

Ministerial Priorities for the Training and Workforce Development System





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Minister's foreword



The Tasmanian Government invests in job-focused training that benefits Tasmanian businesses, industries, learners and the economy. A well-trained workforce is critical to the growth and sustainability of the Tasmanian economy and the industries within it and is a priority for the government.

The government's investment is directed to areas that will make a difference to individuals and the economy as a whole. It includes subsidising foundation skills and training for apprentices and trainees, funding for courses to improve the employment outcomes for existing workers, supporting key industries to build capacity and capability within their workforce, and program and industry support through the Department of State Growth (Skills Tasmania).

Like all parts of our economy and community, the training and workforce development system was significantly disrupted by the pandemic. The training sector responded with resilience and adaptability. We saw innovation in the delivery of training, flexibility from training organisations that creatively responded to the challenge, and a focus on excellence to ensure learner-outcomes.

Looking to the future, it is the training and workforce development system that will grow, reskill and upskill the workforce we need in order to seize emerging opportunities in areas like cyber-security and renewable energy, and to continue to deliver on core economy-growing projects in the building, construction and infrastructure and care sectors. The government is committed to working with all partners in the training and workforce development system to deliver the workforce that Tasmania needs, now and for the future.

To seize these opportunities, the system must continue to be responsive to the needs of its users, accessible to all employers and learners, and deliver training that gets Tasmanians into jobs. We have already commenced discussions with industry about the development of 'industry compacts', as recommended by the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council, to set out immediate actions to address industry skills and training needs.

Over the longer term, we are committed to working with our partners in the system on solutions that benefit Tasmania and that build the quality and capacity in our system - the training organisations, industry and employers and the learners themselves.

TasTAFE continues to play a crucial role, delivering training to more than half of all Tasmanian government-subsidised learners. The transition of TasTAFE to a publicly owned, not-for-profit government business will ensure it can be more responsive to the needs of Tasmanian industry, employers and learners.

These changes will position TasTAFE on a strong footing for the future and are supported by \$114 million for more teaching staff, better facilities and improved regional training options.

I am issuing these *Ministerial Priorities* in accordance with section five of the Training and Workforce Development Act 2013. They will deliver on the government's vision for a training and workforce development system that is accessible, job-focused and responsive, supporting a stronger pathway to jobs and skills for all Tasmanians.

Felix Ellis MP

Minister for Skills, Training and Workforce Growth

Introduction

Vocational Education and Training (VET) plays a critical role in building the skills, knowledge and capability of Tasmania's workforce. A skilled workforce provides benefits to individuals, businesses and the economy. For the individual, VET can provide access to meaningful work and a contribution to the community. For business and industry, a competent and qualified workforce that can fill job vacancies is critical to sustainability and supporting business growth. Both ultimately contribute to the Tasmanian economy, to national productivity and to more resilient communities.

State and territory governments, with support from the Australian Government, fund a significant proportion of VET. Government-funded VET and workforce development activities aim to maximise community and economy-wide benefits. This complements employer-funded VET, which is targeted at the individual and unique needs of a business, and other tertiary education and non-accredited training.

The Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council (PESRAC) noted that training systems only work with the full commitment of government, employers, learners and training organisations. Success depends on each partner being committed to working together to a high standard and often co-investing alongside government. To achieve the best working system, each participant has distinct roles and responsibilities.

Learners – achieving nationally recognised training that provides employment outcomes or career advancement. They invest their time and often contribute to the cost of training through learner fees. In many cases they are managing the challenges associated with concurrently learning and working.

Employers – are key to developing a skilled workforce, in partnership with learners. They contribute to the cost of training delivery and benefit through increased productivity and business growth. They provide an important voice in the development of training packages and workforce development plans. They ensure supportive workplace practices which are critical in achieving positive training outcomes for their employees to realise the productivity benefits.

Training organisations – Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) are a conduit between industry, employers and learners. They ensure that learners are undertaking quality training that is accessible and directly relevant to employment and the learner's own training goals.

Industry bodies – understand the current and future skill needs through forecasting and employer engagement and advise government in relation to priorities. Have a key role in engaging with national industry bodies on development of training packages that are industry and employer relevant.

Tasmanian Government – subsidises training in the public interest, facilitates engagement between stakeholders, administers the state-wide system, and directly invests in priority initiatives. Engages in national policy development to advocate for reforms that align with Tasmania's needs.

Ministerial Priorities

These Ministerial Priorities provide the strategic guidance for the Tasmanian training and workforce development system and will be reviewed and updated periodically.

They align with the object (section 3) of the *Training and Workforce Development Act 2013* and support the Tasmanian Government's vision for a high-quality training and workforce development system that is accessible, job-focussed and responsive.

Priority one: Building stronger partnerships

Participants in the VET system are committed to working together and co-investing to deliver outcomes for learners and employers.

1.1 Refresh our approach to industry engagement

The Tasmanian Government will establish a refreshed approach to industry engagement and will focus on supporting stronger, more collaborative partnerships between system participants. Better engagement with industry also means improving the flow of information and insights from industry through to the policy, programs and projects funded by Skills Tasmania. This ensures that the decisions being made have had appropriate industry and sector input.

The Tasmanian Government will deliver on the PESRAC recommendation that industry bodies (associations and employer representatives) should enter into 'industry compacts' that include 'step-up' commitments. These include support for a modernised TasTAFE, clear and specific advice on current and future industry-wide training requirements, supporting more people from industry working as trainers and sharing infrastructure to enable students to train on modern technology. Specific and immediate actions that address the unique needs of an industry will be included in schedules to the industry compacts.



Government will focus its industry engagement efforts on industry sectors that:

- have a high level of demand for VET
- make a significant contribution to Tasmania's economy - either through a direct contribution to economic output or by enabling workforce participation or productivity improvements in other industries
- have high rates of employment and strong projected jobs growth in occupations that require skills or training delivered by the VET system, or
- provide pathways to high value occupations in regional Tasmania.

What we will do:

- Deliver on the PESRAC recommendation for Industry Compacts, including schedules of fit-for-purpose actions to address the immediate skills and training needs of industry.
- Work with business and industry to share data around skills and training needs to ensure training delivery (or workforce activity) continues to respond to current and emerging skills needs.
- Advocate that national funding arrangements for skills and training have the flexibility to support local industry needs.
- Grow the community services workforce by providing \$3.115 million over three years to support the TasCOSS Local People into Local Jobs project.
- Through the High-Vis Army initiative, provide \$10 million to support the building and construction industry to meet current and projected workforce demand.

1.2 Develop new ways of working to better meet industry needs

The training and workforce development system must keep pace with changing workforce needs and expectations of learners, employers and industry. This includes contemporary learning platforms, industry experienced trainers and assessors, and fit-for-purpose facilities.

Industry and employer feedback indicates the need for government support for innovative training delivery models, to assist RTOs, employers and industry to work in partnership to trial new ways of working that better meet the needs of users. To achieve better outcomes, the government will support RTOs, including TasTAFE, to access modern equipment or facilities so that learners get the best possible experience and are industry-ready when they complete training.

Trainers and assessors are fundamental to the training and workforce development system. Engaging more skilled trainers and assessors, specifically those with current industry knowledge and skills, will be critical in meeting the demand for training and ensuring quality delivery into the future. Government recognises that we need an RTO-led approach to build the capacity of RTOs, including those in specialised fields, to manage a skilled workforce that can meet the fluctuations in training demand.

What we will do:

- Understand the barriers that impact the move to more flexible training delivery and support industry-led partnerships that deliver innovative solutions.
- Support RTOs to access modern equipment and facilities, including through shared access arrangements or other agreements with industry and employers.
- Work with industry and RTOs to support new approaches to grow the number of quality trainers and assessors in our system.

Priority two: Modernising TasTAFE

TasTAFE is a future-focused and market-aligned training provider that is responsive to the needs and expectations of Tasmanian learners, employers and industries.

TasTAFE is the largest of the RTOs in our training and workforce development system. It provides a critical foundational role in the Tasmanian VET system. It maintains a presence in regional areas and develops and implements job training pathways for Tasmanians.

TasTAFE is the main training provider in a number of key areas including plumbing, electrotechnology and automotive. TasTAFE provides more than 90 per cent of training in other areas such as hairdressing, agriculture and engineering.

2.1 Deliver on the vision set out in TasTAFE transition for a better training future

The TasTAFE transition for a better training future document sets out the actions that will support the successful transition of TasTAFE to a more flexible and market-facing training provider. It identifies the following outcomes for TasTAFE in its role within the Tasmanian VET system:

- TasTAFE is valued as being forward-looking and for supporting the Tasmanian economy and community by delivering training in the areas where the public provider is best placed to deliver.
- TasTAFE training meets the needs and expectations of Tasmanian learners, employers and industries.
- TasTAFE's physical infrastructure supports best practice training delivery.

The Tasmanian Government will work with TasTAFE to deliver these outcomes. This includes the government's commitment that TasTAFE will receive 80 per cent of the Tasmanian Government's recurrent skills funding and an additional \$114 million investment.

What we will do:

- Support TasTAFE to commence as a not-for-profit government business on 1 July 2022, under the *TasTAFE (Skills and Training Business) Act 2021*, including finalising the Ministerial Statement of Expectations and determining a robust monitoring and performance framework for TasTAFE.
- Continue work to identify what training TasTAFE needs to deliver to meet the skills needs of the Tasmanian economy and community, now and into the future, and ensuring this informs TasTAFE's infrastructure planning, while also having regard to industry partnering opportunities.
- Enhance the provision of training services provided by TasTAFE supported by \$37.6 million for 100 extra TasTAFE teachers.
- Improve access for rural and regional learners with the development of a \$10 million Regional TAFE Virtual Campus and \$4 million for TasTAFE and Libraries Tasmania to increase access to TAFE courses.
- Boost job-ready skills through the \$2 million SkillUp! initiative which will provide fee-free short courses for Tasmanian learners.
- Support TasTAFE to upgrade facilities, including new student accommodation, and equipment to ensure students are learning on contemporary equipment through the \$45 million TasTAFE Facility Upgrades and Transition Fund.
- Support delivery of the \$26 million Water and Energy Trades Centre of Excellence.
- Support TasTAFE to improve ventilation and air quality across TasTAFE facilities supported by \$3 million in COVID-19 infrastructure improvements.



Priority three: Invest in training for jobs

Workforce needs are identified and all partners, including industry, employers and learners are well positioned to adapt to future changes. Learners get the skills they need for jobs.

It is a priority of the Tasmanian Government to invest in training and support that gets more unemployed and underemployed Tasmanians into meaningful training connected to jobs.

3.1 Training and skills investment aligned with industry needs

Consistent with the findings of PESRAC, the government's investment will be directed towards training that enables more unemployed Tasmanians to be trained for the jobs and careers available now and to support underemployed Tasmanians to upskill or reskill so they can take advantage of emerging employment opportunities.

Where necessary to meet workforce needs, training for these skills will also look beyond traditional pathways and include stackable skill sets or accredited micro-credentials that provide access to, and enable, rewarding jobs and careers.

By directing government investment in this way, businesses and industry will benefit from a skilled workforce that can grow with business needs and seize new opportunities. Government will continue to collaborate with industry to plan for the future so that Tasmanians have the skills they need to seize new job opportunities and to be adaptable to changing economic conditions.

What we will do:

- Work with industry bodies on workforce development planning to help identify priority training needs.
- Deliver an accessible pipeline of investment in skills and training aligned with industry training needs and targeted towards unemployed and underemployed Tasmanians.

3.2 More Tasmanians are job-ready for local jobs

Industry and business representatives have spoken about the unique skills and training challenges faced by our regional communities. Some regional communities find it difficult to access local training that is relevant to the jobs available in their local area.

There is also a need to ensure job-focused, entry-level and foundation skills are available to learners in regional areas. This includes supporting learners to develop the 'soft-skills' they need to be successful in the workplace. Private RTOs, in addition to TasTAFE, are important to meeting the training needs of local communities.

The Jobs Hubs network links local people to local jobs and provide a pathway for government investment in targeted regional training and support services that can assist individuals to be job-ready for local jobs.

What we will do:

- Deliver regional skills and training investment that improves access for more regional Tasmanians.



3.3 Strengthening the apprenticeship system

Today's economy offers school leavers and employees a multitude of options for their future career. This means that employers and industries face a highly competitive environment in attracting and retaining apprentices and trainees.

Modernising the apprenticeship system to reflect these changes in how Australians work, and fostering strong employer and apprentice/trainee relationships, will build positive experiences that help to attract new and diverse cohorts to the system.

Strengthening pathways for school-based learners and recent school leavers to better equip potential apprentices and trainees to enter the workforce, as well as increased support in the early stages of apprenticeships/traineeships, will build successful outcomes for both the apprentice/trainee and the employer.

Industry also has an important role to play in raising the value of apprenticeships and traineeships as a first-choice career option in their industry and, together with the Tasmanian Government, to support employers to gain new skills that will improve their value proposition in the competitive apprentice/trainee labour market.

In addition to collaborating with the Australian Government and its Apprenticeship Network Providers, Skills Tasmania will continue to work with apprentices, trainees and employers in workplaces to foster strong relationships and quality outcomes.

What we will do:

- Facilitate the attraction of apprentices/trainees, support their successful completion, and expand the cohort of Tasmanians considering, and being considered for, apprenticeships/traineeships.
- Promote Group Training Organisations as a value-added pathway for small and medium enterprises to engage successfully with the apprenticeship and traineeship system.

Priority four: Promoting opportunity and access

Learners and employers can more easily navigate and benefit from the VET system. It is valued as a first-choice option for Tasmanian learners.

4.1 Promote the value, opportunity and pathways in VET

The VET system provides diverse pathways – upskilling, reskilling, short and long courses - that are highly relevant to a modern economy, where individuals are rarely in a job for life. The diversity of opportunities available, and the close connection between VET and industry and employers, can make the system difficult to navigate - both for school leavers and adults looking for a career change.

Together with other partners in the system, the Tasmanian Government has a role to play in simplifying the training system wherever possible and raising the profile of VET as a pathway to a rewarding career. Clear and accessible pathways for school leavers are particularly important, as they are the future skilled workforce for Tasmania.

What we will do:

- Work with industry on a state-wide approach for the promotion of VET that reinforces the value, opportunity and visibility of the VET system for individuals, employers and industry.
- Work with industry to build workforce development capability to better promote VET pathways into occupations where there are strong current and future job prospects.
- Enhance the opportunity to celebrate excellence and diversity in our training and workforce development system through recognition events, including the Tasmanian Training Awards.

4.2 Promote lifelong learning

Lifelong learning benefits an individual's wellbeing and allows them to participate fully in their community, whether or not they are in the workforce. By promoting lifelong learning, we are supporting adults, no matter what their background, to access foundational learning (including language, literacy, numeracy, digital and employability skills) and other training they need to reskill, upskill or to be more productive in their workplace or community.

For industries and employers, lifelong learning is important for ensuring that their workforce skills are contemporary and relevant and people can access the skills they need to adopt new technology and new processes that keep their businesses relevant and efficient in the modern economy.

What we will do:

- Promote a coordinated approach to lifelong learning for all Tasmanians, guided by the Adult Learning Strategy.
- Improve the accessibility of the VET system for adult learners, to support career transitions, upskilling, reskilling and lifelong learning.





4.3 Training that builds a diverse and inclusive workforce

Workplaces that support employees and are more diverse and inclusive will enhance personal engagement, reduce turnover and can access a wider talent pool which provides more scope for business growth. Some learners face barriers that make it difficult for them to access or remain in training or work. Women, in particular, were impacted disproportionately by the pandemic.

In some cases, these barriers are complex and systemic, and require coordinated efforts from employers, industry, education providers and state and federal government service providers. We will continue to work with partners in the system and across government to seek to tackle these barriers, to grow the Tasmanian workforce and support Tasmanians to realise their potential.

What we will do:

- Engage with employers, industry, RTOs and other community experts to build capability in the training system to support greater participation by diverse cohorts and Tasmanians facing disadvantage. An initial focus will be on improving pathways and opportunities for women.







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