
NSW UE ITAB News Service 127 – NSW VET Review interim report released, Universities accord and VET, Qualification reform to Skills Ministers, Legislation crackdown on dodgy VET providers passed, Online job ads decline, Labour market softens, Clean energy sector workforce survey, Worldskills Australia Skillaroos 2024 team, NSW Training Awards 2024 closing, Australian training awards open, ARC is Banksia award finalist, Lodging RTO complaints, WPA launches new Industry Skills Accelerator, Barranggirra - skilling for employment initiative, New-look VECEDplus website, Smart & Skilled update Mar 2024, Powering Skills Organisation update, 2024 Skills Conference registrations open, SafeWork NSW to be a standalone WHS regulator, Electrical safety incidents - JAN 2024, Commercial solar photovoltaic installer fined, apprentice electric shock fine, Refresher re AS-NZS 4836-2023, Federally funding EELS could lead to more renewable installations, CEC Report - almost 40 per cent of Australia's electricity supplied by renewables.

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1. NSW VET REVIEW INTERIM REPORT RELEASED



The NSW VET Review Panel of Experts has released its Interim Report. The Media Release states, “The NSW VET Review is a NSW Government commitment to rebuilding TAFE NSW and reskilling our state. The review has been undertaken by an expert independent panel consisting of Dr Michele Bruniges AM, Professor Verity Firth AM and Jason Ardler PSM.

The independent panel has completed extensive consultation to deliver this first set of recommendations.

The 7 recommendations of the interim report are focused on TAFE at the centre of the NSW vocational education system and VET delivery in NSW. Below is a high-level summary of the recommendations:

1. The NSW Government should clarify the role of TAFE NSW in the NSW training system through a TAFE NSW Charter.
2. TAFE NSW should develop a revised operating model that aligns educational delivery with industry needs, prioritises local and community engagement and enhances support for teachers.
3. TAFE NSW and the NSW Department of Education should work together with education regulators to pilot self-accreditation of selected and agreed Australian Qualifications Framework courses. The pilot should include an evaluation process for future TAFE NSW self-accreditation.
4. The NSW Government should consider ways to rebuild TAFE NSW capacity to offer training. These include removing TAFE from the contestable funding market, streamlining its funding, ensuring funding for TAFE reflects operating costs and establishing clear guidelines for TAFE NSW so its assets can maximise public good and be used appropriately for commercial purposes.
5. The NSW Government should ensure governance arrangements for the NSW VET system are strengthened and set up to represent provider, industry and workforce expertise.
6. The NSW Government should increase the number of permanent roles for TAFE teachers and convert temporary roles to permanency within the NSW education system and TAFE NSW.
7. The NSW Government should audit the condition, age and geographic distribution of VET infrastructure across NSW. The audit should include TAFE NSW, public schools and all other government-owned or funded VET assets and see if there is alignment between major tertiary education infrastructure announcements and VET needs.”

The NSW Government has indicated that it “welcomes the findings of the interim report and will consider its recommendations. Work will progress on preparing a TAFE Charter to set the future direction for TAFE NSW, and TAFE NSW will also start working on a revised operating model.”

“The final report is expected to be delivered to the NSW Government in mid-2024 and will extend its focus beyond TAFE NSW, offering insights and proposals for the broader VET sector.

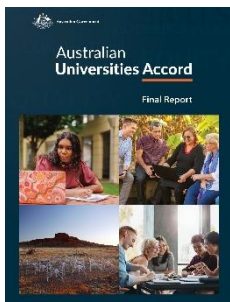
The NSW Government will consider both reports in their entirety.

While the Interim Report focuses on the immediate challenges for TAFE NSW, the Final Report will have a stronger focus on the broader VET system.”

Download the Interim Report – [HERE](#)

The NSW Department of Education will also develop a NSW Skills Plan. This plan will provide a long-term, overarching vision for NSW skills sector to drive outcomes for individuals, industry and state.

2. COULD THE UNIVERSITIES ACCORD DIMINISH THE VALUE OF VET?



Education Minister Jason Clare announced in a Media Release dated the 25 February 2024 the release of the long-awaited Australian Universities Accord Final Report. The Report included forty-seven (47) recommendations and targets to reform higher education and set it up for the next decade and beyond.

The Media Release stated, “That means more Australians from the outer suburbs, the regions, disadvantaged backgrounds and more Indigenous Australians going to university.

It also finds that the barriers between VET and higher education need to be broken down to ensure a more seamless and integrated tertiary education system.

The Report recommends ambitious targets, including:

- increasing the tertiary education attainment rate from 60 per cent to at least 80 per cent of Australians in our workforce by 2050
- increasing the proportion of university educated Australians aged 25 to 34 years from 45 per cent to 55 per cent by 2050, and
- increasing the number of 25- to 34-year-olds with a tertiary level vocational or technical qualification to 40 per cent by 2050.

The Report proposes that implementation of the recommendations be staged.

The Government is considering the Report’s recommendations.

The Universities Accord is the product of 12-months’ work by an expert review panel chaired by Professor Mary O’Kane AC and informed by 820 public submissions and 180 meetings with stakeholders.

The Final Report and its recommendations can be viewed [HERE](#). A summary of the Report is also available [HERE](#).

Two interrelated stories also, worth reviewing are as follows:

The first, an article that appeared in Future Campus by Stephen Matchett regarding an NCVER research activity that found the expansion of undergraduate education has not taken people away from apprenticeships, [according to research](#) from the estimable National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER).

“The news challenges the common assumption that trade training is seen as inferior to university study throughout the community, and that the shortage of sparkies and plumbers can be fixed by comparative marketing.”

The second was an interview Michelle Grattan held with Minister for Education, The Hon Jason Clare MP starting with an open question of, “MICHELLE GRATTAN: Jason Clare, the report says that we need 55 per cent of those aged 25 to 34 to have a university education by 2050. But currently we’re seeing an apparent decline in young people’s interest in going to university. What’s causing this, and what can be done about it?

JASON CLARE, MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: G’day, Michelle, and thank you for having me. Firstly, can I thank Professor Mary O’Kane and the whole Accord team who have put together what is effectively a blueprint for higher education for the next decade and the one after that.

... “When you read the Report, it sketches out what a tertiary education – if we decide to go down that path – could do. What it says is that it would report to the Minister for Education and the Minister for Skills. It’s a tertiary education commission they’re talking about rather than a higher education commission. And it’s important to point that out because one of the things the Report says is we don’t – in order to hit that 80 per cent target, we don’t just have to help more people from poorer backgrounds go to university; we also have to break down that artificial barrier that exists between TAFE and uni, or vocational education and higher education.

It says that a commission like this with one target, one body working together could help to make a difference here on things like recognition of prior learning. So if you do a vocational qualification, having more of that recognised when you go to university so it’s quicker and it’s cheaper when you go to university.”

Link to the interview transcript - [HERE](#)

What might ensue:

The Accord proposes in one of its key recommendations establishing a Tertiary Education Commission that seeks to rope in a self-accrediting TAFE into the mix. The latter no doubt driving increased attention to Diploma and higher-level programs rather than its original remit as it folds itself into an institutional mode of future delivery over industry-based needs. This proposed arrangement along with an emphasised promotion of higher university participation rate, without any empirical evidence that such is needed in the workplace, will only further destabilise parents understanding and support for trades as a worthy career option for their children. Particularly, given the Minister’s acceptance and subsequent promotion of the Accord’s assertion that there will be a need to grow numbers of younger Australians with a university education.

This implicit support sends a signal to parents, career advisors and of course prospective learners that a university pathway is the right pathway for the future. The asserted attainment target of 55% of 25 to 34-year-olds with a bachelor’s degree qualification or above by 2050 compared with 45% in 2023 is not supported by anyone who understands workplace skills formation and job design. The pacifier is the report notes that will also have a VET qualification. It is unclear what this later statement actually means.

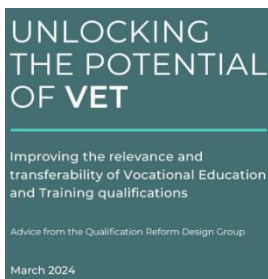
Why then, not establish a National Apprenticeship Commission?

In terms of attracting career aspirants to enhance trades branding as a worthwhile career choice we need national leadership. We need to establish an effective National Apprenticeship Commission that can bring sound policy to bear and promote the value of trades and respective qualifications and skills formation. A Commission that aims to influence and involve employers, parents, the industrial parties, career counsellors and the drive the VET system to heighten the quality of outcomes and attractiveness of trades. As well, protecting apprentices/trainees from poor employment practices and lifting supervision and mentoring accountabilities.

Without a national body to lead apprenticeship and traineeship policy, the bureaucracy, including ministers, can have as many apprenticeship inquiries and produce as many reports as they like and add more money to incentives, but it won’t change the trajectory of attraction and take-up.

A paper will not do it, but a solid and focused industry campaign backed by both employers and unions of a desire to establish a fully autonomous and funded National Apprenticeship Commission with national leadership will.

3. QUALIFICATION REFORM DESIGN UPDATE



Energy Skills Australia in its latest, 21 March 2024 Newsletter consideration by Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council (SWMC) at their recent meeting to an update and series of recommendations for a program of work to modernise Australia’s vocational education and training (VET) qualifications.

The article states, “Mr Craig Robertson, Chair of the Qualifications Reform Design Group (QRDG), presented the groups initial advice at the meeting of 8 March 2024 for improving the relevance and transferability of Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualifications which included a number of recommendations.

The Design Group proposes a new differentiated qualifications system to preserve qualifications that are working well while enabling new qualification models to serve different purposes.

The new system moves from a ‘one size fits all’ approach to designing qualifications based on their purposes:

- Purpose 1 – qualifications leading to a specific occupation (for example a licensed trade)
- Purpose 2 – qualifications to prepare learners for multiple occupations within an industry
- Purpose 3 – qualifications that develop cross-sectoral or foundation skills and knowledge

By end 2024, the QRDG, assisted by Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs), will propose a timeline for a longer-term qualification reform to the Skills Ministers. Advice to Ministers will be informed by the following processes to occur in 2024:

1. Trialling and application of the proposed new qualifications system by JSCs
2. Analysis and consultation on related issues by the QRDG to support JSCs’ work
3. Leveraging relationships with concurrent VET reform, including any AQF revision”

An interesting observation of the report is that much of the debunked proposals recommended by PWC in the former iteration to update Training Products design has reappeared in this report. It will be interesting to observe the progress of the recommendations outlined in the report.

Download a copy of the report - [HERE](#)

4. LEGISLATION TO CRACKDOWN ON DODGY VET PROVIDERS PASSES PARLIAMENT



The Hon Brendan O’Connor MP, Minister for Skills and Training, announced in a Media Release of 21 March 2024, that “Unscrupulous and non-genuine providers in the vocational education and training (VET) sector are on notice, with the Albanese Government passing legislation today to strengthen powers to kick dodgy providers out of the sector - and keep them out.”

The Minister said, “This legislation is the next step in our reforms to strengthen quality and integrity in VET – and there is more to come. There is no place for dodgy providers in the sector who take advantage of students and undermine the sector.”

The National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Amendment (Strengthening Quality and Integrity in Vocational Education and Training No.1) Bill 2024 gives stronger tools to the Australian Skills and Quality Authority (ASQA) to act against the minority of registered training organisations (RTOs) doing the wrong thing.

The legislation will:

- Cause an RTO's registration to automatically lapse where the provider has not delivered training and/or assessment for 12 months.
- Prevent RTOs from expanding their course offering if they have been operating for less than 2 years.
- Provide ASQA with greater discretion in prioritising, considering and deciding RTO applications.
- Empower the Minister, with the agreement of State and Territory Skills Ministers, to require ASQA to pause the acceptance and processing of new RTO applications (or those for one or more classes of RTO).
- Expand offence and civil penalty provisions to cover a broader range of false or misleading representations by RTOs about their operations.
- Increase five-fold maximum penalties for engaging in egregious conduct that breaches relevant offences or civil penalties under the Act.

These new measures build on the Albanese Government's investment to strengthen quality in the VET sector including establishing an integrity unit within ASQA, upgrading ASQA's digital and data systems and creating a tip-off line to report egregious RTO conduct.

The Minister went on to say, "Removing dodgy providers, who undermine integrity and trust in VET, will benefit students, the sector and our wider community."

One hopes that the new legislation will in fact lead to better outcomes and quality control of unscrupulous and non-genuine providers, and that ASQA will institute improved process including technical content expert panels to assist auditors in their audit activities and evaluate whether an RTO is not only able to pass a process audit but has the wear with all to deliver content. We hope the new arrangement will overcome the current model where it is possible in a metaphoric sense to pass an audit whilst producing concrete life jackets.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

5. ONLINE JOB ADVERTISEMENTS DECREASED LAST MONTH



Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) reports in its 20 March 2024 [Internet Vacancy Index \(IVI\)](#) that vacancy numbers have decreased in five of the past six months. The report states, "February data from Jobs and Skills Australia's Internet Vacancy Index (IVI) show the period of record growth in advertisements following the COVID-19 pandemic is ending, with vacancy numbers decreasing in five of the past six

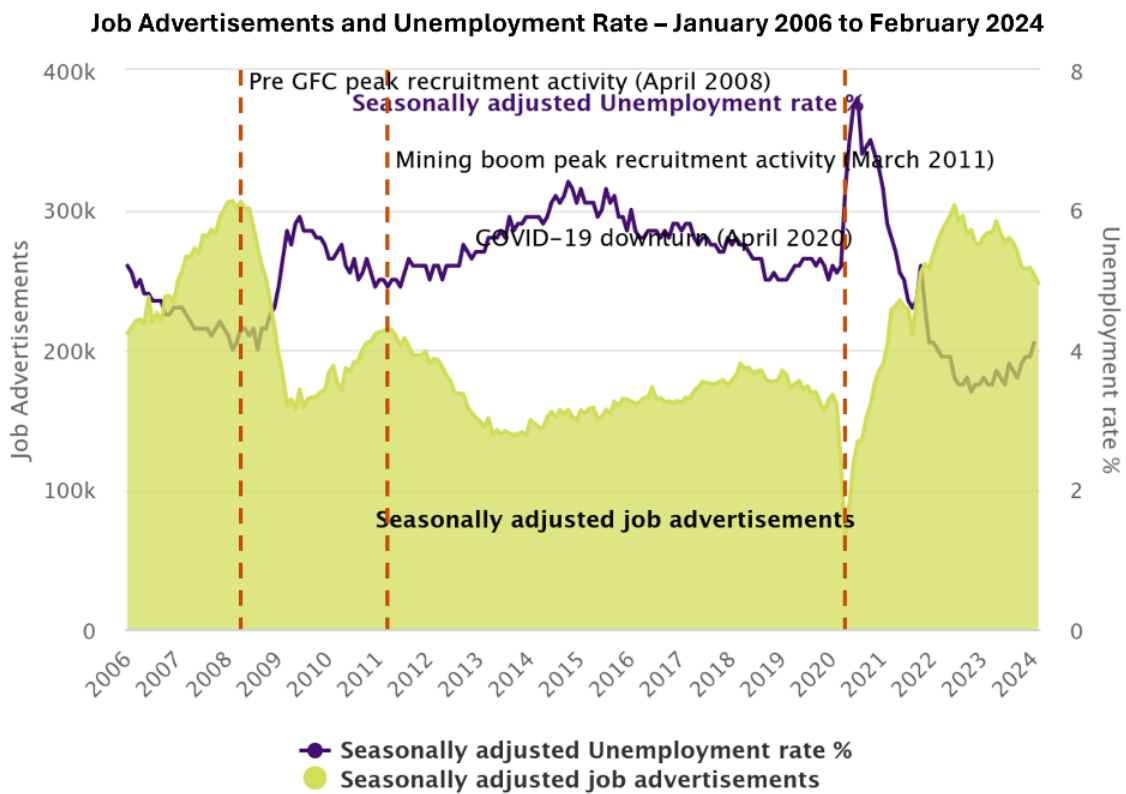
months. Despite this, vacancy numbers remain at record levels, with around 50% more advertisements in the labour market compared to five years ago.

In seasonally adjusted terms, online job advertisements decreased by 2.3% or 5,900, to 247,400. Vacancy numbers were down in all states and territories, across all skill level groups.

Managers were the only major occupation group to record a slight increase in vacancies (up by 0.5% or 150 advertisements), while the strongest drop in job advertisements was for Community and Personal Service Workers (down by 6.3% or 1,800).

Job advertisements decreased the most in capital cities over the year, down by 11.7%, compared to a 6.6% decrease in regional Australia.”

The Internet Vacancy Index (IVI) is a monthly count of online job advertisements compiled by Jobs and Skills Australia. Data are available by occupational groups, skill level groups, state or territory and by regional areas.



[READ MORE HERE](#)

5.1. LABOUR MARKET CONTINUES TO SOFTEN, REPORT FINDS

Read also about the labour market continuing to soften, “Latest REOS results reflect a continued softening in labour market conditions, with key indicators from the survey remaining fairly flat over the month. Recruitment activity, as measured by the recruitment rate, increased slightly by 1 percentage point to 49% of employers in February 2024, while recruitment difficulty fell by 1 percentage point to 54%.”

[READ MORE HERE](#)

6. CLEAN ENERGY SECTOR, FUTURE WORKFORCE TRAINING - EMPLOYER SURVEY



Training Services NSW is seeking feedback from employers on workforce needs, skills and training gaps related to the Clean Energy sector.

In this regard, Training Services NSW are gathering information from businesses connected with NSW's transition to Clean Energy in particular in relation to workforce needs, skills and training gaps, now and into the future.

The Clean Energy sector may include but is not limited to the following:

- Solar
- Wind
- Battery manufacture and/or storage
- Hydrogen production
- Other sustainable technologies

The survey aims to help inform how Training Services NSW can support the state's transition to net zero through:

- ✓ identifying gaps in the current Training Market
- ✓ advising on skills required for specific job roles
- ✓ new course design opportunities
- ✓ promotion of school to work awareness

Training Services NSW needs industry's help and guidance to ensure the NSW Training Market is fit-for-purpose in order to develop workers needed for Clean Energy projects.

The NSW UE ITAB encourages employers and related stakeholders with knowledge and expertise in the emerging Clean Energy sector to complete the survey using the link below:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DY6YHJ9>

Responses by COB 30 April 2024 please.

7. WORLDSKILLS AUSTRALIA ANNOUNCES SKILLAROOS TEAM FOR LYON 2024



WorldSkills Australia has announced the 2024 Team for Lyon. In a circular issued 14 March 2024, it states, "WorldSkills Australia is pleased to announce the 2024 Australian Team, who will represent the country at the 47th International Competition, taking place in the French city of Lyon in September.

The contingent of 33 young apprentices, trainees, and students (known as the Skillaroos) is the largest the organisation has sent overseas since Lyon last hosted in 1995. The WorldSkills Australia delegation of competitors, trainers, officials, and team management, is the largest ever sent to an International Competition.

The 47th International Competition is set to be the biggest skills competition ever, with over 1,500 Competitors from 75 countries set to compete in 59 skills. More than 250,000 visitors are also expected to attend the event, which will run from September 10th to 15th.

Worldskills Australia’s participation in the International Competition aims to benchmark Australian skills excellence against global standards.

Team Australia members represent the best in their fields, which include Plumbing, Carpentry, Baking, Industry 4.0, Cyber Security, and Fashion Design.

...

Each Skillaroo will be accompanied by their Expert who have overseen their training and preparation to compete on the global stage, meaning the contingent wearing the green and gold will number close to 75.

More details on the Skillaroos 2024 team, including competitor profiles, can be found at www.worldskills.org.au/competitions/lyon-france.”



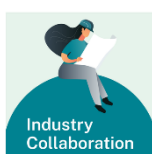
[READ MORE HERE](#)

8. NSW TRAINING AWARDS 2024 APPLICATIONS CLOSE SOON – ORGANISATIONAL AWARDS



Applications to the NSW Training Awards 2024 are closing soon. Don’t miss the chance to enter the NSW Training Awards and have your organisation recognised for its continuous passion and innovation in the VET sector.

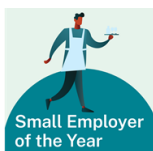
The following award categories are available to eligible organisations:



The NSW Industry Collaboration Award recognises exemplary skills development collaboration between at least one employer/industry body and at least one organisation delivering nationally recognised training.



The NSW Large Employer of the Year Award recognises large businesses and enterprises that have achieved excellence in the provision of nationally recognised training to their employees.



The NSW Small Employer of the Year Award recognises small businesses that have achieved excellence in the provision of nationally recognised training to their employees.



The Large Training Provider of the Year Award recognises a Registered Training Organisation that offers a broad range of training products and services and demonstrates excellence and high-level performance in all aspects of vocational education and training.



The Small Training Provider of the Year Award recognises a Registered Training Organisation that offers a specific range of training products and services and demonstrates excellence and high-level performance in all aspects of vocational education and training.



To Apply:

1. Review the [step-by-step guide](#) to confirm your organisation's award category
2. Reach out to the Department if you have further questions at NSW.TrainingAwards@det.nsw.edu.au

Follow them on Instagram or Facebook for the latest news.

Learn more and apply [HERE](#)

9. AUSTRALIAN TRAINING AWARDS NOMINATIONS OPEN



The Hon Brendan O'Connor MP, Minister for Skills and Training announced in a 14 March 2024 Media Release that nominations are now open for the 2024 Australian Training Awards. The Awards recognise outstanding achievement in the vocational education and training (VET) sector.

The Media Release states, "The awards highlight the hard work and excellence of students, trainees and apprentices, as well the innovative VET practices of teachers, trainers, registered training organisations and employers.

The 2024 Awards will honour 16 recipients.

Winners from each state and territory training awards compete for a national award in eleven categories.

And nominations are now open in five direct entry categories:

- [Outstanding Achievement in the VET and Skills Sector Award](#)
- [Australian Apprenticeships Employer Award](#)
- [Innovation in VET Award](#)
- [School Pathways to VET Award](#)
- [Excellence in Language, Literacy and Numeracy Practice Award](#)

The Australian Training Awards are the peak national awards for VET, showcasing best practice and promoting the benefits of this essential sector.

Nominations for the 2024 Australian Training Awards **close on Friday 31 May**.

For more information and last year's winners, visit -

<https://www.australiantrainingawards.gov.au/>

The Minister stated, "The Australian Training Awards are a great chance for students, apprentices, trainees, teachers and trainers involved in VET to be celebrated for their exceptional work and effort."

"From education to IT, construction to healthcare, across the country the VET sector trains students in essential services that Australians need now and into the future."

Nominating is an opportunity to be acknowledged as a leader in your field and have your achievements or your organisation's achievements recognised nationally.

All award finalists, including businesses and RTOs, are invited to become a VET ambassador through the exclusive [Australian VET Alumni](#). The Alumni is a community of high achieving VET graduates, leaders and practitioners, businesses, schools and training providers committed to sharing their stories of success. They bring national and international awareness for Australia's VET sector and skills-based careers."

Nominations to the 2024 direct entry categories for the Australian Training Awards are now open.

[APPLY NOW](#)

10. ARC IS BANKSIA AWARD FINALIST



The Australian Refrigeration Council (ARC) has been nominated as a finalist in the highly prestigious 35th National Banksia Sustainability Awards. The ARC 5 March 2024 Media Release stated that the Banksia Sustainability Awards is the "longest-running sustainability awards in the world". The Banksia Awards seek out and recognise innovation and leadership through the lens of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

"ARC entered its 'Look for the Tick' summer marketing campaign in the Marketing and Communications for Impact category and is in great company – other finalists in this category include the World Wildlife Fund and the Australian Conservation Foundation.

ARC chief executive officer, Glenn Evans, said it was a great honour for ARC and its summer campaign to be a finalist in such illustrious company.

'Our campaign reaches hundreds of thousands of consumers each year, encouraging them to seek out ARCTick license holders for all their air conditioning and refrigeration needs,' he said.

"It is a wonderfully successful way to help licence holders to grow their businesses and to protect the environment in the process.

'Last summer we added video commercials on YouTube and Connected TV, and this year we added commercials featuring a female technician along with those with a male technician.

'We are delighted to receive this recognition, as it highlights the work our whole team at ARC does to make a real and positive difference to the environment.'

[READ MORE HERE](#)

11. HOW TO LODGE RTO COMPLAINTS



The Australian Skills quality Authority (ASQA) advises stakeholders and in particular learners with complaints about a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) to submit a formal complaint via the [asqaconnect](#) website.

The ASQA website states, “If you have a complaint about your training provider, the first step is to submit a complaint through your provider’s process and channel.

A registered training provider is required to have a publicly available complaints and appeals process in place. This process must outline the procedure for making a complaint or an appeal against a decision and the review/resolution process.

If you feel that your complaint/appeal has not been resolved, you may request a review from an independent body. Details of this independent body should be available to you from the provider.

If your complaint is related to a potential breach of the Standards for RTOs, you can submit the complaint through [asqaconnect](#).”

If your complaint requires a personal resolution, and is related to issues such as refunds, issuance of certification or allegations of harassment, visit our [Complaints – More support page](#).

“ASQA accepts complaints and feedback about training providers from all members of the community.

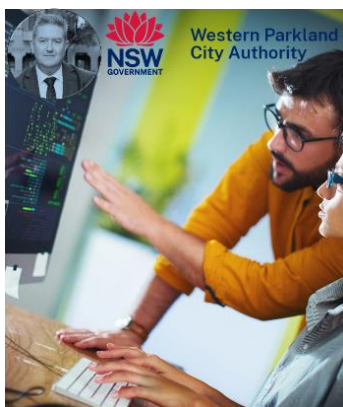
Poor quality training delivery can affect students, industry, and the community. Complaints and feedback contribute constructively to the protection of the sector and we encourage you to report your concerns.”

If you are unable to access [asqanet](#) you can submit a complaint through the National Training Complaints Hotline by either completing their [complaints form](#) or calling the enquiry line on **13 38 73**.

asqanet is the Australian Skills Quality Authority’s (ASQA’s) online web portal for managing registration, applications and fee payment for registered training organisations (RTOs) and Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) providers.

[Read more about submitting a complaint to ASQA](#)

12. WESTERN PARKLAND CITY AUTHORITY LAUNCHES NEW INDUSTRY SKILLS ACCELERATOR (ISA) PROGRAM



Western Parkland City Authority’s (WPCA’s) Peter Mackey, Executive Director - Skills & Industry Capability formerly launched the new [Industry Skills Accelerator \(ISA\)](#) program on 21 March 2024 at the WPCA’s Penrith offices. The ISA program replaces the successful New Education and Training Model (NETM) pilot program that had been in operation over a 2-year period.

The new ISA program transitions to a user-pays model from April 2024 offering an initial 38 micro-credentials for learners on a fee-paying basis, expands its coverage beyond the Western Parkland City to include broader regions, and will explore options to expand portfolio of microcredentials to meet industry needs.

Highlights of the pilot include:

- The development and delivery of 43 microcredentials,
- Involvement of 26 industry partners,
- 1,420 enrolments,
- Involvement of 526 employers,
- 92% satisfaction rate, and
- Learners indicating a 91% confirmation that the course would help their career.

The new Industry Skills Accelerator (ISA) will aim to deliver short, targeted training courses called microcredentials that allow workers to build the knowledge, skills, and experience employers need in just 40 hours.

ISA microcredentials are industry-led, developed and delivered with leading industry partners and world-class education providers.

Built on the success of the [NETM pilot](#), there is a range of microcredentials available through the ISA.

[ACCESS THE CATALOGUE OF COURSES AND READ MORE HERE](#)

13. IMPROVED ACCESS TO BARRANGIRRA - SKILLING FOR EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE REFERRAL FORM



Training Services NSW has announced that it has created a simplified self-referral form for all Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander learners in partnership with its Customer Service Strategy.

Barranggirra provides end to end support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners through culturally appropriate mentoring to ensure successful retention and completion of training and improved post-training employment outcomes.

This initiative consolidates and replaces the long-standing The Way Ahead for Aboriginal People and New Careers for Aboriginal People programs to strengthen the end to end support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners. This includes improved post-training outcomes and building stronger links for Aboriginal people with current opportunities for employment and training flowing from broader Department and Government priorities for Aboriginal participation in the NSW workforce and in major projects.

Barranggirra achieves the following objectives for Aboriginal people:

- Increased access, retention and completion of vocational education and training.
- Aspiration and expectation of career pathways.
- Improved post-training outcomes.
- Increased placement in meaningful and sustainable employment.
- Greater confidence in making decisions that maximise training and employment experiences and outcomes.
- Greater opportunity for Aboriginal business ownership and economic independence.

Aboriginal learners undertaking an apprenticeship or traineeship, or Smart and Skilled prevocational and part qualifications. Learners must have a TCID (training contract ID) or CID (commitment ID) to be eligible for Barranggirra.

“There are 3 ways to access this form to help us promote mentoring and allow learners to self-register:

1. By sending the link below
2. By sharing the QR code which can be scanned by a mobile device
3. In the LinkTree which has all our most used links to help with website navigation. You can find the button “Barranggirra referral form” under Support for Aboriginal Learners.”

QR Code:

Barranggirra online referral form:

<https://forms.office.com/r/WzvbyLx10M>

Download the fact sheet - [HERE](#)



14. NEW-LOOK VOCEDPLUS WEBSITE LAUNCHED



The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) has announced that it has revamped and relaunched the [VOCEDplus](#) website. The promotion for the updated site states that it “now offers a more enriching user experience.

With more than 97,000 publications in the VOCEDplus database to explore, the exciting new features make it easier than ever to find quality research and statistics to meet your information needs.”

Users can now seamlessly retain their search progress and *My selection beyond* a single session using the newly created *My profile tool*. To create their free profile, users can:

- Click on the purple person icon in the top right corner of the homepage which opens a pop-up box and provides a 'Sign up' option.
- Enter their email address and a password.
- Will receive an email with an account verification link.
- Complete their details and their done!

The user profile is now set up and ready to use.

Users can now use the *My selection tool* to easily organise, save, and categorise items for future reference.

Save time and effort by storing their search information. Users can re-run their favourite searches as often as they like and enjoy increased flexibility in search options.

Users can access popular resources such as the [VET Knowledge Bank](#), the [VET Practitioner Resource](#) and [Pod Network](#) directly from any page using the top menu for added convenience.

Visit the [VOCEDplus](#) website and learn more – [HERE](#)

15. SMART & SKILLED UPDATE – NO 225-227 MAR 2024



Smart and Skilled
www.smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au

Training Services NSW has published the latest Smart and Skilled Update, No. 225 - 227 for **MARCH 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. Financial Cap Review # 2 Outcomes
 - a. Providers not receiving a Contract Variation Offer – unsuccessful request
 - b. Financial Cap Review # 3 and Ongoing Monitoring
 - c. Further adjustments for 2023-24 Activity Period
2. NSW Skills List updated – Version 14.2
 - a. Approved qualification added to the NSW Skills List and Prices and Fees Schedule
 - b. Qualifications with extended transition end dates
 - c. VTO changes affecting the NSW Skills List
3. Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Upgrade Initiative – Update
4. Be recognised through the 2024 NSW Training awards

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](#)

16. POWERING SKILLS ORGANISATION – NEWS UPDATE



Powering Skills Organisation (PSO) 18 March 2024 Energise Newsletter reported that the Australian Government, in collaboration with states and territories, is developing the VET Workforce Blueprint to support, grow and sustain the VET workforce.

The article states, “Like many industries across Australia, there is increasing pressure to attract and retain a skilled VET workforce. At the same time skills shortages are being experienced and industry is looking to the VET sector to help address these issues.

The Department of Employment and Workforce Relations have launched a Blueprint that will identify effective strategies to address workforce issues, such as attraction, retention, development and career progression.

Consultations to support developing a VET Workforce Blueprint are being undertaken to ensure the strategies and actions in the Blueprint will address these issues. Consultations are seeking feedback from a range of stakeholders, including those currently in the VET workforce, and those who have recently left to test current understanding of the challenges faced by the VET workforce and identify actions which will result in effective change.

Visit the department's website to find out how to get involved via the link below.

Feedback closes at **11:00 PM (AEDT) 26 March 2024.**"

[VET Workforce Blueprint](#)

For the latest information on the work Powering Skills Organisation (PSO) is undertaking in relation to Training Advisory Group (TAGs) and their work in lending expertise and insights towards crafting training programs that meet the highest technical specifications or participating in the Strategic Industry Advisory Body (SIAB), a vital partner in shaping the future of the energy sector workforce, then visit their website at: <https://poweringskills.com.au/>.

17. 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.

18. NSW GOVERNMENT TO TRANSFORM SAFEWORK NSW INTO STANDALONE WHS REGULATOR



The NSW Government has announced that will transform SafeWork into a standalone regulator following a 12-month inquiry by former judge The Hon. Robert McDougall KC.

The SafeWork NSW website regarding the announcement states, “The Government has released the independent report as it continues work to create

a modern, strong and fit for purpose work health and safety regulator.

The Government has endorsed the report’s recommendations with further work underway to determine specific implementation details.

Many of the recommended reforms started after March last year, including reviewing SafeWork’s capabilities in triaging of incidents, improving the responsiveness of contact centre staff and pulling together SafeWork staff previously spread across the Department of Customer Service.

Other critical recommendations include:

- Requiring SafeWork to keep those affected by workplace incidents, including families of deceased workers and those seriously injured at work, informed of progress of investigations and prosecutions,
- Training more inspectors in dealing with psychosocial hazards in the workplace such as extreme workload and bullying,
- Reviewing complaints handling policies,
- Formalising data collection and analysis to make better compliance and enforcement decisions.

In opposition, Labor fought for the establishment of this inquiry to ensure that workers were protected, following a spate of scandals under Liberal-National Ministers such as an inadequate response to the emerging silica threat.

The Independent Review was informed by public consultation including submissions by former and current SafeWork staff, families of injured and deceased workers, unions and peak bodies, employer groups and SafeWork itself.

Detailed options are being developed on the possible design of the standalone regulator for the Government’s consideration.

Minister for Work Health and Safety Sophie Cotsis said:

“This Government commits to all NSW workers that it will never allow the health and safety regulator to be compromised so badly again.”

[READ MORE HERE](#)

19. ELECTRICAL SAFETY INCIDENTS - JAN 2024 – 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 **January 2024**:

- **Download the January 2024 report - [JANUARY 2024 REPORT HERE](#)**

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

20. COMMERCIAL SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC INSTALLER FINED



WorkSafe Victoria reports in its February 2024 Safety Soapbox edition of a commercial solar photovoltaic installer, who was fined \$9,000 and ordered to pay WorkSafe's costs of \$4,132 for failing to control the risk of falling from height. The court heard that three workers were found to be installing solar panels on a second-story residential roof with a risk of falling in excess of 5 meters without adequate fall protection controls in place.

The incident report stated, that "on 15 December 2022, WorkSafe Inspectors attended the workplace after receiving a health and safety concern via the WorkSafe Advisory line, where the caller advised that persons were working on a roof without adequate fall protection.

...

After issuing a Section 120 Direction to come down from the roof, it was established that the three workers observed on the roof were all first-year apprentices employed by the offender.

At a later stage, the Director of the offender arrived at the workplace and confirmed that:

- the guard rail was on the truck but "it was too windy and dangerous to install" and the guard rail brackets were left at the depot in Melbourne,
- generic Safe Work Method Statements were used, reviewed every six months, and
- a harness system was used in the morning to which the anchor point system was made by his employees yet did not have an engineering certificate.

‘The Company’ was issued with a notice prohibiting further works until a suitably qualified person safely installed guard railing around the perimeter of the second-storey roof and the working area of the garage roof.”

...

In sentencing the offender, the Court noted:

- This was a serious breach of ‘The Company’s safety duties – in that the conditions (weather) were already "not ideal", yet the employees were working from height anyway.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

21. BELATED APPRENTICE ELECTRIC SHOCK REPORT LEADS TO \$12K FINE



The 6 March 2024 edition of Electrical Comms Data reports of an electrical contractor in Mandurah, WA, has been fined \$12,000 after taking six weeks to inform authorities about an apprentice’s electric shock.

The article states, “Ballantyne Commercial Property Services had been contracted to carry out electrical work at a premises in Beckenham on 21 February 2022. One of the three employees who attended the site was a third-year electrical apprentice, who received an electric shock after touching live wires while disconnecting cables in the ceiling space.

The electric shock was reported to Building and Energy on 1 April 2022 by a Ballantyne employee who contacted the safety regulator because the company’s managers had not reported the incident as required by law. A Ballantyne director later informed the network operator, Western Power, on 11 April 2022.

At Armadale Magistrates Court on 9 February 2024, the company pleaded guilty to not immediately reporting an electrical accident to the network operator as required by WA’s electrical licensing regulations.

While noting the apprentice was not seriously injured, Magistrate Clare Cullen said that this was a matter of good luck rather than good management. She added that the company directors would be aware of their reporting obligations and it was a “brave act” by the employee who first reported the incident.”

[READ MORE HERE](#)

22. REFRESHED AUSTRALIAN STANDARD AS-NZS 4836-2023



Electrical Connection reports in its 15 March 2024 newsletter that reminds readers of the Standards Australia recently issued and updated AS/NZS 4836:2023 Safe working on or near low voltage and extra-low voltage electrical installations and equipment.

The article states with respect to Working safely around electrical hazards,

- **“Is compliance with this standard compulsory in workplace health and safety (WHS) law?”**
- **Are there new/additional elements that you need to consider?**

There is no short answer to the first question.

However, failure to assess risk and implement controls for electrical work in a way that is consistent with this standard could place businesses, and potentially directors of those businesses, at risk of prosecution from the relevant safety regulator if the worst should happen.

Although AS/NZS 4836 is not mandated by WHS regulations and is barely mentioned in the model Code of Practice for Managing Electrical Risk, it is routinely referred to by regulators, and may be introduced by prosecutors at trial, to articulate how a business has/has not adequately attempted to protect its workers with respect to specific hazards or situations.

This is perfectly valid for workplace incidents as the determination of guilt contemplates how the person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) has managed the risks involved in their activities against available knowledge, standards, and controls for that industry.

In such instances, there is necessarily the question of ‘what material represents an adequate risk assessment and controls for such work?’ and the authoritative document for work on or near low voltage electrical installations is invariably AS/NZS 4836:2023.

Are there new/additional elements to consider?

The new standard extends its scope to include work on extra-low voltage installations and equipment and non-electrical workers.

It includes additional information specific to:

- Principles of risk management, assessment of risk and risk treatment.
- Working with asbestos and polychlorinated biphenyls.
- Working below ground level.
- Cutting cables and wiring enclosures.
- Selection and use of test equipment.
- Selection and use of personal protective equipment.
- Preservation of an incident scene.”

[READ MORE HERE](#)

23. CALLS FOR FEDERAL FUNDING OF EELS COULD LEAD TO MORE RENEWABLE INSTALLATIONS



Reporter, San Williams reports in the 19 March 2024 edition of Electrical Connections, that the Federal Government has been called to fund the Electrify Everything Loan Scheme (EELS), a loan proposal developed by Rewiring Australia market transformation manager Francis Vierboom. The article states, “The proposal aims to help all Australian residences to install solar panels, batteries, efficient electric appliances and an EV.

The EELS proposal holds as the centrepiece of Rewiring Australia’s recent release 2024-2025 Pre-Budget Submission to the Australian Government.

By rolling out EELS, loans would be slated to be secured on the property title, indexed to inflation and repaid on the sale of the property, giving every property owner a simple and attractive way to unlock the cost-of-living savings offered by electrification.

“The national investment case for universal electrification finance is undeniable, if we move aggressively to electrify homes and vehicles, consumers will save \$1.1 trillion by 2050, and if funded by flexible finance like EELS ...”

[READ MORE HERE](#)

24. NEW REPORT - ALMOST 40 PER CENT OF AUSTRALIA'S ELECTRICITY SUPPLIED BY RENEWABLES



The Clean Energy Council reports that a record-breaking investment in utility-scale storage and booming results for rooftop solar are among the new data published in its latest Clean Energy Australia 2024 report.

The article states, “The report found that renewables overall accounted for nearly 40 per cent of Australia’s total electricity supply at 39.4 per cent, while figures for generation capacity added were strong at 5.9 GW, up from 5 GW in 2022.

Clean Energy Council Chief Executive Kane Thornton said renewables had now reached a critical tipping point in the Australian energy mix.

“We’ve reached a major milestone following 12 months of profound change as industry and governments at all levels continue to work together with a renewed focus on a timely transformation of our energy system,” Thornton said.

Key statistics from the Clean Energy Australia 2024 Report:

- Renewables account for 39.4 per cent of Australia’s total electricity supply.
- 5.9 GW of new renewable generation capacity added in 2023.
- 2.8 GW of new large-scale renewable generation capacity completed construction and was added to the grid.
- The rooftop solar sector added 3.1 GW of new capacity from 337,498 households and small businesses.
- 27 utility-scale batteries under construction at the end of 2023, accounting for a total of 5 GW / 11 GWh combined capacity, up from 19 totalling 1.4 GW / 2 GWh of capacity in 2022.
- \$4.9 billion in new investments in large-scale storage during 2023, up from \$1.9 billion in 2022.
- No new financial commitments to utility scale wind projects in 2023, compared to six in 2022.
- 7 new financial commitments to large-scale solar projects for a combined 921 MW, down from 10 projects and 1.5 GW in 2022.

“Rooftop solar accounted for 28.5 per cent of all renewable generation nationally over the past year. This is a testament to its success in driving additional value and lowering energy bills for over one in three Australian households and small businesses,” Thornton said.

While the past year’s figures indicate some encouraging progress for Australia’s clean energy transition, a significant downturn in investment, particularly in large-scale generation projects, remains an issue for the sector.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

[DOWNLOAD THE REPORT HERE](#)

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.