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 Queensland under the 2024–2028 National Skills Agreement (the NSA) and should be read in conjunction with the NSA.

2. The Plan gives effect to the policy initiatives contained in the National Skills Agreement, which has been guided by the vision statement and principles endorsed by National Cabinet on 31 August 2022. It gives effect to the Parties' shared commitment to high-quality, responsive and accessible vocational education and training (VET) to boost productivity and support Australians to obtain the skills they need to prosper. The Plan will support governments to work collaboratively and purposefully towards national priorities, while preserving flexibility for States and Territories to align local skills supply with demand.

3. 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).

4. 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.

5. For each policy initiative, this Plan outlines the actions to be delivered, how progress will be measured and how the actions are expected to contribute to the overarching objectives of the NSA.

6. In considering bilateral Implementation Plans, the Commonwealth recognises that states are at different starting points across the different policy initiatives. Implementation plans may be updated at any time with the written agreement of the Commonwealth and the relevant State or States, including to incorporate additional policy initiatives, or additional activities under specific policy initiatives (Clause A90 refers).

7. The implementation plan does not cover the National TAFE Network initiative, as states will jointly develop a multilateral implementation plan for this initiative for agreement with the Commonwealth (Clause A122 refers).

TAFE CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE (Clause A112 to A116 of the NSA)

Queensland TAFE Centre of Excellence –Health Care and Support

(a) Operation of TAFE Centres of Excellence (clause A112 refers).

The Queensland TAFE Centre of Excellence – Health Care and Support (TCE HCS), located at the TAFE Queensland Cairns campus, will strengthen capability and capacity for the essential care and support sector through innovative health care training addressing critical skills gaps in aged care, disability support and mental health care sector across Queensland and nationally. The TCE HCS will pilot enhanced and innovative models of delivery for rural, regional and remote students in the health care and support sector; increase accessibility for regional, rural and remote students through equitable digital access to training, support the acceleration of commitments to Closing the Gap by implementing culturally appropriate and safe training pathways for First Nations students and progressing new higher apprenticeships in nursing to help grow and retain the health care and support workforces.

Sustaining essential care services is one of the seven (7) agreed national priorities under the National Skills Agreement (NSA).

The care and support economy is growing, driven by an ageing population, a transition from informal to formal care, and increased citizen expectations of government. The most recent Intergenerational Report[1] projected the share of the population aged over 65 years old will increase to nearly 23 per cent as the baby boomer generation ages over the next 40 years. This will drive the dependency ratio — the ratio of working age people to non-working age people — down by almost one-third (from four working-aged people today to around 2.7 people in 2060).

The care and support workforce is growing three times faster than other sectors in the Australian economy. With demand for care and support services expected to outstrip workforce supply, the previous National Skills Commission projected a workforce gap. By 2049-50, the total demand for care and support workers is expected to be double what we see today.

Given the increasing demand for workers and the shrinking supply of working age people, productivity growth is becoming increasingly important. Stronger productivity growth within the care and support economy could contribute to lowering future workforce demand. Plus, from a workforce supply perspective, stronger productivity growth across the economy as a whole could increase the potential share of workers available to work in the care and support system.[2]

The health care and social assistance industry, which includes health services, early childhood education and care, disability support and aged care, now accounts for 15 per cent of Australia's workforce, making it the largest employing industry in Australia. It is forecast to grow faster than any other industry.[3]

There are a number of aspects of working conditions for the care and support workforce that contribute to staff turnover, as highlighted by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety Final Report: Care, Dignity and Respect (Aged Care Royal Commission). These include high workloads, work pressures, inadequate staffing and skill mixes, working conditions and arrangements including pay. The Aged Care Royal Commission also highlighted the importance of

[1] Australian Government Treasury 2023 Intergenerational Report - 2023 Intergenerational Report | Treasury.gov.au

[2] Australian Government Draft National Care and Support Economy Strategy 2023 – Care and Support Economy Taskforce. Refer to: Draft National Care and Support Economy Strategy 2023 (pmc.gov.au)

[3] Australian Government Draft National Care and Support Economy Strategy 2023 – Care and Support Economy Taskforce. Refer to: Draft National Care and Support Economy Strategy 2023 (pmc.gov.au) (page 8).

good leadership, supervision and support, as well as training and skills development. Many of these issues are also evident in the disability sector.

Regional and remote areas face unique challenges including workforce retention. The importance of developing a local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce, including engaging with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to link people to health systems and of attracting community members with the right skills to the care and support workforce, was also highlighted as key to successful outcomes for the sector.[4]

Aged care

The number of older people in Australia will grow significantly in the next 30 years, resulting in a substantial increase in people needing different types of aged care. This will have significant impacts on the number of people necessary to deliver that care and the required size of the aged care workforce.

It is well established that the quality of care and support is linked to the quality of jobs for workers. Not only do there need to be enough workers, but those workers need to be suitably skilled and enabled to do their jobs well.

The Aged Care Royal Commission makes a number of recommendations to better support skills and workforce development in the aged care sector to support the growing demand for quality services.[5]

The Aged Care Royal Commission report (the report) outlines that modelling by Deloitte Access Economics estimates the number of direct care workers needed to maintain current staffing levels would be around 316,500 full-time equivalent by 2050, based on demographic trends and rates of use of aged care. This is a 70% increase, more than 130,000 additional workers, compared with the current baseline number of 186,100 full-time equivalent in 2020 (the number will be significantly higher if the Aged Care Royal Commission recommended reforms are implemented).

The report states that:

- Australia's aged care system is understaffed and the workforce underpaid and undertrained;
- there are insufficient staff members, particularly nurses, in home and residential aged care;
- the mix of staff who provide aged care is not matched to the needs of older people;
- aged care workers often lack sufficient skills and training to cater for the needs of older people receiving aged care services;
- inadequate staffing levels, skill mix and training are the principal causes of substandard care in the current system;
- the sector has difficulty attracting and retaining well-skilled people due to: low wages and poor employment conditions; lack of investment in staff and, in particular, staff training; limited opportunities to progress or be promoted; and no career pathways; and
- despite best intentions, aged care workers simply do not have the requisite time, knowledge, skill and support to deliver high quality care.[6]

The report notes that a highly skilled, well rewarded and valued aged care workforce is vital to the success of any future aged care system. It highlights that the quality of care and the quality of jobs in aged care are inextricably linked, pointing to the need for good working conditions, supportive

[4] Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (Aged Care Royal Commission), Final report volume 1.

[5] Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (Aged Care Royal Commission), Final report volume 1 – Summary of Final report (pages 124 to 132).

[6] Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (Aged Care Royal Commission), Final report volume 1 – Summary of Final report (page 76).

and visionary management, an empowering work culture, collaborative teams, relevant education and training, structured career progression, and job satisfaction among care workers to underpin high quality, person-centred care.

The report makes a number of recommendations, relating to skills and workforce development, including (but not limited to) recommendations to:

- **build 'an aged care profession'**, with the Australian Government, the aged care sector and unions working together to professionalise the personal care workforce which will require cultural change and improvements to education, training, wages and labour conditions for nurses and personal care workers;
- **set a clear vision for career progression**, and a collaborative approach between the Australian Government, tertiary education providers, aged care providers and unions to consider how jobs should be valued and redesigned across the aged care sector and how roles might come together to provide career paths;
- **introduce a regulatory scheme** (like other health professionals), with one of the key features cited a **mandatory minimum qualification of a Certificate III** (noting that there is currently no formal industry standard for an entry-level qualification to work as a personal care worker). A Certificate III level qualification as the mandatory minimum will ensure care workers have a broad range of knowledge and skills in varied aged care contexts and to provide a pathway for further learning;
- **review the need for specialist aged care Certificate III and IV courses**, including regular review of the content of the Certificate III and IV courses to determine if any additional units of competency should be included in the core modules of the courses;
- **fast-track the development of accredited, nationally recognised short courses**, skills sets and micro-credentials for the aged care workforce. The courses should be designed to improve opportunities for learning and professional development, and upgrade the skills and knowledge of the existing workforce;
- develop curricula to equip the health professionals of the future with the skills and attributes they need for their core patient groups of tomorrow. Specifically, the **undergraduate curricula for health professionals should be reviewed** by the relevant accreditation authorities to consider changes to the knowledge, skills and professional attributes so that the care needs of older people are met by health professionals; and
- funding to teach aged care programs for delivery to students in both residential aged care and home care settings. The programs should **facilitate clinical placements based on partnerships between aged care and tertiary education providers**. This will make the programs well placed not only to build the aged care workforce, by way of placements and education, **but also to support research and innovation**.

Queensland's proposed TAFE Centre of Excellence

The Queensland Government is committed to the long-term goals of good, secure jobs and delivering better services across Queensland. Critical to achieving these goals is strategic workforce planning for the health care and the support sector.

In Queensland, the health care and social assistance industry is mainly engaged in providing human health care and social assistance. It includes hospitals, medical and other care services (including allied health, ambulances and pathology), residential care services (including aged care) and social assistance services, such as childcare, disabilities assistance, and welfare counselling services.[7]

By 2024-25, it is projected that these sectors will employ more than 440,800 people including more

[7] Jobs Queensland – Anticipating Future Skills Series.

than the 63,000 additional people employed since 2020-21. Hospital, social assistance services and residential care services (including aged care) are predicted to grow by more than 20% by 2024-25.[8] As Queensland is a large, decentralised state, this projected growth presents challenges for the delivery of education and training opportunities, as well as service delivery around the care economy workforce.

Queensland Health has developed the Health Workforce Strategy for Queensland to 2032, with consultation recently concluding in January 2024.[9] The Queensland Health's Health Workforce Strategy for Queensland to 2032 Consultation paper identified that:

- Queensland's population is projected to grow to 6,079,000 by 2031;
- the population is expected to grow by 1.5 per cent annually to 2031-32 with the population aged over 70 (who are more likely to need hospital care) projected to grow faster than any other age group at the rate of 3.8 per cent annually;
- analysis of patient demand on hospital services showed that between 2018-19 and 2022-23, hospital activity increased by 17.3 per cent, or around 4.1 per cent per annum;
- prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, hospital admissions in Queensland had seen a consistent growth of 5.0 per cent per annum. The growth in admissions stalled following the onset of the pandemic but is returning to pre-existing trends; and
- over the next 10 years, Queensland will need up to 45,000 additional staff working in the health system.

The Health Workforce Strategy for Queensland to 2032 outlines the aim to expand the entire workforce by 45,000 people by 2032. This includes a projected 46.4 per cent increase in nursing and midwifery, with 19,000 more on the frontline. The strategy will tackle workforce challenges in three key areas: supporting and retaining the current workforce; building new talent pipelines and attracting talent; and adapt and implement new ways to deliver healthcare.

The establishment of the TCE HCS will focus on addressing the challenges and promoting opportunities related to the delivery of training and skills in the health care and support sector, with a particular focus on aged care, and the disability and mental health sectors.

The TCE HCS will work to better address the needs of students in rural and regional communities and provide opportunities to deliver innovative training pathways to upskill students in priority areas of the aged care sector from vocational education and training (VET) into university qualifications.

Critically this will enable delivery of skilled workers, including from priority cohorts, into good, secure well-paid jobs for high demand health and care occupations.

Subject to agreement by the Commonwealth, the TCE HCS will:

- provide national leadership in the delivery of education and training through innovative models of delivery for rural, regional and remote students in the health care and support sector, with a specific focus on aged care, and the disability and mental health sectors in future years;
- enable TAFE Queensland to leverage its statewide footprint across rural and regional communities to explore how skills and training pathways can be made more accessible for priority cohorts, in particular, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as well as addressing barriers for existing workers to upskill in high priority occupations across the sector; and
- focus on innovation, including through partnering with industry, unions, universities, employers,

[8] Jobs Queensland – Anticipating Future Skills Series.

[9] Refer to: Health Workforce Strategy for Queensland to 2032 – Consultation paper | Queensland Health

health organisations, training organisations, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to undertake research to develop new pathways, training products and modes of delivery that support successful student and aged care sector workforce outcomes.

Queensland recognises the mutual benefits of collaboration between the VET and higher education sectors and commits the TCE HCS to developing partnerships to support and deliver on its objectives, including with universities, Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs), employers and unions. These partnerships could take different forms, and are likely to evolve over time, but could include:

- university representation in the TCE HCS governance structures;
- exchanging expertise and experience in the design and delivery of education and training relevant to the TCE HCS governance, including higher apprenticeship pathways;
- establishing credit recognition arrangements and entry pathways between VET and higher education for education and training relevant to the TCE HCS governance; and/or
- facilitating joint opportunities for applied research relevant to the TCE HCS.

Queensland acknowledges that there is the potential for duplication of effort between the TCE HCS and relevant JSCs. Queensland is committed to working with the Commonwealth to maximise the collective benefit for the skills and training system through TAFE Centres of Excellence, and commits the TCE HCS to early and regular engagement with relevant JSCs on all its activities for the purposes of:

- minimising the potential for duplication of effort;
- sharing learnings on best practice and support knowledge translation; and
- partnering on projects of mutual interest where appropriate.

Description	Three core themes will underpin the TCE HCS to address place- based workforce needs and respond to challenges in the health care and support industry, particularly the aged care, disability and mental health sectors, specifically: • **Excellence in training delivery** by focusing on innovative ways to deliver training, and building expertise in regional, rural, remote access and delivery, as well as for targeted communities, that can be shared across the National TAFE Network; • **Building local care workforces** by working with communities to grow and retain critical care and support sector workforces (including through higher apprenticeship pathways); and • **Industry and community-led applied research** through projects that respond to training, workforce and skills needs. Key activities and deliverables of the TCE HCS include: • developing a strategic partnership network to inform the activities of the TCE HCS, including over the longer term; • identifying, piloting and sharing enhanced delivery modes and new training products, including through an evaluative report and recommendations; • identifying, piloting and sharing culturally appropriate and safe training options; and • through comprehensive consultation, research and piloting, including the development of market adoption strategies, explore the development of pathways in nursing, in close partnership with the health sector, unions, universities and First Nations partner organisations to meet skills needs resulting from transforming job roles for nurses. The TCE HCS addresses the core requirements for TAFE Centres of Excellence as set out in the National

Skills Agreement by:

i) Providing national leadership in the delivery of education and training

TAFE Queensland is an experienced Australian Skills Quality Authority (AQSA) and Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA) accredited provider with an extensive history of working in conjunction with the Australian Government to achieve educational outcomes that support national priorities.

TAFE Queensland successfully delivers training to a range of students, including those most disadvantaged in the labour market through an applied learning approach.

As a foundational member of TAFE Directors Australia, TAFE Queensland is recognised for sharing best practice and innovative developments across the TAFE network nationally. This practice will continue as a priority under a newly established TCE for the health care and support sector.

The TCE HCS will work with the National TAFE Network once established to drive excellence in teaching and learning and best practice in health care and support by TAFEs. This will be a critical collaboration for the TCE HCS.

Queensland commits to the TCE HCS operating in such a way that it:

- plays a national leadership role with employers, unions, universities, Jobs and Skills Councils, and other relevant stakeholders to identify, develop and deliver education and training solutions that meet industry needs across Australia;
- partners with TAFEs and other public providers across Australia, including through the National TAFE Network where applicable, to assist them with non-financial support to build their capability and capacity to deliver health care and support related training; and
- ensures the needs of rural, regional and remote communities and First Nations people embedded in the design of national training solutions for the health care and support sector.

The focus of the leadership role of the TCE HCS will be on innovation in order to:

- develop new delivery models, including opportunities for new technology to support training across communities;
- develop and embed culturally appropriate and safe training pathways and cultural competence across the training organisation, to support successful student outcomes, translating into strong health workforce outcomes across communities;
- research and develop new training products, including micro- credentials, for specific critical skills shortages in the health sector where the existing workforce could be upskilled to deliver (such as clinical coding); and
- explore new options for pathways in nursing , with an initial emphasis on aged care to align with focus areas being pursued in the development of the Health Workforce Strategy for Queensland to 2032, which aims to build a supported workforce to deliver high-quality healthcare across Queensland, and in response to the drivers and challenges identified in this implementation plan (pages 2 to 7).[10]

[10] Refer to: Health Workforce Strategy for Queensland to 2032 – Consultation paper | Queensland Health

(ii) enrich students' learning experience, support industry needs and enable applied research programs

TAFE Queensland has an established track record in successfully delivering education and training in essential care services. Refer to section titled – *Delivery Method*, page 13, Implementation Plan for further details.

TAFE Queensland brings strong industry connections, to the TCE HCS through existing community relationships, union support and successful university partnerships in key sectors including aged care, nursing and other key essential services.

Through the nursing and community services sector, TAFE Queensland significantly contributes to the national voice and has developed an essential partnership with the new Jobs and Skills Council, HumanAbility.

The TCE HCS will develop and deliver place-based training solutions to address **local care workforce challenges**. Projects to be explored include:

- working with local employers and industry sector on blended training/ employment pathways to provide upskilling or reskilling opportunities;
- upskilling opportunities to support retention within the sector;
- identifying transferrable skills to build local workforces;
- building employer capability by training local mentors/ supervisory capability;
- working with First Nations communities and community controlled organisations to develop supported training pathways for a First Nations care and support workforce;
- complementary training and skills (e.g. business or leadership skills) where required; and
- building the industry currency of TAFE trainers and assessors.

The following have been identified in collaboration with key stakeholders as areas for further **research and development**, and will be explored as part of the work of the TCE HCS:

- **Critical skill shortage** areas across health industry in clinical and non-clinical areas.
- **Innovative delivery modalities** that are able to provide service to rural and remote areas.
- **Student placement options** in rural and remote locations. Consideration of financial, and all other practical needs (accommodation, transport etc).
- **Specialisation streams** to support breadth of scope to meet skill shortage needs for example; peri-operative and acute streams in health support qualification and clinical coding skills sets/quals.
- **Pathway opportunities** / articulation pathways and credit blocks.
- **Traineeships** available in appropriate qualifications and/or partnerships that work collaboratively with industry to ensure best industry ready graduates.
- **Mental health peer work** training delivery expansion to meet demand for increase in peer run services.
- **National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) sole traders** to complete Certificate III in Individual Support OR a recognised skill set in order to work with people with disability under the NDIS. There is currently no requirement for qualification or training for people who are setting up NDIS businesses.
- N**on-accredited calendar of professional development** training across the sectors e.g. person-centred approaches, recovery focus, behaviour support. This can be for novice workers with more complex training solutions developed for experienced workers who

do not need, or already have, relevant qualifications.

- **Sector engagement activities** including annual forums focusing on workforce issues eg health, disability, aged care, child protection, mental health.

(iii) innovate in the delivery of tertiary education, such as development and delivery of higher apprenticeships in areas of high skills need

Under the TCE HCS, Queensland proposes to explore the development of pathways in Nursing, in close partnership with the health sector, unions, universities and First Nations partner organisations to meet skills needs resulting from transforming job roles for nurses.

Job roles for nurses are transforming along with the sector and nurses are increasingly required to operate in a more integrated manner across organisational boundaries. The demand for nurse entrepreneurs trained in advanced clinical care who can perform jobs traditionally performed by other medical professionals is growing, particularly in rural, remote, and areas where health professionals are in short supply.

There is a growing need for a greater volume of highly skilled nursing professionals who can apply their expertise across a range of chronic health issues, conditions and contexts. Over the next three years, nursing is expected to grow strongly. Registered nursing employment is predicted to grow by 13.9 per cent, ranking it third among all professions in Australia.[11]

In Queensland, as at November 2023 there were 78,100 Registered Nurses. This represents growth of 3,400 over the year (4.6 per cent) and 15,100 growth over the last 5 years (24 per cent).

Demand, as measured through internet job vacancies, is up 7 per cent over the year at 1,707, noting the January 2024 level is lower than the level seen across the latter half of 2023. The January 2024 figures are 85 per cent higher than 5 years ago.

Jobs Queensland's *Anticipating Future Skills* series projects that the demand for Registered Nurses will grow by more than 2 per cent annually to 2025-26. Jobs and Skills Australia notes that as one of the top 20 'in demand' occupations, the reason for the Registered Nurse (RN) skills shortages relates to the required time it takes to undertake training.

Queensland has a strong record of funding Free TAFE for Nursing. In 2024, the Commonwealth and Queensland are contributing to the delivery 3,500 Free TAFE places in the Diploma of Nursing (AQF level 5), this is in addition to the over 3,000 students who commenced in the Diploma of Nursing under Free TAFE in 2023. Free TAFE is contributing to the delivery of the Enrolled Nursing (EN) workforce in Queensland.

The TCE HCS higher-level apprenticeship opportunity

Queensland proposes to explore, in close partnership with the care sector, unions, universities and First Nations partner organisations, new higher apprenticeship (or equivalent) pathway options, with an initial focus on aged care, and those that align with national skills priorities and focus areas being pursued in the Health Workforce Strategy for Queensland to 2032. Options will be scoped in consultation with stakeholders.

In progressing this work, the TCE HCS will work closely with the Queensland Chief Nurse and

[11] Adapted from James Cook University – Demand for Nurses in Australia, September 2023

	Midwifery Officer, and national nursing stakeholders for example the: • Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care • Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia • Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council • Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation, and • Australian College of Nursing. The TCE HCS will undertake work to explore the transition pathway opportunities focused on addressing the challenges and promoting the opportunities related to the health care and support sector. ***(iv) enable organisational innovation and teaching and training excellence and*** ***(v) enrich students' learning experience*** *Enable organisational innovation and teaching and training excellence* The TCE HCS will provide innovative and practical solutions for sector issues through identification, research, development and testing. Through national collaboration with stakeholders, solutions will provide students with opportunities to gain the advanced skills needed by industries. The TCE HCS will be overseen by a steering committee made up of industry, university, government and community partners that identifies and delivers projects that **improve professional practice**. Projects to be explored include: • building and expanding on industry and community partnerships; • working on real world problems brought to the TCE HCS by partners – could be local or systemic; • documenting and sharing outcomes from research and development across the National TAFE Network and with industry; • testing prototypes or ideas brought forward by partners; • developing a mechanism to share/seed knowledge and outcomes across the VET sector – Australian Apprenticeship Support Network providers; Skills Assure Suppliers, schools, universities, industry – with opportunities for commercialisation to be in scope; • development of a program to embed applied research/innovation in TAFE culture and practice over the long term and across the organisation to facilitate ongoing flexibility; and • a national TAFE community of practice to share findings and products. *Enrich students' learning experience* The TCE HCS will support best-practice delivery through new product strategies and partnerships, and by sharing practice. Solutions will be high-quality, student centred, industry-led and educator supported. The TCE HCS will develop and deliver **pedagogical models that support student engagement and completions**. Projects to be explored include: • improving training products that meets industry need (outcomes could include new training products, review and update of existing product, micro-credentials or skill sets if there is a gap in the training product); • addressing the digital divide for regional, rural and remote communities to access

	training for the care and support sector; • delivering excellence in blended face to face and online delivery; • delivery of culturally specific and appropriate content for First Nations communities and care workforce; • identifying practical barriers to training and strategies to address these (e.g. vocational placements); • designing and delivering Enrolled Nurse to Registered Nurse pathways; and • promoting the value of VET and its contribution, by raising awareness of individuals, industry and community of the opportunities it enables. <u>*Will partner and network with stakeholders*</u> The TCE HCS will **partner** with industry, unions, universities, employers, health organisations, training organisations, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to undertake research to develop new pathways, training products and modes of delivery that support successful student and health workforce outcomes. As a priority on establishment of the TCE HCS, strategic partnerships will be identified. These will be drawn from existing networks and complemented by identification of other crucial stakeholders from an environmental scan and state and national recommendations. Communication channels will be established that ensure ease of connection for stakeholders with the TCE HCS, including: • central information portal; • workshops / webinars; • meetings (face to face or online); and • site visits.
Delivery Method	The TCE HCS will leverage the scope, scale and reach of TAFE Queensland delivery and partnerships (outlined below) to deliver on its strategic objectives. *Scale of offerings* TAFE Queensland delivers practical, industry-relevant training to 126,000 students each year, across a range of industries from entry- level certificates to bachelor degrees, at more than 60 locations in Queensland. TAFE Queensland also delivers training interstate and internationally, as well as across the Pacific through the Commonwealth funded Australia Pacific Training Coalition. Over 20,000 businesses and employers' partner with TAFE Queensland each year. These range from small, local family-run businesses through to large international companies. Additionally, TAFE Queensland's strong stakeholder partnerships enhance the training and skilling opportunities for students, including being able to offer over 550 university pathways to TAFE Queensland students. *Performance – Health Care and Support sector* Overall, TAFE Queensland consistently achieves above the national average in National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) student satisfaction and student outcomes ratings, as well as the Australian Quality Indicator Learner Engagement and Employer Satisfaction (AQILEES) employer satisfaction rating.

- Student satisfaction 89.5%
- Employment and further study outcomes 86.2%
- Employer satisfaction 92.1%

More than 20% of TAFE Queensland's total training delivery is in the Community Services, Health and Nursing sector, with more than 25,000 students undertaking training each year.

TAFE Queensland students	2022/23
Community Services	13,484
Health	10,804
Nursing	4,375
Unique Students in Above	26,155
% of Total TQ Delivery	20.8%

Existing partnerships – Health Care and Support Sector

For many years, TAFE Queensland has provided state and national leadership in the health, care and support sector, as demonstrated:

- through its strong industry connections, vital community relationships, union support and successful university partnerships; and
- by supporting the implementation of a number of key workforce and training initiatives and strategies, in key sectors including aged care, nursing and other key essential service.

TAFE Queensland's partnerships, collaborations, and strong links with industry networks are crucial to underpin a vibrant and contemporary Centre of Excellence. Some examples of TAFE Queensland's existing partnership arrangements include (not an exhaustive list):

Sunshine Coast Health Institute

The Sunshine Coast Health Institute (SCHI) is a dedicated education, training and research facility. The Institute is a collaborative partnership (joint venture) between the Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service, the University of the Sunshine Coast, Griffith University and TAFE Queensland and is located within the Sunshine Coast University Hospital (SCUH). The institute leads research informed health care, education and training that delivers solutions to address health service, consumer and community needs.

TAFE Queensland commenced delivery from SCHI in January 2017 in nursing, aged care and allied health programs.

Industry partnerships (Hospitals) – including Ramsay Health, St Vincent's Health, Mater Hospital Australia and Greenslopes Private Hospital

TAFE Queensland has long-standing partnerships with these top hospital operators, which are some of Australia's largest and best teaching hospitals, located in Queensland as well as around Australia.

Student's studying the Diploma of Nursing through these partnerships benefit from a hybrid delivery model, which is a combination of theory and practical training. The course is delivered entirely on site at the hospital and students are able to 'hit the ground running' on completion, having been part of the team as a student. These courses have a 98% retention to employment with the host hospital facility.

Industry partnerships (Aged and Disability care providers) – including Uniting care, Endeavour, Oz Care and Anglicare

The aged care and disability support industries provide a vital role to both individuals and communities. TAFE Queensland works together with industry partners to develop bespoke and customised training solutions that meet the unique needs of these organisation and ensure the ongoing provision of exemplary services in residential, home, community, and health care settings.

TAFE Queensland offers a range of solutions including accredited training, traineeships, recognition of prior learning (RPL) and micro-credentials across the aged care and disability services sectors.

University partnerships and the Diploma of Disability Sector Leadership

TAFE Queensland has collaborated with a range of stakeholders (Department of Social Services, Ability First Australia, University of New England) engaged in the development of the Diploma of Leadership in Disability Services, which will be delivered from Semester 2, 2024, providing a pivotal opportunity for pathways for support workers and team leaders to management opportunities in the disability sector.

Industry partnerships – emerging skill need

TAFE Queensland has provided expertise and developed industry partnerships supporting the following initiatives:

- *Oral health and fluoride varnishing:* TAFE Queensland has commenced delivery of an oral health and fluoride varnishing virtual course to upskill Queensland Health health care workers and nurses to provide this essential service in rural and remote locations. The course has been successful and Queensland Health will be rolling this out to Indigenous health care workers in remote communities in the next offering;
- *Collaboration and resource development*: WorkUP Queensland – Resource Hub. Collaboration and development of a range of materials to support the workforce through attraction and pathways;
- *Supporting workforce in partnership*: Queensland Alliance for Mental Health (QAMH) – stakeholder representation on the Mental Health Workforce Strategy Committee;
- *Leadership responding to industry need:* Certificate IV in Mental Health Peer Work – establishment of the state-wide Vocational Placement Network to support this emerging sector need;
- *Networks that deliver:* Establishment of the state wide NDIS Community of Practice with stakeholders including people with disability; and
- *Partnership training and resource development*: Partnership with Community Services Industry Alliance (CSIA) across a range of vocational education and sector needs including the state-wide Foundation Skills initiative, state-wide NDIS VET Practitioners Initiative and the Vocational Placement Initiative – Disability Sector Project, all providing deliverables and resources which are transferrable across sectors and for future use.

Expected reach and additionality	The TCE HCS will be coordinated from TAFE locations that have relevant industry and university partnerships but will be expected to work across the state to deliver: • accessibility for regional, rural, and remote students; • an increasing skills profile, particularly in the area of higher level skills; • pathways to employment, career advancement, upskilling and reskilling; • flexible and agile methods of training delivery; • collaborative partnerships with industry and employers, in both design and delivery; and • improved support to access to training and workforce participation for First Nations people; culturally and linguistically diverse people and people with disability.

Amount of investment - Commonwealth	**Amount of investment – State**	**Planned start date**	**Planned end date**
$15 million	$15 million	01 July 2024	31 December 2028

TAFE Centres of Excellence – approach to matched funding arrangements (clause A114 refers)

Details of matched funding	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total
Queensland contribution – new funding	$0M	$5.5M	$4.0M	$2.0M	$2.0M	$1.5M	$15M

The Queensland Government will provide details of their matched funding contributions at the end of each financial year, commencing 1 July 2024 until 31 December 2028. Final payments under this implementation plan may be reduced where the total contribution by the Queensland Government over the life of the project does not align with the Commonwealth contribution.

TAFE Centres of Excellence – reporting

Queensland will report on progress with activities of the TCE HCS, in accordance with the *Milestones and Payments section*. Reporting will include quantitative and qualitative measures (where appropriate and relevant) broadly as follows (to be confirmed in the development phase):

<u>Quantitative measures (existing data collection)</u>

- Student participation/enrolments overall and for:
    - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
    - Women
    - People with disability
    - People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Student participation/enrolment in higher level skills – increase in enrolment numbers as a proportion of overall enrolments.
- Student participation/enrolment from rural, regional and remote localities – increase in enrolment numbers as a proportion of overall enrolments.
- Successful completions overall and for:
    - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
    - Women
    - People with disability
    - People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Student satisfaction results – National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) reporting – (existing measure), including for priority cohorts, specifically:
    - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
    - Women
    - People with disability
    - People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Employer satisfaction – NCVER reporting (existing measure).

<u>Qualitative measures (survey results; case studies; pilot approaches)</u>

- Governance structures established;
- Increased use/optimising existing TAFE footprint and/or opportunities for shared use of TAFE facilities;
- Strengthened alignment of training offerings and pathways with local labour market priorities;

- New training delivery strategies developed;
- Number of new partnership arrangements established (industry; employer; community; sector);
- New products and/or pathways developed and implemented;
- Increased access to training for underrepresented cohorts: students who may face additional barriers accessing VET are enrolled in VET at a rate reflective of the general population;
- Care workforce – attraction and retention strategies established and/or implemented;
- New research projects established; and
- Best practice approached identified and disseminated.

The Commonwealth and Queensland will consult on the nature and content of any events, announcements, promotional activity or publicity related to the TCE HCS. In all public materials relating to the TCE HCS, Queensland will acknowledge the Commonwealth's contribution with the following statement:

> The Queensland TAFE Centre of Excellence – Health Care and Support is a joint initiative between the Australian Government and the Queensland Government.

TAFE Centres of Excellence – contribution to the goals of the NSA

The overarching goals of the NSA are to:

- deliver a national VET system that provides high quality, responsive and accessible education and training to boost productivity;
- support Australians to obtain the skills and capabilities they need to obtain well-paid, secure jobs; and
- ensure Australia has the skilled workforce it needs now and into the future, with TAFE at the heart of the VET sector.

The TCE HCS will focus on addressing challenges and promoting opportunities related to the delivery of training and skills in the health, care and support sector. The TCE HCS will have a particular focus on better addressing the needs of students and the health industry in rural and regional communities and provide opportunities to deliver innovative training pathways to upskill students in priority areas from VET into university qualifications.

Critically this will enable delivery of skilled workers, including from priority cohorts, into good, secure well-paid jobs for high demand health occupations, and support access and delivery nationwide through the National TAFE Network by sharing good practice.

The Theory of Change principles, including the following, are addressed in the Overview and Description sections of this Implementation Plan:

- effective supports;
- effective pathways and transitions;
- relevant skills and knowledge;
- transferrable skills and knowledge;
- up-to-date courses;
- industry engaged with education and training delivery;
- high-quality RTOs;
- high-quality training and education;
- expert educators and trainers; and

- collaboration between governments and other stakeholders.

TAFE Centres of Excellence - evaluation arrangements

The TCE HCS will be guided by a steering committee that includes TAFE, relevant industry, union, other higher education representation and departmental representatives to establish priorities, oversee implementation and monitor outcomes. The steering committee leverages strong community and industry/enterprise relationships to identify and deliver projects.

At year 3 (2026-27), interim evaluation findings will be available. The evaluation strategy will examine the following objectives (to be confirmed in the establishment phase):

1. **Appropriateness** – the extent to which the TCE HCS is addressing the policy intent to:
   a) increase collaboration between TAFEs, through partnerships with industry and universities; and
   b) deliver the skills people need for good, secure work and careers.

   National Skills Agreement deliverables for a TAFE Centre of Excellence include:
   - provide national leadership in the delivery of skills, education and training;
   - bring together employers, unions, universities and other education and training providers to develop and implement real work and practical solutions to meet skills needs;
   - support industry and enrich students' learning experience through applied research and problem solving programs;
   - innovate the delivery of tertiary education, such as the development and delivery of higher apprenticeships in areas of high skills need;
   - disseminate best practice across the National TAFE Network; and
   - enable organisational innovation and teaching and training excellence.

2. **Implementation** – the extent to which the establishment of the TCE HCS and the roll-out of activities is consistent with original plans and timing. Key deliverables are to be confirmed as part of establishment and planning, but could include:
   - Develop appropriate governance structures to oversee effective implementation by 6 months from commencement of the project;
   - Research and develop new delivery modes – including opportunities for new technology to support training across communities by year 3 (30 June 2027);
   - Research, develop and embed culturally appropriate and safe training, pathways and cultural competence across the training organisation, to support successful student outcomes, translating into strong health workforce outcomes across communities by year 3 (30 June 2027);
   - Research and develop new training products, including micro-credentials, for specific critical skills shortages in the health sector where existing workforce could be upskilled to deliver by year 3 (30 June 2027);
   - Interim evaluation findings are developed and communicated by year 3 (30 June 2027);
   - Pilot of new delivery modes and training products critical skills shortages in the health sector by year 4 (30 June 2028);
   - Exploring a new higher apprenticeship/s to align with focus areas being pursued in the development of the Health Workforce Strategy for Queensland to 2032 by year 4 (30 June 2028); and
   - Final evaluation report is available by 31 December 2028.

3. **Effectiveness** – the extent to which activities of the TCE HCS are measurably generating the intended outcomes.
    - Refer to quantitative and qualitative measures outlined in the reporting section of this implementation plan (page 16 and 17).
    - Impact of external factors on ability to achieve the intended outcomes.

4. **Value for money** – the extent to which the establishment of the TCE HCS has produced economic and social benefits commensurate with its costs.
    - Identified economic, social and equity-related benefits, particularly for priority cohorts.
    - Cost effectiveness of the initiative/activity/project.

5. **Lessons learned** – the lessons learned during implementation.
    - What results were observed and were they as expected?
    - What adjustments were made during implementation?

GENERAL PROVISIONS

This section sets out considerations for implementation arrangements across all relevant Policy Initiatives under Part 6 of the NSA. States are to outline how the following apply across all relevant Policy Initiatives:

Linkages

As outlined above for each policy initiative.

Dependencies

As outlined above for each policy initiative.

Student Experience

As outlined above for each policy initiative.

Engagement arrangements

As outlined above for each policy initiative.

Reporting

The Parties will work to develop reporting arrangements on the progress of implementation, information to support public communication on policy initiatives, and deliverables/milestones.

As outlined above for each policy initiative.

MILESTONES AND PAYMENTS

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. Performance reporting will be due by 31 March and 30 September each year (if six monthly reporting in any given year) or by 30 September each year (if annual reporting in any given year) until the cessation of this Agreement or the final milestone is processed. As part of the performance reporting, Queensland will provide evidence of what has been delivered in the reporting period. Payments will be processed once performance reports have been assessed and accepted.

2024-25

NOTE: use of the term 'industry' in the tables below includes relevant Jobs and Skills Councils.

Policy initiative	**Milestone**	**Evidence**	**Payment Value up to (Commonwealth funded)**
Queensland TAFE Centre of Excellence – Health Care and Support	Milestone 1: 30 July 2024 Initial payment on agreement of implementation plan	Implementation plan agreed with the Commonwealth	$1.50 million
	Milestone 2: 31 December 2024 Commonwealth acceptance that the TCE HCS has been successfully established demonstrated by: • establishment of governance to oversee the TCE HCS activity with representation from TAFE Queensland, the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training, Queensland Health, the university sector and other relevant industry and government organisations • establishment of a strategic partnership strategy and network, which includes representation from government, industry, unions, universities, employers, First Nations communities, health and training	Report (or other appropriate document) signed by Queensland senior officials with responsibility for skills (DDG level) that outlines key activities of the TCE HCS in the reporting period, that: • outlines initial and future proposed activity for the TCE HCS Steering Committee • attaches Terms of Reference for the TCE HCS Steering Committee, cleared by key stakeholders • attaches an initial Partnership Strategy that includes initial stakeholder consultation and engagement, and evidence of pre-existing or emerging partnerships (including engagement with employers, unions, universities and Jobs and Skills Councils) • attaches an initial workplan of activity of the TCE HCS Steering Committee, and relevant Sub-	$1.50 million

	organisations (not an exhaustive list) to support the delivery of project outcomes • early engagement with relevant Jobs and Skills Councils to mitigate duplication, identify partnership opportunities and ensure shared learnings into the future • identification and establishment of relevant sub-committees and working groups to progress activities/actions, and • commencement of work on an applied research framework and identify initial priorities for exploration in consultation with stakeholders.	Committees where applicable, until 30 June 2026 (end of year 2), and • attaches an initial applied research framework that identifies initial priorities for exploration.	
	Milestone 3: 30 June 2025 Commonwealth acceptance of the TCE HCS research and engagement strategy for the delivery of innovative training practice and for the delivery of culturally appropriate and safe training options, that includes: • establishment of the Innovative Training Practices Sub-Committee and the Cultural Practices Sub-Committee to drive activity and strategic stakeholder engagement in line with the Partnership Strategy • identification of an approach for the two Sub-Committees to deliver initial draft options for new delivery modes, including opportunities for new technology to support training across communities • commencement of mapping the job role for a new Registered Nurse equivalent	Research strategy (or other appropriate document) signed by Queensland senior officials with responsibility for skills that outlines key activities of the Innovative Training Practices Sub-Committee and the Cultural Practices Sub-Committee including: • governance of the work through the establishment of the Innovative Training Practices Sub-Committee and the Cultural Practices Sub-Committee under the remit of the TCE HCS Steering Committee • initial and future proposed activity outline of the two Sub-Committees, and • stakeholder engagement activities.	$2.50 million

	apprenticeship for aged care in consultation with stakeholders, and • commencement of quantitative and qualitative research on culturally appropriate and safe training options.		

2025-26

Policy initiative	**Milestone**	**Evidence**	**Payment Value up to (Commonwealth funded)**
Queensland TAFE Centre of Excellence – Health Care and Support	Milestone 4: 30 June 2026 Commonwealth acceptance of ongoing strategic engagement using existing and new channels where appropriate to build and expand partnerships, identify emerging opportunities and issues, progress deliverables, and proactively share learnings, as demonstrated by: • delivery on the Partnership Strategy including work with the strategic partnership network through effective communication channels such as communication portal, webinars, workshops, events, meetings and site visits (not an exhaustive list), on potential and developing projects • identify opportunities to develop a national TAFE community of practice to share findings and products relating to the health care and support sector, and • commencement of higher level apprenticeship proof of concept for consultation.	Progress report (or other appropriate document) signed by Queensland senior officials with responsibility for skills that: • details progress against agreed deliverables • details stakeholder engagement in line with the Partnership Strategy, including collaboration with the Australian Government Department of Health • identifies potential projects as raised by strategic partners and stakeholders • outlines existing and new opportunities to share findings and products • attaches a workplan of activity of the TCE HCS Steering Committee, and relevant Sub-Committees where applicable, until 30 June 2027 (end of year 3).	$1.50 million

	Milestone 5: 30 June 2026 Commonwealth acceptance of progress on the development of options for enhanced delivery modes, innovative curriculum and training products, and higher level apprenticeship/s, as demonstrated by identification of options for enhanced delivery modes based on research, consultation conducted and input from the strategic partnership network and informed by: • specific projects and pilots identified to road test enhanced delivery modes and products, including micro-credentials, for specific critical skills shortages in the health sector where existing workforce could be upskilled to deliver by 30 June 2027, and • delivery of place-based responses to local workforce issues and applied research projects.	Report (or other appropriate document), as per above, signed by Queensland senior officials with responsibility for skills that details: • agreed specific projects and pilots to road test enhanced delivery modes and products, • timelines for place-based projects, and • proof of concept for a higher level health and care pathways.	$2.50 million

2026-27

Policy initiative	**Milestone**	**Evidence**	**Payment Value up to (Commonwealth funded)**
Queensland TAFE Centre of Excellence – Health Care and Support	Milestone 6: 30 June 2027 Commonwealth acceptance of ongoing strategic engagement using existing and new channels where appropriate to build and expand partnerships, identify emerging opportunities and issues, progress deliverables, and proactively share learnings, as demonstrated by: • delivery on the Partnership Strategy including work with the strategic partnership network through effective communication channels	Report (or other appropriate document) signed by Queensland senior officials with responsibility for skills that: • details progress against agreed deliverables • details stakeholder engagement in line with the Partnership Strategy • identifies potential projects as raised by strategic partners and stakeholders	$1.00 million

	such as communication portal, webinars, workshops, events, meetings and site visits (not an exhaustive list), on potential and developing projects • development, where applicable, of a national TAFE community of practice to share findings and products relating to the health care and support sector, and • explore and pilot opportunities to offer secondment or applied research placement on specific projects across the National TAFE Network.	• outlines existing and new opportunities to share findings and products • attaches a workplan of activity of the TCE HCS Steering Committee, and relevant Sub-Committees where applicable, until 30 June 2028 • attaches pilot project documentation to release and commence the pilot of secondment or applied research placement, as agreed by the TCE HCS Steering Committee.	

	Milestone 7: 30 June 2027
	Commonwealth acceptance that Queensland has:
	• established sound parameters to meet industry needs for the piloting of enhanced delivery modes and training products within the context of the health care and support sector project, and
	• released enhanced delivery modes including culturally appropriate and safe training, and new training products
	• progressed higher level apprenticeship/s.
		Pilot project documentation to release and commence the pilots as agreed by the TCE HCS Steering Committee, including:
		• parameters for the pilot approach established, as agreed by the TCE HCS Steering Committee, including:
		  • targets, timeframes and objectives
		  • approach for release of pilot – targeted stakeholders, broader approach (local or state)
		  • resources and instructions for pilot and mechanisms for feedback, and
		  • risk mitigation strategies and actions to resolve challenges and issues arising during pilot phase
		• report commencement following pilot delivery, and
			$1.00 million

		• continued development of higher level apprenticeship/s following proof of concept agreement.	

2027-28

Policy initiative	Milestone	Evidence	Payment Value up to (Commonwealth funded)
Queensland TAFE Centre of Excellence – Health Care and Support	Milestone 8: 30 June 2028 Commonwealth acceptance of ongoing strategic engagement using existing and new channels where appropriate to build and expand partnerships, identify emerging opportunities and issues, progress deliverables, and proactively share learnings, as demonstrated by: • delivery on the Partnership Strategy including work with the strategic partnership network through effective communication channels such as communication portal, webinars, workshops, events, meetings and site visits (not an exhaustive list), on potential and developing projects • development, where applicable, of a national TAFE community of practice to further share findings and products relating to the health care and support sector, and • initiating exploration of options to ensure ongoing legacy from inputs, outputs and outcomes from the TCE HCS Steering Committee.	Report (or other appropriate document) signed by Queensland senior officials with responsibility for skills that: • details progress against agreed deliverables • details stakeholder engagement in line with the Partnership Strategy • identifies potential projects as raised by strategic partners and stakeholders • outlines existing and new opportunities to share findings and products, and • attaches a workplan of activity of the TCE HCS Steering Committee, and relevant Sub-Committees where applicable, until 31 December 2028.	$1.00 million
	Milestone 9: 30 June 2028 Commonwealth acceptance of the commencement of pilots of enhanced delivery modes, new training	Pilot project documentation to commence the pilots, as agreed by the TCE HCS Steering Committee.	$1.00 million

	products and release of higher level apprenticeship/s developed through the TCE HCS, as demonstrated by: • implementing an agreed approach and conducting pilots • commencing an evaluation through quantitative data analysis of outcomes and qualitative analysis of student and sector impact/uptake • identifying and documenting best-practice that can potentially be implemented through the National TAFE Network and by local communities, and • identifying and documenting how applied research capability might be embedded in TAFE Queensland and through the National TAFE Network.		

2028-29

Policy initiative	**Milestone**	**Evidence**	**Payment Value up to (Commonwealth funded)**
Queensland TAFE Centre of Excellence – Health Care and Support	Milestone 10: 31 December 2028 Commonwealth acceptance of the final report detailing the embedded strategic engagement to build and expand partnerships, identify emerging opportunities and issues, progress deliverables, proactively share learnings, and to support ongoing legacy from the TCE HCS, as demonstrated by: • delivery on the Partnership Strategy including work with the strategic partnership network through effective communication channels such as communication portal, webinars,	Report (or other appropriate document) signed by Queensland senior officials with responsibility for skills that: • details outcomes against agreed deliverables • details stakeholder engagement in line with the Partnership Strategy • outlines existing and new opportunities to share findings and products • details approaches to ensure ongoing legacy from inputs, outputs and outcomes from the TCE HCS.	$1.00 million

	workshops, events, meetings and site visits (not an exhaustive list), on potential and developing projects • development, where applicable, of a national TAFE community of practice to further share findings and products relating to the health care and support sector, and • implementation of strategies to embed ongoing capability beyond the life of the National Skills Agreement.		
	Milestone 11: 30 December 2028 Commonwealth acceptance of the final pilot evaluation report detailing findings, outcomes and recommendations from the pilots.	Final pilot evaluation report detailing findings, outcomes and recommendations.	$0.50 million

The Parties have confirmed their commitment to this schedule as follows:

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

The Honourable Brendan O'Connor MP

Minister for Skills and Training

July 15, 2024

Signed *for and on behalf of the State of Queensland by*

The Honourable Lance McCallum MP

Minister for Employment and Small Business, and Minister for Training and Skills Development

15 JUL 2024