Appendix A: Bilateral Implementation Plan – National Skills Agreement Policy Initiatives

PRELIMINARIES

1. This implementation plan (Plan) is made between the Commonwealth of Australia (Commonwealth) and Australian Capital Territory (ACT) under the 2024–2028 National Skills Agreement (the NSA) and should be read in conjunction with the NSA.

2. Once executed, this implementation plan and any updates agreed with the Commonwealth, will be appended to the NSA and will be published on the Commonwealth's Federal Financial Relations website (https://federalfinancialrelations.gov.au).

3. This implementation plan is expected to expire on 31 December 2028 (in line with the NSA), or on completion of the initiative, including final performance reporting and processing of final payments against milestones.

4. In all public materials relating to the policy initiatives, ACT will acknowledge the Commonwealth's contribution with the following statement: The Enhanced Vocational Education and Training (VET) Data and Evidence policy initiative is a joint initiative between the Australian Government and the ACT Government.

REPORTING AND PAYMENTS

Reporting

1. Performance reporting will be due by 31 March and 30 September each year until the cessation of this implementation plan, or the final payment is processed.

2. ACT will provide to the Commonwealth a traffic light status and activity summary on all policy initiatives.

3. The Commonwealth will provide templates for the purposes of reporting.

Payments

1. The Commonwealth will make payment subject to performance reporting demonstrating the relevant milestone has been met. After the initial payment, second and subsequent milestone payments will be assessed and processed in the following reporting period.

2. As part of the performance reporting, ACT will provide evidence of what has been delivered in the reporting period. Payments will be processed once performance reports have been assessed and accepted.

3. Where a payment is due at a reporting period (31 March and/or 30 September), ACT will complete the relevant section of the reporting template and provide the evidence required as agreed in the Milestones and Payments associated with this Implementation Plan.

ENHANCED VET DATA AND EVIDENCE (Clause A130 to A140 of the NSA)

The Enhanced VET Data and Evidence policy initiative includes three key measures:

- *VET Data Streamlining (VDS)* – Transition the VET sector to the new VET Information Standard and National VET Data System.
- *Enhancements to improve the cyber security posture of VET Data* – Develop a sector wide VET Data Security policy and strategy and initiatives to improve the security posture of the sector.
- *Development of the VET Data Reform Blueprint and Investment Roadmap* – Develop a 5-to-10-year collaborative roadmap and blueprint for multi-jurisdictional investment.

The enhancements to cyber security and the development of the VET Data Reform Blueprint and Investment Roadmap will be progressed through the State Skills Officials Network (SSON) and Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council.

This section of the bilateral agreement covers the VDS program only.

VET Data Streamlining: Australian Capital Territory (ACT) opts-in to the VDS program and commits to:

- completing transition to the National VET Data System by 31 December 2028; and
- transitioning State Training Authority and support TAFE transition to the VET Information Standard by 31 December 2028.

Note: A state that opts out will be ineligible for future payments under the initiative but will retain previous payments made up to the point of opting out. States will be responsible for any costs incurred by their jurisdiction in transitioning out of the program (Clause A139 refers).

(a) Specify activities that support the VDS program.

The ACT will support the VDS Program:

- Through the provision of subject matter experts and expertise to provide continuous input and feedback in the analysis, design review and development support in all development lifecycles of the National VET Data System to go live.

- By implementing ACT technology infrastructure that:
    - aligns with VDS Program goals.
    - complies with information security policies.
    - facilitates the VET Information Standard; and
    - integrates with the National VET Data System.

- In collaborating with the VDS Program teams to jointly develop and implement ACT specific business processes and rules, reference data, metadata requirements, and business processes to support the VDS Program implementation.

- Providing ACT business and technical expertise and resources to support testing of the National VET Data System, including user acceptance testing.

- Supporting ACT Training Organisations (TOs) and the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) to transition to the National VET Data System and the VET information Standard by participating in VDS Program and ACT specific change management programs.

- By providing subject matter experts to actively participate in VDS Program governance groups in all phases of the development lifecycle of the National VET Data System to go live.

The ACT proposes to fully transition to the VET Information Standard and National VET Data System by 31 December 2028, following staged implementation phases. Transition is anticipated to commence with integration to the National VET Data System in June 2027 to go live. Transitioning funded training organisations by June 2028.

- The following indicative timeline supports this transition approach and is indicative and non-binding.
    - ACT detailed planning complete: September 2025.
    - ACT detailed design complete: January 2026.
    - ACT build commencement: March 2026.
    - ACT build complete: September 2026.
    - ACT integration and User Acceptance Testing complete: December 2026.
    - ACT integration to the VDS as a direct state – go live: June 2027.
    - ACT funded RTOs transition commences: June 2027.
    - ACT funded training organisations transition complete: June 2028. Support the transition of Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) to the National VET Data System by 31 December 2028.

(b) Specify activities that support the VET Information Standard.

The ACT will support the National Centre for the Vocational Education Research (NCVER) develop and implement the VET Information Standard:

- Through the provision of subject matter experts and expertise to contribute to the business and technical aspects of VDS Program VET Information Standard working groups to provide analysis, input, and design review on the VET Information Standard and associated artifacts throughout the Standard's development lifecycle.

- Collaboratively designing ACT specific data elements and associated business rules for inclusion in the VET Information Standard with VDS Program teams and the NCVER.

- By actively participating in VDS Program governance forums and decision making.

- Supporting TOs and the CIT implement the VET Information Standard by the 31 December 2028 through active participation in VDS Program and ACT specific change management practices.

(c) Specify the state's reporting pathway for the purpose of collecting VET Activity Data (clause A138b refers).

The ACT Proposes to collect VET Activity Data by the direct reporting pathway, whereby funded TOs submit VET Activity Data in VET Information Standard compliant format, anytime directly

to the National VET Data System via Student Management System or the National VET Data System user interface.

The ACT anticipates releasing validation responses for funded VET Activity Data from an ACT IT infrastructure network to the National VET Data System for National reporting purposes as often as possible, but not less frequently than quarterly or the period set in the Data Provision Requirements. Non-funded VET Activity Data will be distributed to the NCVER by the National VET Data System.

(d) Specify the state's collection and submission processes.

States will support the collection of metadata related to VET Activity Data submitted by RTOs to the National VET Data System to enable states to monitor compliance with state specific contracts and regulators to monitor compliance with the Data Provisioning Requirements (DPRs).

The ACT will support the collection of metadata related to VET Activity Data submitted to the National VET Data System to enable compliance with ACT contracts and regulators to monitor compliance with DPRs by:

- Supporting TOs to submit VET Information Standard compliant data without restrictions to allow for any time submission (submit as you go) for all VET Activity Data.
- Requiring funded ACT VET Activity Data submissions to the National VET Data System, no less frequently than quarterly or as agreed in the DPRs and in accordance with ACT contract obligations.
- Validating and releasing funded VET Activity Data submissions received by the ACT as often as possible, but no less frequently than quarterly or as agreed under the DPRs and in accordance with ACT specific contract obligations.
- Continuing to report VET in schools' data annually through current processes or as defined in the DPRs. The ACT may require funded training organisations to report VET in Schools data more (but not less) frequently than annually to meet ACT specific obligations.

(e) Specify activities to support inclusive and robust governance.

The ACT agrees to implement the outcomes of the VDS Program Governance Reset and commits to providing details of the ACT specific program governance model and arrangements as part of the Project Management Plan in milestone 2.

(f) Project management: Specify approach to project management and reporting

The ACT commits to providing a detailed Project Management Plan as part of milestone 2, which will include details of how the ACT will manage its ACT-specific VDS transition project using its

preferred contemporary, fit-for-purpose program and project governance, and delivery methodology.

The ACT commits to:

- participating in the Commonwealth VDS program delivery program and project management forums and working groups.
- collaborating on VET Data Streamlining program wide risk management activities with all partners including risk identification, mitigation, and treatments.
- providing regular industry standard status reporting to the Commonwealth VDS Program Management Office in line with the agreed format and frequency as agreed as part of the VDS Governance reset.

Gate Reviews

Gate-reviews are a key governance tool in contemporary program management methodologies that provide stakeholders with a formalised process to review and assess the current and ongoing value and risk of the program.

The VDS program will have gate reviews at key stages of the program. States have the option to opt out of the VDS program as part of the gateway review process. (A138 refers).

Gate reviews provide a formalised process to review and assess the ongoing viability of the VDS Program, as such the ACT commits to actively participating in the VDS Program Gate Reviews endorsed by the SSON on 24 April 2024 as part of the governance reset. These are:

- Gate 1 – Governance review.
- Gate 2 – Go Live review.
- Gate 3 – Mid-Point review.
- Gate 4 – Delivery and Operational Transfer.
- Gate 5 – Program Closure.

The ACT will assess the overall value and risk of the VDS Program at each gate review.

Enhanced VET Data and Evidence - evaluation arrangements

The ACT supports the development of a VET Data Streamlining Evaluation framework, for consideration by SSON which will provide a consistent methodology for all jurisdictions to use to evaluate the success of the VDS program. The Evaluation arrangements will be robust and appropriate to the design and scale of the VET Data Streamlining program.

As part of Milestone 2 Project Planning, the ACT commits to using the evaluation framework to outline how the success of the VDS program as it pertains to their jurisdiction will be measured, how effectiveness will be evaluated, and how findings will be disseminated and actioned.

Enhanced VET Data and Evidence funding arrangements.

Details of funding	**2025-26**	**2026-27**	**2027-28**	**2028-29**
Commonwealth contribution	$1,000,000	TBA-	TBA-	TBA-

Future payments to be agreed prior to 30 June 2026 (as per clause A136 of the National Skills Agreement) following delivery of the project management plan at Milestone 2.

MILESTONES FOR ENHANCED - VET DATA AND EVIDENCE

The initial payment amount is limited to 10 per cent of the maximum Commonwealth contribution, States will receive up to a further 10 per cent on completion and acceptance of detailed State-specific program management planning artifacts, as outlined in the table below:

Milestone	**Evidence**	**Payment Value (Commonwealth funded)[1] [2]**	**Commonwealth reporting period**
Milestone 1: Initial payment on agreement of bilateral implementation plan	1: Bilateral implementation plan agreed with the Commonwealth	$500,000	N/A – Payment will be made on execution of the implementation plan.
Milestone 2: Completion and acceptance of detailed State-specific program management planning artefacts •	2: Commonwealth acceptance of State-specific program management planning artefacts, including: • VET Data and Streamlining roadmap • project management plan • detailed project Schedule • resource / procurement plan • risk management plan and key risks • payment schedule • agreed delivery payment milestones • State specific reconciliation report template	$500,000	31 March 2026
Future milestones to be agreed prior to 30 June 2026 (as per clause A136 of the National Skills Agreement) following delivery of the project management plan at Milestone 2.			

[1] First payment to be no more than 10% of maximum Commonwealth contribution

[2] Details for each 6 monthly payment will be defined in the milestone 2 payment schedule and will be linked to agreed delivery milestones.

The Parties have confirmed their commitment to this implementation plan as follows:

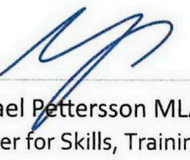
Signed *for and on behalf of the Commonwealth of Australia by*



The Honourable Andrew Giles MP
Minister for Skills and Training

24 / 7 /

Signed *for and on behalf of the Australian Capital Territory by*



Michael Pettersson MLA
Minister for Skills, Training and Industrial Relations

1 / 7 / 2025