports available to them and how to access them.
- improve qualification completions to support stronger returns on public investment and increase the flow of skills into the workforce. The spotlight on completions will be strengthened to better realise our ambitions for skilling the workforce.
- \$5m to support apprentices and trainees employed by Group Training Organisations (GTOs) to stay in their job and complete their qualification. This includes funding for the South Australian Group Training Program (SAGTP) which delivers mentoring support, payroll tax assistance for GTO employers, and the GTO Boost initiative offering additional incentives to support employers hosting priority cohort apprentices and trainees, including mature age and Aboriginal people.
- pilot innovative learning support models to build evidence about excellence for supporting priority cohorts and vulnerable learners to completion. Models include culturally sensitive wellbeing and mentoring supports, culturally safe learning and accommodation environments for regionally based Aboriginal learners travelling to training, access to professional mentoring services for direct indenture apprentices to increase access and completions.
- improve and pilot VET attraction strategies supported by evidence-based research, including for young people 16-24 without a qualification not engaged in full-time learning and/or work.



PRIORITY AREA 3

TAFE at the centre

Investment: South Australia has committed to providing TAFE SA with 70% of Australian Government funding over the life of the National Skills Agreement

Pillar 2 Thriving South Australia

Pillar 3 Connected skills system

Focus areas

- Access to subsidised training
- Planning for economic and social priorities
- Place-based approach
- Building TAFE and the training sector

The delivery of high-quality, responsive training aligned to strategic government skills priorities and economic demand is at the heart of both the National Skills Agreement and Our Policy Direction.

The National Skills Agreement commits Australian governments to strengthening VET sector capability to deliver a skilled workforce by returning TAFE to the heart of the sector.

Over its five-year life, National Skills Agreement positions the TAFE sector as the key enabler for delivering the nations skilled workforce.

Australian Government funding will support a 70 percent minimum for TAFEs nationally as well investing up to \$325m in networked TAFE Centres of Excellence and up to \$148 million over five years to establish and operate the National TAFE Network to support the VET workforce and facilitate quality training.

These key investments enable TAFE SA, as the public provider, to lead high quality, accessible training for the state.

The South Australian Government has a long-term commitment to rebuilding TAFE SA, which established a 10-year Roadmap for the Future

to reposition TAFE SA at the centre of the South Australian training system.

As the largest training provider in the state, a strong TAFE SA is critical for supporting communities and developing the state's skilled workforce under the National Skills Agreement.

Priority actions:

- continue to rebuild TAFE SA in line with the Roadmap for the Future of TAFE SA by investing in its future, strengthening its capability to meet priority and lead high quality and accessible training statewide.
- re-establishing TAFE SA as VET sector leader at state and national level.
- \$21.9 million to increase the number of training places provided by TAFE SA, including regionally, and enable TAFE SA to strengthen its course alignment to the Government's priority sectors.
- \$7.1 million in 2024-25 for 13,500 Fee Free TAFE places in courses aligned to occupations in demand in the economy including construction.
- \$2.4 million for TAFE SA to design and develop contemporary digitised learning and assessment resources that support an inclusive student-centred learning experience, improve completion rates and develop new accredited VET and higher education courses that respond to South Australia's skills gaps.
- secure Australian Government funding to support implementation of National Skills Agreement Policy Initiatives and Priorities Areas delivering critical training and support including, TAFE Technology Fund, Centres of Excellence, and National TAFE Network,
- up to \$23 million over 4 years for TAFE Centres of Excellence to establishing an Early Childhood Education and Care Centre of Excellence.



Building on its recognition for excellence and leadership in VET



PRIORITY AREA 4

Quality, safe, inclusive training

Investment: \$13.0 million in 2024-25

Pillar 1 Skilled people

Pillar 3 Connected skills system

Focus areas

- **Learner wellbeing**
 - **Closing the gap**
 - **Quality training**
 - **Building TAFE and the training sector**
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Whether training is delivered in a classroom or on a worksite, it is essential that all learners feel confident about the quality of their training and are physically, psychologically and culturally safe.

Unfortunately, this isn't always the case. The National Centre for Vocational Education Research reports that 66.2% of apprenticeship and traineeship non-completions are associated with workplace issues³.

More needs to be done to stamp out poor behaviours and ensure learning environments are inclusive and safe.

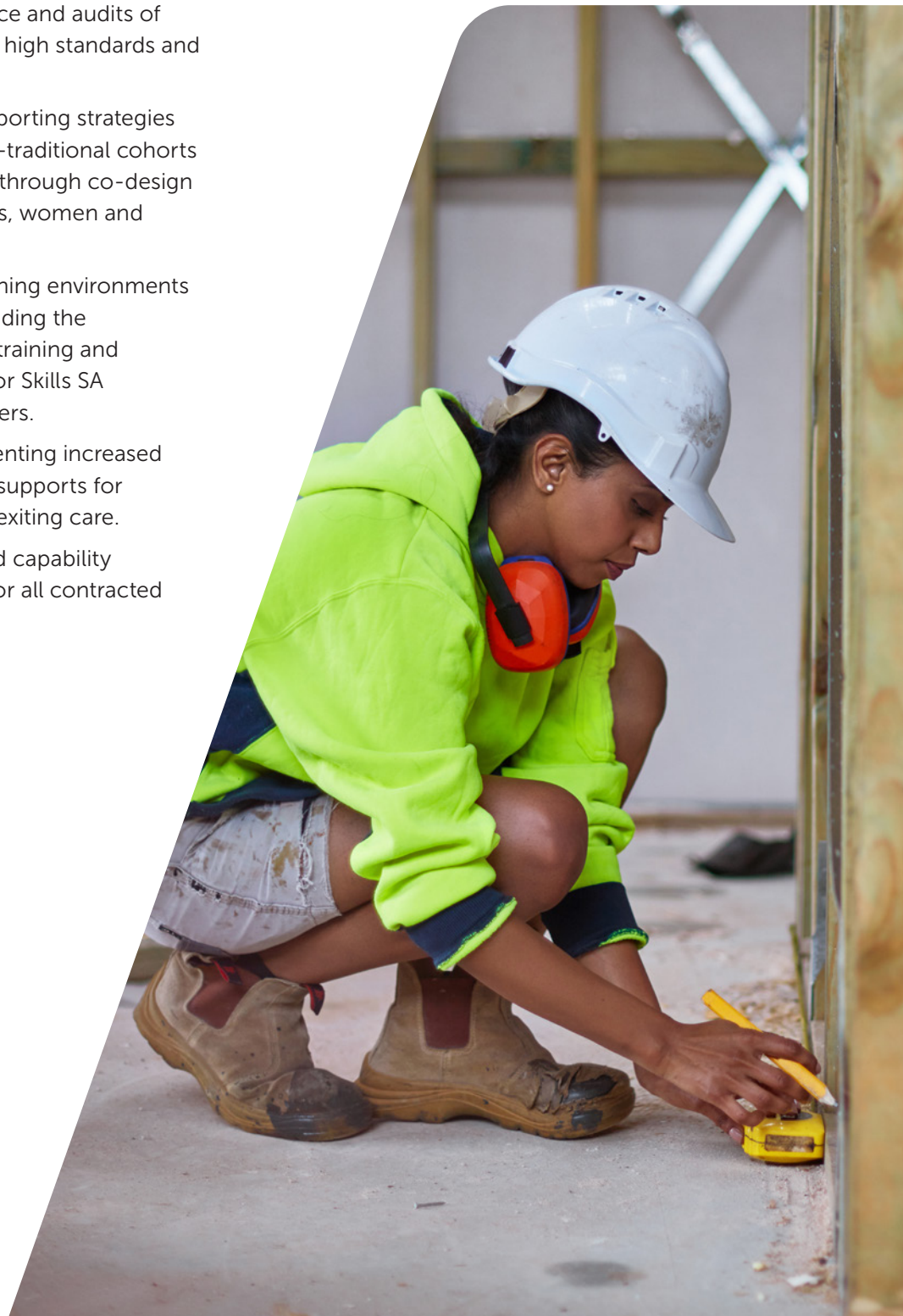
That's why we are investing in apprentice and trainee safety and a quality on-job training experience to help safeguard the wellbeing of the State's 26,000 apprentices and trainees to support improved retention and completion.

Priority actions:

- \$1.2m to strengthen the integrity of the apprenticeship and traineeship system, to ensure:
 - apprentices and trainees receive meaningful on-the-job training and support through increased employer accountability.
 - providing high quality safe learning and work environments is vital to assist apprentices and trainees to advance
 - apprentices and trainees who feel as though they are being used as cheap labour, rather than receiving training, will be better supported. More public education, investigative and compliance action, especially in regional areas, will ensure these employers are put on notice, boosting consumer confidence in the apprenticeship and traineeship system.
 - apprentices, trainees and their employers can access tailored support and dispute resolution services offered by the South Australian Skills Commission in a way that suits them.
 - increased collaboration with co-regulators such as SafeWork SA, the Fair Work Ombudsman and Return to Work SA to co-design and develop a coordinated approach to education and training, monitoring and compliance will improve the experience of employers and their apprentices and trainees.

³ National Vocational Education and Training Completions
Apprentice and Trainee Outcomes 2023

- \$1.3m to increase compliance and audits of training providers to uphold high standards and contractual obligations.
- developing and trialling supporting strategies to improve inclusion of non-traditional cohorts in trades and VET including through co-design with Aboriginal communities, women and LGBTQIA+ people.
- build culturally inclusive training environments for Aboriginal learners, including the development of accredited training and professional development for Skills SA contracted RTOs and suppliers.
- explore models for implementing increased wrap around and transition supports for children and young people exiting care.
- delivering cultural safety and capability professional development for all contracted providers.



PRIORITY AREA 5

Lifting skill levels

Investment: \$8.8 million in 2024-25

Pillar 1 Skilled people

Pillar 3 Connected skills system

Focus areas

- **Foundation skills**
 - **Assessing learner needs**
 - **Flexible and responsive training**
-

Foundation skills are core skills and competencies that assist people to participate in study, work and in the community. They include language, literacy, numeracy and digital (LLND) skills and employability skills like problem solving and team work. In an increasingly digital world, South Australians without the skills to navigate the digital economy and online services are at risk of restricted social and economic participation.

Lifting foundation skills is a state and national priority. Foundation skills support learners at every qualification level - that is why South Australia supports them on fee free basis for anyone who needs them to build their skills and complete their training.

As the job market, technology and the economy evolve, there are fewer occupations and job roles available to unqualified workers, particularly where they are trying to secure full-time entry-level employment. Similarly, while professional development for existing workers with qualifications is a common expectation in contemporary workplaces how it is funded, supported and accredited is variable at best.

However, as we collectively grapple with the demand for higher level skills, and the need for accredited skills deepening and technical skills increases, people can face uncertainty about where they get what they need to keep or improve

their employment status. The emphasis of industry entry courses and learners in transitions can mean there is often less information and access for existing workers to tap into the skills they need to retain currency, or where they are at the bleeding edge of innovation and applying adaptive skills for formalised skills formation and recognition.

Priority actions:

- \$8.8m for fee free foundation skills course delivery with VET providers and in community-based learning settings, including:
 - additional places in easy to access Adult Community Education short courses
 - accredited standalone courses and foundation skills bridging units delivered in conjunction with a vocational course but tailored to individual need via the Snapshot Reading and Numeracy Indicator (SRNI) and Core Skills Profile for Adults (CSPA) assessment tools underpinning South Australia's Upfront Assessment of Need for students enrolling in training.
- investment in VET supports nationally accredited training aligned to occupations in demand including in post-trade occupations in skills shortage.
- review the demand for higher level VET skills aligned to government priority areas to inform targeting of investment and skills initiatives that address needs including support for upskilling and reskilling of existing workers.
- undertake research to identify models or opportunities to support South Australians with a Certificate III and above to upskill using accredited training products to meet emerging demand for specialist technical skills in the economy. This will include supervisory levels in post trade priority skill shortage areas.



Where to find more information

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Department of
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Skilled. Thriving. Connected.

Our Policy Direction for Skills in South Australia