
News Service 126 – Online job ads decrease Jan 2024, New Electrical Apprentice Supervision Practice Standard, New JSA Commissioner, Piloting revised standards for RTOs, ASQA online tip-off service, Productivity commission reports on performance of VET, Smart & skilled update – No. 221-224 Jan 2024, PSO’s 2024 insights update forum, Registrations open - 2024 Skills Conference, ARC welcomes strengthening of ASQA, Consultation open – SEEP First Nations, Entries open to 2024 NSW Training Awards, 2024 applications Return To Work Pathways Program open, Women in energy breakfast, Electrical safety incidents Nov 23 – sharing the knowledge, Electricians charged, Electrical licensing disciplinary action, Electric shocks, NSW Building Commission inspection powers expand, Changes to Clean Energy Council (CEC) accreditation process, Community benefits for central-west Orana REZ, Release of fourth quarter 2023 Solar Report.

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

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1. ONLINE JOB ADVERTISEMENTS DECREASE IN JAN 2024



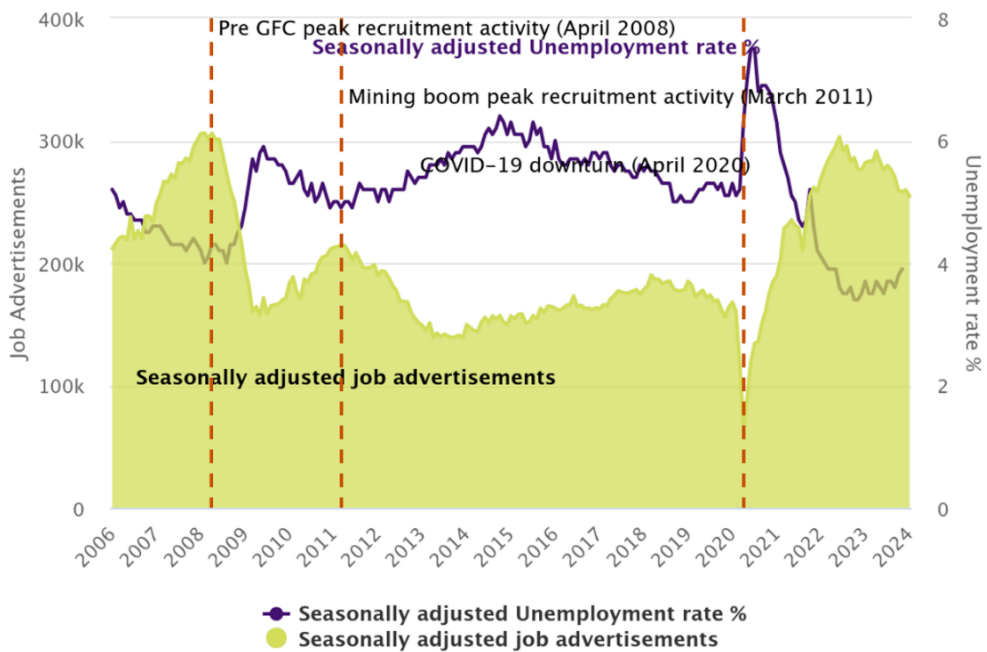
The Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) reports this month that the January online job adverts decreased. In seasonally adjusted terms, job advertisements decreased by 2% or 5,200 job advertisements to 254,500.

The JSA states, “Latest data from Jobs and Skills Australia’s January Internet Vacancy Index (IVI) show the period of record growth in advertisements following the COVID-19 pandemic may be ending, with vacancy numbers decreasing in seven of the past nine months. Despite this, vacancy numbers remain at record levels, with around two-thirds more advertisements in the labour market compared with the monthly average for 2019.

...

Over the month to January 2024, Labourers was the only major occupation group to record an increase in vacancies (up by 1.7% or 260 advertisements). The strongest drop in job ads was for Technicians and Trades Workers vacancies (down by 4.7% or 1,700).

Jobs ads over the year decreased the most in city areas, down by 12.3%, compared to a 5.8% decrease in regional Australia.



Job Advertisements and Unemployment Rate – January 2006 to January 2024

Recruitment activity declined in five states over the month, with the strongest decreases recorded in New South Wales (down by 4.6% or 3,500) and Western Australia (down by 3.0% or 980).

– Tasmania bucked the trend, increasing by 7.8% (or 340 job advertisements), with other increases recorded in the Northern Territory (up by 5.8% or 190) and the Australian Capital Territory (up by 1.7% or 120).

...

Recruitment activity was concentrated in metropolitan Australia, with 70.7% of job advertisements in January 2024 found in Australia's capital cities. ...”

Download the report [HERE](#)

2. REMINDER – RELEASE OF NSW ELECTRICAL APPRENTICE SUPERVISION PRACTICE STANDARD GUIDE



Under the tutelage of the new Building Commission NSW, the new regulator of the building and construction industry in NSW from 1 December 2023 and the growing concern over apprentice supervision in the electrical industry, a reminder that a new Supervision Practice Standard (SPS) for the electrical industry has been released. The new standard covers appropriate supervision requirements, levels and ratios for the supervision of electrical apprentices.

The new Supervision Practice Standard for licenced electricians supervising apprentices was released after a lengthy consultation and feedback process with undertaken with selected industry stakeholders.

The new standard states, “The new Supervision Practice Standard for electrical apprentices aims to respond to compliance issues and industry needs by clarifying the appropriate levels and ratios of supervision depending on the experience of an apprentice. These guidelines will assist businesses, licence holders and apprentices to understand their rights and obligation and make the necessary arrangements to ensure safety and compliance.”

The Supervision Practice Standard (SPS) acts as a guideline to help businesses, licence holders and apprentices to understand their rights and obligations. It also details the supervision requirements of electrical apprentices to achieve compliant work in a safe manner.

SPS to be mandated – Sep 2024

A point to note is that NSW Government intends the SPS will be **mandated as a legal requirement from September 2024**.

Key information

- The new Supervision Practice Standard (SPS) provides information for the electrical industry on appropriate levels and ratios for the supervision of electrical apprentices.
- Only a licensed electrician can supervise electrical apprentices.
- The SPS details varying levels of supervision that are appropriate depending on the experience of an apprentice, Direct, General and Broad.
- Currently, the SPS acts as a guideline to help businesses, licence holders and apprentices to understand their rights and obligations under the SPS and make appropriate arrangements to meet the requirements.
- The SPS will be mandated as a legal requirement in September 2024. Once mandatory, a failure to comply with the SPS will attract enforcement action and penalties.

Download a copy of the guide via this link: [SUPERVISION PRACTICE STANDARD FOR APPRENTICES IN THE ELECTRICAL INDUSTRY PDF, 558.89 KB](#).

More information is available on the Fair Trading website [HERE](#)

A Power Point Presentation (PPT) slide show, is also available explaining the Standard - [HERE](#)

3. NEW JOBS AND SKILLS AUSTRALIA COMMISSIONER



Professor
Barney Glover AO

The Hon Brendan O'Connor MP, Minister for Skills and Training announced on 10 January 2024 Professor Barney Glover AO, the current Vice-Chancellor and President of Western Sydney University, was appointed the new Commissioner of Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA). Professor Glover will commence his five-year term in April 2024.

The Minister stated, "Professor Glover's esteemed career includes significant dual-sector expertise and experience at the most senior levels of university management and business leadership.

I congratulate Professor Glover on his appointment and look forward to his leadership in this critical time. His distinguished academic leadership and extensive experience make Professor Glover eminently qualified for the role.

His five-year term will begin in April 2024 and follows a rigorous merit-based selection process.

Jobs and Skills Australia was established by the Albanese Government to provide independent evidence and advice.

It plays a critical role in informing decisions to address Australia's current and emerging workforce skills and training needs, such as the challenges in transformation to net zero, the rapidly growing care and support sector, digitisation and the growing need for digital skills.

...

As JSA Commissioner, Professor Glover will be a trusted, independent source of expert advice on Australia's current and future skills needs and lead JSA's work on researching workforce trends, skills, and workforce needs.

The Commissioner will work closely with JSA's tripartite partners including employers, unions, state and territory governments and education and training sectors to ensure JSA's advice to government and stakeholders is high quality, balanced and incorporates a wide range of views."

[READ MORE HERE](#)

4. PILOTING THE REVISED STANDARDS FOR RTOS



ASQA will continue piloting the revised Standards in practice and identify the guidance materials, policies and tools required to support RTOs.

ASQA states that, "This quarter, we are [conducting further piloting activities](#) to test the revised Standards in practice and identify the guidance materials, policies and tools required to support RTOs.

The Standards are being revised to provide **greater clarity for RTOs** about how quality outcomes for learners can be achieved, support consistency in regulation, and enable RTOs to deliver flexibly and innovatively. The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR)

[released the latest amended draft Standards](#) in October 2023; they are expected to come into effect from 1 January 2025.

Coupled with the revised Standards will be a Compliance Requirements Instrument and Credentials Policy, both of which DEWR is currently drafting. Having these in place will **streamline the legislative framework** to better meet the needs of RTOs and regulators and enable a clear focus on quality and integrity in the sector.”

[READ MORE HERE](#)

4.1. ASQA ONLINE TIP-OFF SERVICE

Reporting information that may relate to fraud and other threats to the integrity of the VET sector.

Tip-off report



ASQA



A reminder, that ASQA has established an online Tip-off service. This online service allows concerned or impacted individuals to provide information to ASQA about an individual, business, or organisation in the VET sector which may then be used to detect potential fraud or other serious conduct.

ASQA can only take action on concerns that relate to their regulatory responsibility. It may refer information collected to other government agencies for potential investigations that fall outside of ASQA’s scope.

- What is a Tip-off?
- A Tip-off refers to suspicions or evidence/intelligence you may have of deceptive practices, unethical behaviours or illegal activities.
- A complaint refers to your dissatisfaction with the quality of training, customer service, communication or administrative processes you have experienced.

If you believe your query may relate to a complaint, please go to ASQA’s [Complaints about training providers](#) page.

For VET tip-offs call:

1300 644 844
Within Australia

+61 2 5933 2022
From outside of Australia

If you have reported a Tip-off via phone and need to supply further information, [CLICK HERE](#).

You can read more about ASQA's Tip-off capabilities [HERE](#).

5. PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION REPORTS ON PERFORMANCE INFORMATION FOR VET SERVICES



Australian Government
Productivity Commission

On the 5th of February 2024 the Productivity Commission released its report on the performance of government services pertaining to Vocational Education and Training (VET).

The Productivity Commission employed 12 VET services performance indicators to assess results. These indicators were:

1. *Barriers to participation in VET by selected equity group*
2. *Barriers to participation in VET*
3. *Students who achieve main reason for training*
4. *Employer satisfaction with VET*
5. *Student satisfaction with quality of training*
6. *Service quality*
7. *Workforce sustainability*
8. *Government recurrent expenditure per annual hour*
9. *Student employment and further study outcomes*
10. *Student completions and qualifications*
11. *Students who improved education status*
12. *Skill utilisation*

For each it reported the following results:

1. Barriers to participation in VET by selected equity group

In 2020-21, the proportion of people who wanted to participate in any (or more) formal study below bachelor degree level in the last 12 months but could not was highest in major cities (2.7%) and lowest in outer regional and remote areas (0.4%). Results across SEIFA quintiles were fairly constant ranging from 0.7% in both the lowest and highest quintiles to 0.9% in the third quintile (figure 5.3).

2. Barriers to participation in VET

Nationally in 2020-21, 5.5% of people wanted to participate in any (or more) formal study in the last 12 months but could not. The proportion was higher for barriers to enrolment in a qualification (or more qualifications) below bachelor degree level (3.8%), than for enrolment in a qualification (or more qualifications) at bachelor degree level or above (2.3%) (figure 5.4). The main barriers to participation include too much work/no time and financial reasons.

3. Students who achieve main reason for training

Nationally in 2022, 87.2% of government-funded 2021 VET qualification completers reported that training helped to fully or partly achieve their main reason for training (figure 5.5). The proportion was higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander government-funded qualification completers (88.4%) in 2022 (table 5A.13).

4. Employer satisfaction with VET

Nationally in 2023, 56.8% of Australian employers were engaged with VET (table 5A.15), of which 66.4% were satisfied with all forms of VET engagement (down from 72.9% in 2015) (figure 5.6).

By type of training engaged in, satisfaction with apprenticeships and traineeships has shown the largest percentage point decrease (8.5%; from 81.7% in 2015 to 73.2% in 2023) (figure 5.6 and table 5A.16).

5. Student satisfaction with quality of training

Nationally in 2022, 89.3% of all government-funded 2021 VET qualification completers indicated that they were satisfied with the overall quality of their training (figure 5.7). The proportion was higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander government-funded qualification completers (92.2%) in 2022 (table 5A.14).

Satisfaction with instructors (87.5%) was lower than satisfaction with assessment (89.3%) in 2022 (table 5A.14).

6. Service quality

In 2022-23, the proportion of the providers audited as a proportion of all regulated providers was 5.8%. The proportion of providers that were subject to compliance audit and with critical/serious findings, as a proportion of all regulated providers was 1.4%. This is an increase from 0.4% in 2021-22 (figure 5.8).

7. Workforce sustainability

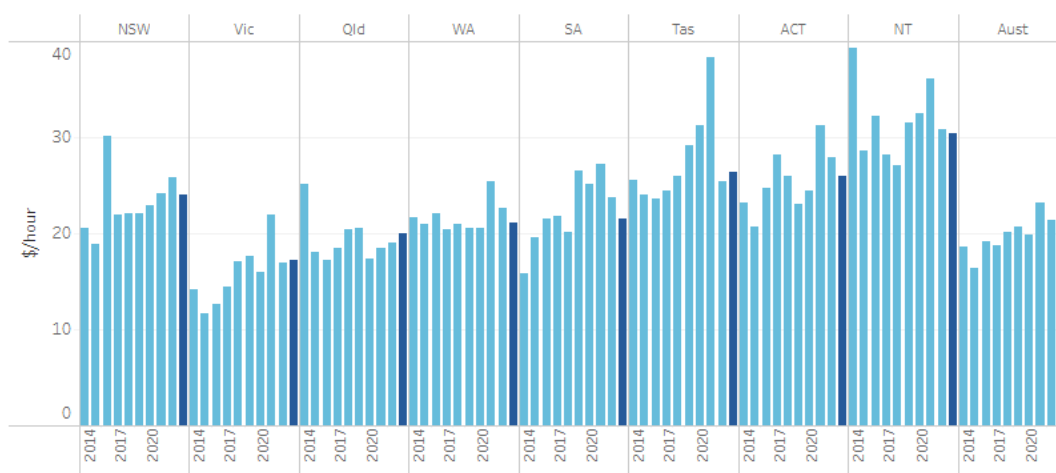
‘Workforce sustainability’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide sustainable VET services.

This indicator is currently under development for reporting in the future.

8. Government recurrent expenditure per annual hour

Nationally in 2022, government real recurrent expenditure decreased 5.2% from 2021 (table 5A.1), and the number of governments funded annual hours (course mix adjusted) decreased 2.6% (table 5A.2). These annual movements resulted in a decrease in recurrent expenditure per annual hour from \$21.44 in 2021 to \$20.86 in 2022 (figure 5.9).

Figure 5.9 Government recurrent expenditure per annual hour
By jurisdiction, by year (2022 dollars)



Source: table 5A.2

9. Student employment and further study outcomes

Nationally in 2022, 89.1% of 20–64 year old total VET qualification completers from 2021 were employed and/or continued on to further study after training (figure 5.10a) – up from 86.6% in 2021. The proportion was higher for people from remote and very remote areas

(91.5%) and lower for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (86.1%) and people with disability (78.4%) (table 5A.17).

For government-funded VET qualification completers, 87.5% were employed and/or continued on to further study in 2022 (lower than the proportion for total VET qualification completers) – up from 85.4% in 2021 (table 5A.18).

Nationally in 2022, 71.4% of 20–64 year old total VET qualification completers from 2021 improved their employment status after training (figure 5.10b) – up from 67.2% in 2021. The proportion was higher for people from remote and very remote areas (77.6%), slightly lower for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (69.9%) and lower for people with disability (55.1%) than the national average (table 5A.19). For government-funded qualification completers, 69.8% had improved employment status in 2022 (lower than the proportion for total VET qualification completers) – up from 65.2% in 2021 (table 5A.20).

By type of improved employment status for total VET qualification completers, the proportion was highest for qualification completers receiving a job-related benefit (82.6%), followed by qualification completers employed after training (who were not employed before training) (55.3%) and employed at a higher skill level after training (17.5%). In 2022, for both total VET and government-funded qualification completers, the proportion who improved their employment status was lower for qualification completers completing a Certificate I/II qualification (58.9 and 52.6% respectively), compared with qualification completers completing a Certificate III/IV qualification (72.6 and 71.7% respectively) or a Diploma and above qualification (74.1 and 73.1% respectively) (tables 5A.21–22).

10. Student completions and qualifications

Nationally in 2022, around 716,400 qualifications were completed by total VET students aged 15–64 years (table 5A.23) – equivalent to 42.6 qualifications per 1,000 people aged 15–64 years (figure 5.11a). The rate was higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (49.4), and higher for people from remote and very remote areas (43.0). The number of qualification completions by total VET students declined 5.3% from 2018 to 2022 (table 5A.23).

Around 316,900 qualifications were completed by government-funded VET students aged 15–64 years – equivalent to 18.9 qualifications per 1,000 people aged 15–64 years (table 5A.24). The number of government-funded VET qualification completions declined 7.0% from 2018 to 2022 (table 5A.24).

By qualification level, the rate of total VET qualifications completed per 1,000 people aged 15–64 years was highest for Certificate III/IV (24.5), followed by Certificate I/II (9.9) and Diploma and above (8.2) (figure 5.11b).

Of the 716,400 qualifications completed by total VET students, 57.5% were for Certificate III/IV, 23.2% for Certificate I/II and 19.3% for Diploma and above (table 5A.25). For the 316,900 completed by government-funded VET students, there was a greater concentration in Certificate III/IV (64.3%), followed by 22.1% for Certificate I/II and 13.6% for Diploma and above (table 5A.26).

11. Students who improved education status

Of all total VET qualification completers aged 20–64 years that completed an AQF qualification nationally in 2022, 46.5% did so with a higher qualification than their previous highest AQF qualification (figure 5.12). The proportion was higher for all three selected equity groups – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (56.6%), people from remote and very remote areas (50.7%) and for people with disability (49.1%) (table 5A.27).

Nationally, for government-funded VET qualification completers aged 20–64 years that completed an AQF qualification in 2022, 55.9% did so with a higher qualification than their previous highest AQF qualification (table 5A.28).

12. Skill utilisation

Nationally in 2018-19, 79.8% of persons aged 15–64 years that completed their highest VET qualification in the last five years, were either working in the field of that qualification or not working in same field and the qualification was relevant to their current job. This proportion is lower than 2015 (83.0%), but similar to 2010-11 (79.9%) (figure 5.13).

Nationally in 2018-19, 68.1% were working in the field of the highest VET qualification and 11.6% were not working in the same field but the qualification is relevant to their current job (table 5A.33).

Review the Report details and data as well as the graphs as it is clear there are issues with service delivery in the VET sector effected by a decline in real term funding of the Australian VET system over time. Some of the indicators point to a concomitant decline in quality, as well. Given the huge investment in government funded training this report and especially the data, is timely and worthy of close review.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

6. SMART & SKILLED UPDATE – NO 221-224 JAN 2024



Training Services NSW has published the latest Smart and Skilled Update, No. 221 - 224 for **JANUARY 2024** ([DOWNLOAD A COPY HERE](#)).

Smart and Skilled is an NSW Government program that helps people get qualifications in in-demand skills and industries. It's a key part of the NSW [vocational education and training](#) system.

This latest Smart and Skilled Update covers the following:

1. Smart and Skilled: Performance-Based Contracting for FY23-24 Activity Period
 - a. Overview
 - b. Performance Assessment
 - c. Sharing Student Outcome Data with Providers and Students
 - d. High Performing Provider Application
2. NSW Fee Free
 - a. NSW Fee Free arrangements for commencements occurring 1 January to 30 June
3. 2024 (NFF Jan - June 2024)
 - a. Close of NSW Fee Free 2023
 - b. Further information
4. Financial Cap Review # 2 for 2023-24 - Update
 - a. Assessment of Financial Cap Review
 - b. Financial Cap Adjustments
 - c. Ongoing Financial Cap Monitoring
 - d. Further adjustments for 2023-24 Activity Period
5. NSW Skills List updated – Version 14.1
 - a. Approved additions to the NSW Skills List

- b. Accredited course replaced by a training package qualification
- c. Accredited courses replaced on the NSW Skills List
- d. VTO changes affecting the NSW Skills List
- e. Qualifications removed from the Pre-qualified List

The department is managing Financial Caps carefully, in consideration of the changing budget environment.

Find out how to access funding for vocational education and training that gives people workplace skills in high demand industries. Learn about Smart and Skilled and other government programs in NSW. For more information visit: [FUNDING AND SUPPORT – SMART AND SKILLED](#)

Or, for technical support in relation to this update, contact Training Market Customer Support at Training.Market@det.nsw.edu.au

For the **Smart and Skilled – NSW Skills List** visit: [NSW SKILLS LIST – SMART AND SKILLED](#)

7. POWERING SKILLS ORGANISATION'S 2024 INSIGHTS UPDATE FORUM



Powering Skills Organisation (PSO) is extending an invitation to stakeholders to participate in their first virtual monthly Insights Update for 2024. Join them on **Friday 8th March, 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM (AEDT)** for an engaging session.

During the Insights Update, PSO provide a comprehensive overview of Powering Skills Organisation's recent activities. This includes new initiatives, ongoing plans, and the outcomes they have achieved. The meeting is a great opportunity to stay informed about PSO's endeavours and participate in discussions about the industry's future.

Stakeholder participation and insights is highly valued, making this session both informative and collaborative. PSO thanks stakeholders for their ongoing support, and they look forward to your presence at the meeting, where they will share with you the latest developments within Powering Skills Organisation.



The meeting is an excellent opportunity to stay informed about PSO's activities and engage in discussions about their future endeavours. Your participation and insights are invaluable, and you are encouraged to join them for this informative session.

PSO looks forward to seeing you at the meeting and sharing the developments within Powering Skills Organisation.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

8. REGISTRATIONS ARE NOW OPEN - 2024 SKILLS CONFERENCE



The annual Skills Conference will be held on Wednesday 12th June 2024. The event hosted each year by the Apprentice Employment Network NSW & ACT. This year's theme is 'Empowerment and Connection'.

The Skills Conference will look at where skills are heading, what work is being done, and how we continue to address the nation's skills shortages.

The Skills Conference attracts over 200 people annually from across Australia and New Zealand.

The 2024 Skills Conference will be held on Wednesday, 12th June 2024, at Dockside Darling Harbour. As a lead into the event, a Pre-Conference Networking event will be held at the Crowne Plaza Sydney on the evening of Tuesday, 11th June 2024.



This year's keynote speaker will be the NSW Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education, the Hon Steve Whan, who will provide a timely update on his portfolio in NSW and speak about where Skills and Vocational Education and Training is heading.

Registrations are now open for the 2024 Skills Conference - Empowerment and Connection.

EARLY BIRD RATES ARE NOW AVAILABLE

Discounts are available for registrations of 5 or more people, Apprentice Employment Network members and TAFE NSW staff.

Visit www.skillsconference.com.au for more information or to register for the event.

9. ARC WELCOMES STRENGTHENING OF ASQA



In its latest news release of 9 February 2024, the Australian Refrigeration Council (ARC) has welcomed plans to strengthen the powers of the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) to crack down on dodgy training organisations.

A new bill to be introduced into federal parliament on the 7 February 2024 by the Minister for Skills and Training, Hon Brendan O'Connor MP, responds to integrity and quality issues in the VET sector.

The Minister stated in the chamber, "The bill empowers ASQA to take decisive action against the minority of non-genuine or unscrupulous registered training organisations. The bill targets those organisations that use their business operations as a veil of legitimacy for fraudulent activity, or to circumvent the regulatory requirements for the delivery and assessment of vocational education and training. The bill will enable ASQA to take swift action to deter and remove non-genuine or unscrupulous RTOs, and to apply greater scrutiny to new RTOs seeking to enter the VET sector."

The ARC news release welcomed its introduction and stated, “The National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Amendment (Strengthening Quality and Integrity in Vocational Education and Training No. 1) Bill 2024 is designed to tackle non-genuine providers and improve the integrity of the nation’s vocational education and training (VET) sector.

It provides for a five-fold increase in maximum penalties for breaches, intended to deter RTOs that currently see penalties as a risk worth taking or a ‘cost of doing business’.

ARC chief executive officer, Glenn Evans, welcome the planned legislation which would, if passed, boost ASQA’s powers to take decisive action against RTOs that circumvent regulatory requirements.

‘The permit scheme is competency based and reliant on qualifications, so training quality is critical.

‘ARC and ASQA have long been allies in the battle to shut down these courses which are a blight on our industry, and we hope this legislation is passed as it would strengthen our hand considerably,’ he said.

‘If this becomes law, it will support ARC’s work to eliminate dodgy RTOs that issue spurious qualifications typically based on inadequate courses and inappropriate reliance on tick-and-flick recognition of prior learning (RPL) processes.

‘This Bill, if passed, will support the majority of providers who are doing the right thing, while further strengthening our arm in keeping the dodgy courses shut down.’

[READ MORE HERE](#)

10. CONSULTATION NOW OPEN - SKILLS FOR EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM – FIRST NATIONS



Australian Government
Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) is seeking comment on a grants process and guidelines for the provision of service for Stream 2 of its redesigned Skills for Education and Employment (SEE)

Program, launching later this year.

The website page states, Stream 2 of the SEE Program aims to cater specifically to First Nations people and community organisations. This stream will allocate funds to place-based, whole of community projects, that address the English language, literacy, numeracy, and digital skills (LLND) training needs of First Nations communities. These projects will be delivered through partnerships between First Nations organisations and Registered Training Organisations or Adult Community Education providers.

Participants of the program will have the valuable opportunity to enhance their reading, writing, language, and digital skills. Additionally, participants may benefit from increased cultural, social, and emotional well-being, as well as empowerment and self-fulfilment.

The Program’s impact extends to the economic development of First Nations communities. It supports the overarching goal of Closing the Gap, by improving LLND skills and barriers to education and training for First Nations people.

The Department is now inviting comments on the draft guidelines for the SEE Program Stream 2 Scoping and Delivery grants.

Visit the [Consultation Hub](#) for more information and submit your feedback.

Submissions close AEDT 11:59 pm 12 March 2024."

HAVE YOUR SAY

A consultation paper has been prepared and provides further information on the proposed SEE Program Stream 2 - First Nations Delivery and poses some questions for consideration when providing feedback. The consultation paper includes instructions on how to provide feedback and should be read in conjunction with the DRAFT Grant Guidelines (Scoping and Delivery).

Download the consultation paper and provide your feedback [HERE](#)

11. ENTRY NOW OPEN TO NSW TRAINING AWARDS



Entries for 2024 are now open!

Enter and recognise someone with a NSW Training Award!

Do you know an apprentice, trainee, student, teacher, employer or training provider, who are passionate and are excelling in Vocational Education and Training (VET)?

Start identifying and recognising talent today!

The NSW Training Awards are conducted annually to recognise outstanding achievement in Vocational Education and Training (VET).

The Awards honour and reward the achievements of students, teachers, training organisations and employers.

One of the main aims of the program is to discover Vocational Education and Training Ambassadors. During the regional phase applicants that are outstanding in their industry are shortlisted and interviewed. The state phase will evaluate the regional winners and look for character values and virtues that will contribute to the qualities that are required to become an individual Ambassador.

The Awards categories

- **Individual Award**
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year
 - Apprentice of the Year
 - School-based Apprentice/Trainee of the Year
 - Trainee of the Year
 - VET Trainer/Teacher of the Year
 - Vocational Student of the Year
 - VET in Schools Student of the Year
- **Organisation Awards**
 - Large Training Provider of the Year
 - Small Training Provider of the Year

- Industry Collaboration Award
- Large Employer of the Year
- Small Employer of the Year

Don't miss out for your chance to be recognised with a NSW Training Award!

- **Individual Award nominations close 17 March 2024**
- **Organisation Award entries close 31 March 2024**

Learn more about the Awards or apply now - [HERE](#)

12. 2024 RETURN TO WORK PATHWAYS PROGRAM – APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN



Women NSW, in the latest 12 February 2024 circular advise that applications for the 2024 Return to Work Pathways Funding Program are **NOW OPEN**.

The circular states, “Eligible organisations can apply for funding between \$100,000 and \$250,000.

The funding can be used to implement tailored projects that work to decrease the barriers that prevent women re-entering the workforce. Projects will support women to gain employment by providing wrap-around support including training, mentoring and pathways to employment.

Consider applying if your organisation is supporting women and girls:

- From Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- Living in regional, rural and remote areas of NSW
- Of diverse sexualities and genders, including those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, queer and/or asexual
- Who are living with disability
- Who are living with mental illness
- Who are in contact with the criminal justice system
- Who are veterans”

Grant **applications close Monday 11 March 2024!**

For more information on the grant program, eligibility information and how to apply, visit nsw.gov.au/return-to-work-pathways-program

13. WOMEN IN ENERGY BREAKFAST



The Australian Institute of Energy in conjunction with Young Energy Professionals is hosting a Women in Energy Breakfast.

Please note this is a women-only, in-person event. This invite is open to all women regardless of their career stage.

Event details

Date: Thursday 7 March 2024
Start Time: 7:30am AEDT
End Time: 9:30am AEDT
Cost: Free for all
Venue: King & Wood Mallesons (KWM) offices Level 61, Governor Phillip Tower, 1 Farrer Place, Sydney NSW 2000 (in-person only)

--- REGISTER HERE ---



Join the hosts for a casual light breakfast at the KWM offices. You will have the opportunity to meet and network with some like-minded women in the energy sector, as well as hearing a short address from Shirly Cheng (KWM) and Victoria Mollard (AEMC).

If registrations are full, please register your interest on the waitlist [HERE](#), and we will notify you if spaces become available.

If your plans change and you can no longer attend, please let them know [HERE](#).

14. ELECTRICAL SAFETY INCIDENTS NOV – SHARING THE KNOWLEDGE



The NSW UE ITAB is fortunate again this month to be provided with the latest electrical incident reports from BlueScope Steel. As stated in previous News Services, the NSW UE ITAB has received permission from BlueScope Steel to share the information.

The aim is to help RTOs and industry practitioners have available, real case studies of electrical incidents that have occurred in workplaces and which they can showcase and use in their programs or safety moments to highlight findings and experience, and discuss possible issues, responses or solutions.

The NSW UE ITAB again, sincerely thanks BlueScope Steel for their permission, and advises RTOs and industry practitioners to ensure they recognise and acknowledge attribution to BlueScope for sharing this information and treat the information for educational purposes only.

As we receive the incident reports, we will continue to share them accordingly.

For this News Service we have a Blue Scope Steel reports covering the month of **November 2023**:

- **Download the November 2023 report - [NOVEMBER REPORT HERE](#)**

For more information and BlueScope contact details please refer to the undersigned for more information. Again, a sincere thanks to BlueScope.

15. ELECTRICIAN FINED AFTER LEAVING LIVE SWITCHBOARD IN CLASSROOM



Writer, San Williams reports in the 8 February 2024 edition of Electrical Connection, that an electrician was fined after leaving a live switchboard in a classroom.

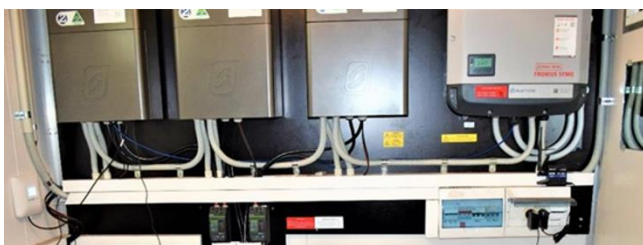
The article states, “An electrician contracted to install air-conditioning units at a Sunshine Coast school has been fined for leaving a live switchboard exposed in a classroom.

The contractor had been instructed to cease work in one of the temporary classrooms but ignored the instruction and started live testing on the switchboard inside, leaving the live switchboard unattended for a short period with the escutcheon panel removed and live terminals exposed.

The electrician pleaded guilty to offences under the Electrical Safety Act including failing to conduct his business in a way that was electrically safe and exposing individuals to risk of death or injury. The presiding magistrate noted it was a serious offence as schoolchildren who are “naturally inquisitive” and “unpredictable beings” could easily have been exposed to risk.”

[READ MORE HERE](#)

16. ELECTRICIAN CHARGED - IGNITION RISKS FROM LEAD-ACID BATTERIES



Three inverter chargers installed by an electrician in the same room as lead-acid batteries.

The renamed Western Australian Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DEMIRS) reported in its Electrical Focus – Issue 9 newsletter of an identified ignition risk from lead-acid batteries.

A southwest electrician has been ordered to pay \$11,000 in fines and costs for a dangerous installation that could have caused a hydrogen explosion.

- **Electrician installed chargers near exposed lead-acid battery bank**
- **Risk of chargers igniting hydrogen produced by recharging batteries**
- **Electrician also submitted incorrect compliance documents**

The report states, “A [recent prosecution](#) by Building and Energy has highlighted the importance of not compromising safety as the clean energy transition progresses.

Building and Energy’s investigation found the electrician installed inverter chargers near a bank of vented lead-acid batteries, which produce potentially explosive hydrogen gas when they are recharging.

There is a high risk of serious injury or death if lead-acid batteries are not handled, installed, and stored correctly. Not only are lead-acid batteries a source of ignition, the acids used to produce the electrolyte are also corrosive.

Due to the increase in demand for alternative back up electricity supplies and stand-alone power systems (SAPS), energy storage batteries are becoming frequently used as an alternative to mains power.”

Lead-acid batteries can be found in SAPS due to their cost effectiveness and long-standing availability.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

17. ELECTRICAL LICENSING DISCIPLINARY ACTION



WorkSafe Queensland’s Electrical Licensing Committee took disciplinary action against eight licence holders in December 2023 according to the January 2024 bulletin eSAFE Electrical.

Case 1: An electrical worker failed to ensure installations were electrically safe and compliant at multiple domestic locations.

Case 2: An electrical contractor performing installation work at multiple domestic locations failed to ensure the works were electrically safe and compliant with the Wiring Rules.

Case 3: An electrical worker was working at a domestic property when they failed to ensure the installation was electrically safe and compliant with the Wiring Rules. ...

Case 6: An electrical contractor was installing PV Solar systems at multiple domestic locations but failed to the work was electrically safe and compliant with the Wiring Rules. ...

Case 8: An electrical worker was working and supervising the replacement of printed circuit boards on air conditioning equipment at a commercial location when the worker failed to ensure the correct identification, isolation, and lockout of the equipment.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

18. SAFETY BREACH LEADS TO ELECTRIC SHOCKS



Electrical Comms Data reports in its 12 February 2024 newsletter that an electrical line worker has been fined \$10,500 for safety failures that left an apprentice unconscious and suffering burns.

The article states, “In August 2022, an electrical line worker and a second-year apprentice line worker travelled to Gorge Rock — around 250 km east of Perth — to repair a fire-damaged network power pole for Western Power.

Prior to beginning work, the line worker, Darren Scott Hardy, had completed safety paperwork, including certification that protective earths were fitted to the power poles. These earths protect line workers against contact with live electricity if the installation becomes unexpectedly energised.

A court heard that the apprentice climbed a ladder and reported he had received an electric shock while removing wires from the damaged pole. He then adjusted the ladder and returned to work, but sustained another electric shock — this time falling unconscious with burns on his hands and knees.

Hardy drove the apprentice to Kondinin Hospital and from there the injured worker was airlifted to Royal Perth Hospital. He later required several skin grafts.

A Western Power investigation found Hardy did not follow mandatory work practices outlined in the network operator's safety rules."

[READ MORE HERE](#)

19. ANYWHERE, ANYTIME INSPECTION POWERS EXPAND



The news NSW Building Commission has issued an alert that, recent amendments to the *Home Building Act 1989* have provided it with anywhere, anytime inspection powers for residential homes under construction.

These changes mean its inspectors can enter residential construction sites covered by the *Home Building Act 1989* and inspect for compliance with that Act, including compliance with the Building Code of Australia, and issue rectification orders and stop work orders.

Who does this impact?

Builders and tradespeople constructing or working on buildings covered by the *Home Building Act 1989* and owners of these buildings.

Help spread the word

You can use NSW Building Commission's communication toolkit to share news of the updated laws with industry stakeholders, members and broader networks.

The toolkit includes newsletter, website and social media content that you can adapt and share.

[DOWNLOAD THE TOOLKIT HERE](#)

Access more information about these changes and additional reforms:

- visit [How we audit Class 1 building constructions](#) webpage for more information about anywhere, anytime inspection powers and other recent amendments to building laws.
- visit [Changes to building legislation in NSW](#) to learn more about other recent amendments to building laws.
- visit www.nsw.gov.au/building-commission to learn more about the regulator call the Commission on 13 32 20.

20. CHANGES TO CLEAN ENERGY COUNCIL (CEC) ACCREDITATION PROCESS

Energy Skills Australia reports in its 6 February 2024 Newsletter that Clean Energy Regulator (CER) is expected to announce a new accreditation scheme operator (ASO) to administer the accreditation program for installers and designers under the Small-scale Renewable Energy Scheme (SRES). It is expected to make this announcement in February 2024.



Australian Government
Clean Energy Regulator

Installer and designer accreditation scheme



The article states that, “All accredited installers and designers must transfer to the new ASO within 3 months from the February announcement to remain eligible for small-scale technology certificates (STCs).

There is now a call to installers and designers to prepare for a change in provider of the CEC accreditation program.

To support a smooth transition to new provider, the CEC is introducing two key changes to the CEC Accreditation for those planning to submit a new application before February 2024.”

The CEC decided not to apply to be an approved provider.

For further information on the changes by the Clean Energy Regulator click [HERE](#).

If you are an existing CEC accredited installer, click [HERE](#) for more information.

21. COMMUNITY BENEFITS FOR CENTRAL-WEST ORANA REZ



Millions of dollars will be provided to communities in Renewable Energy Zones (REZs) and EnergyCo is seeking input from communities in the Central-West Orana REZ on preferred initiatives for their region.

The Central-West Orana REZ will be serviced by new transmission network infrastructure, including transmission lines and energy hubs, which will transfer power generated by solar and wind farms to electricity consumers. This infrastructure will be critical for the successful operation of the REZ. EnergyCo is leading the development of the REZ transmission network infrastructure as the Infrastructure Planner for the REZs in NSW.

EnergyCo is developing a program to deliver tangible benefits for the community. They are seeking feedback from the community through a survey, workshops and local information sessions.

EnergyCo held an online briefing on Monday 5 February 2024 and a video recording of this is available [HERE](#). The ensuing Q&As will be hosted at this link shortly.

The [online survey](#) is also available to give your feedback on the types of benefits you think should be delivered in your community.

They are also, hosting a series of community drop-in sessions to gather feedback to inform the Program, open to all members of the Central-West Orana REZ community. Location schedule for Dunedoo, Cassilis, Mudgee, Elong Elong, Coolah, Wellington, Dubbo, and Gulgong can be accessed [HERE](#).

Community and Employment Benefit Program

EnergyCo also states, that “Communities in the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) will receive \$128 million over the next four years to deliver community projects and employment opportunities.

The funding is the first down payment to bring forward community and employment benefits, to ensure they flow before construction of new transmission infrastructure and renewable generation projects begins in late 2024.”

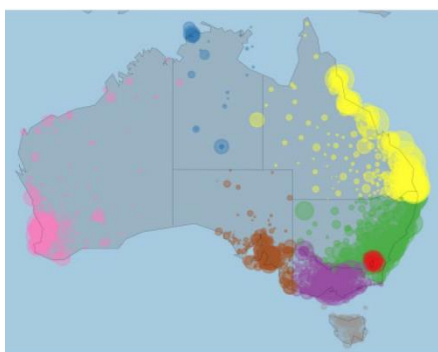
[READ MORE HERE](#)

22. RELEASE OF FOURTH QUARTER 2023 SOLAR REPORT



The latest 15 February 2024 edition of EnergyInsider, a joint publication of Energy Networks Australia (ENA) and Australian Energy Council (AEC) includes a review of the latest fourth quarter Solar Report.

The article states, “Our appetite for solar PV continues. At the end of last year Australia’s total installed solar rooftop capacity had reached more than 22GW. A total of 2785MW of new rooftop solar was installed during 2023. In addition to the latest installation statistics, we take a look at other developments in the sector, including its levelised cost of energy and the average payback period for solar PV systems. ...



Cumulative rooftop solar installation to end December 2023

Rooftop solar installations continued their strong growth nationally during 2023. By the end of the year, a total of 2,785 MW of new rooftop solar had been installed, taking Australia’s cumulative total to 22,072 MW as at the end of December 2023.

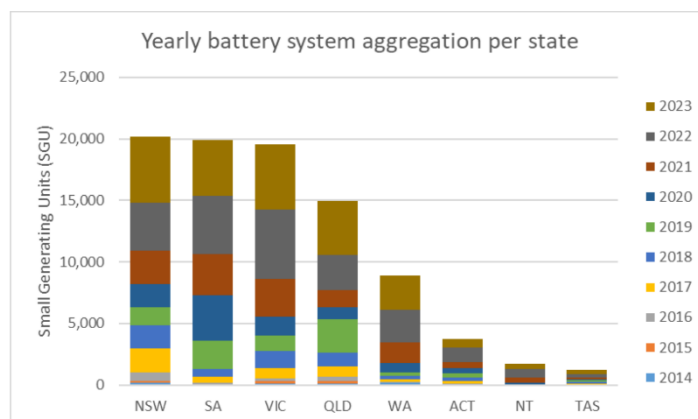
new installed capacity by state during 2023 with New South Wales leads the way with 930 MW installed. Queensland installed a further 720 MW, Victoria 516 MW, 248 MW in Western Australia, 236 MW in South Australia, 45 MW in Tasmania, 78 MW in the Australian Capital Territory, and just 12 MW in the Northern Territory.

In the last quarter of 2023, 663 MW of capacity was added to the solar fleet. While this appears to be a significant reduction (204 MW) compared to the same quarter in the previous year, there is a lag in Clean Energy Regulator accreditation of all systems. ...

Once the full year data update is finalised, we estimate it will show 2,990 MW of capacity was installed in 2023 in Australia. This forecast would mean a 7.18 per cent increase in annual installed capacity compared to the 2022 final number – an improved outcome compared to the 12.60 per cent reduction in installations between 2021 and 2022.” ...

Battery installations with rooftop solar

Overall, Australia installed 8.44 per cent more batteries with solar systems in 2023 than in 2022, and we expect this number to continue increasing with newer registrations before the CER. Cumulatively, NSW has installed more batteries than any other state or territory with 20,184 solar systems installed with battery storage, accounting for 22.39 per cent of the national total, followed by SA with 19,883 (22.05 per cent) and Victoria with 19,539 (21.67 per cent).



Source: AEC analysis of CER 2024 data

Cumulative battery installations in Australia per state

[READ MORE HERE](#)

For more, contact [Aaron Martinez](#), Australian Energy Council

If you would like to contribute to this News Service, please feel free to write to the undersigned accordingly. Thank you.

For the latest and past News Services visit: www.uensw.com.au/news/

Kind regards
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WEBSITE: Electrical Safety Project: www.esproject.com.au - provides information about improving electrical Safe Work Practice and exemplar Safe Work Procedures (SWPs) for use in training, or adaptation by micro-businesses and self-employed in the utilities and electrotechnology industries.