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

PRELIMINARIES

1. This implementation 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. 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, Queensland will acknowledge the Commonwealth's contribution with the following statement: Measures to Strengthen the VET Workforce is a joint initiative between the Australian Government and Queensland Government.

REPORTING AND PAYMENTS

Reporting

5. 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.
6. Queensland will provide to the Commonwealth a traffic light status and activity summary on all policy initiatives.
7. The Commonwealth will provide templates for the purposes of reporting.

Payments

8. The Commonwealth will make payment subject to performance reporting demonstrating the relevant milestone has been met.
9. 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.
10. Where a payment is due at a reporting period (31 March and/or 30 September), Queensland 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.
11. Under A92 of the NSA, if a State is unable to expend any Commonwealth funding provided for policy initiative milestone payments, the Commonwealth may reduce a future payment by an amount equivalent to the unspent funds.

MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN THE VET WORKFORCE (Clause A124 to A129 of the NSA)

1) Outline activities that will support, grow and retain a quality VET workforce (including relationship to the VET Workforce Blueprint):

NextGen Trainers and Assessors – Preparing the next generation of Queensland skilled VET professionals

Queensland is committed to promoting a high-quality VET workforce as a critical enabler of economic growth and participation. A range of initiatives already exist to support quality training delivery and the capability of the Queensland VET workforce, which provide a solid foundation for further growth and innovation. Existing initiatives include:

- Subsidised TAE – the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE) is a fee-free program under the Fee-Free TAFE initiative.
- SAS framework – the Queensland Skills Assure Supplier (SAS) framework implements policies, systems and standards to quality assure the delivery of government funded training. The framework is linked to both national and Queensland-specific quality standards, providing a higher level of quality assurance from SAS delivery.
- Pilot programs – including: a Queensland Future Skills Partnership Tomorrows Trainers Project that is piloting strategies to support the future supply of tertiary educators for Queensland's Mining and Mining Equipment, Technology and Services (METS) sectors; and a VET Trainers and Assessor funded Traineeship Pilot specific to the electrical industry testing a traineeship pathway to engage students in the TAE.

Queensland has undertaken key stakeholder consultations to test thinking and to determine where to best focus efforts to strengthen the capacity and capability of the VET workforce. The consultations confirmed challenges and priorities consistent with those identified in the development of the national VET Workforce Blueprint and the findings from the Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) VET Workforce Study.

In line with the national VET Workforce Blueprint, Queensland will implement new and expanded initiatives to support engagement with VET workforce qualifications and skills development, improve quality training delivery to students, enhance the capability of RTOs to deliver to diverse learner cohorts, and promote a national approach to improvements.

Four core principles

Queensland's approach to strengthening the VET Workforce is based on four core principles in line with key contact points with VET trainers and assessors throughout their engagement with the sector (VET workforce maturity spectrum).

- Focus on under-represented cohorts and industries experiencing most challenges: initiatives will focus on industries with high demand for trainers and assessors and include considered actions to increase VET workforce diversity. First Nations Training and Education (TAE) students will also receive targeted support under the Closing the Gap policy initiative to support their engagement with the TAE and participation in the VET workforce.
- Activities to support quality delivery along the entire workforce maturation spectrum: the approach to activities is scalable and acknowledges that trainers and assessors need different things at different times of their VET workforce journey. Initiatives will be based on evidence-based interventions aligned with stakeholder needs and the national VET Workforce Blueprint.
- Data driven and evidence-based information for decision making: Queensland acknowledges national foundational actions underway that focus on improved availability of robust VET workforce data and is committed to collaborative action that supports the development of these actions. Queensland

research, evaluation and improvements to data will ensure our targeted interventions under this specific policy initiative are responsive and support long-term, broad scale benefit.

- Embedding best practice for the long term: dissemination of best practice and knowledge, co-designed initiatives, supporting RTOs understanding of their workforce and strong program evaluation will create a legacy of improvements to the quality of training delivery and improved workforce sustainability.

Three focus areas for action

Queensland's approach can be clearly mapped to the VET Workforce Blueprint actions across the VET workforce maturity spectrum. Queensland's approach also leverages opportunities under the 2025 Standards for RTOs. Actions will support the development of the VET workforce with a focus on Queensland's public and private training providers across the state.

Attraction and awareness – supporting TAE engagement.

Objective - initiatives that attract and support the next generation of VET trainers and assessors in Queensland.

Queensland will introduce a TAE support package made up of three core components (outlined below) to increase the availability of VET trainers and assessors and reduce non-completions. Complementary to any potential national promotional actions, activities will be underpinned by a Queensland VET careers promotional campaign designed to increase esteem and promote engagement with VET workforce pathways.

- **Learning hub**
  - A learning hub will be established (virtual and satellite in Cairns) to raise awareness of opportunities, strategically engage priority cohorts, and provide referral services for TAE students. The learning hub will provide information services to connect TAE students with available supports and services.
  - Through the learning hub, prospective TAE students and employer training providers will be able to access information and guidance about learning supports and pathways.
    - Aligns with Blueprint action 4
- **TAE support package – for students**
  - New supported learning pathways for individuals with relevant levels of experience and qualification to transition to VET careers, with targeted support for cohorts and industries where there is particular need (e.g. scholarships to students to support them while they are training, wrap-around support).
  - TAE training will be subsidised for students through this package, including through traineeships pathways, and will include higher-level trainer/assessor qualifications.
  - The new TAE support package for students is anticipated to cover approximately 50 participants and final numbers will be flexible dependent on demand, cohort needs, the industry sector and regional location.
  - Under the new student support package, work placement support, post-training employment options, and access to additional guidance and learning resources will be available through the learning hub. The type of support, learning support and guidance will be student centric and will be determined based on the individual needs of the student at time of enrolment and their progression through training.
    - Aligns with Blueprint actions 9, 10, 11, 12
- **TAE support package – for RTO employers**
  - Traineeship pathways will be available to Queensland RTOs, with subsidised TAE training delivered by Queensland's public providers.

- The new traineeship pathway is anticipated to be available for approximately 50 participants and final numbers will be flexible dependent on demand, cohort needs, the industry sector and regional location.
- Specific regional and industry sectors, and priority cohorts will be targeted for traineeship pathways.
- For target regions, industries and cohorts, funding will be available to RTO employers to assist with on-the-job and qualification completion support, including mentoring and supervision.
- Additional guidance and learning resources will be available through the learning hub.
    - Aligns with Blueprint actions **9, 10**, 11, 14.

Career development and progression - supporting professional development

Objective - drive quality improvement and professional connectivity.

Queensland's TAE package will enhance the capability of trainers and assessors to deliver quality training through support for training delivery skills development, opportunities to learn and practice new skills and the sharing of innovative practice. Activities will promote system-based responses that support RTOs to deliver on requirements under the 2025 *Standards for RTOs*.

- **Continuous Professional Development (CPD) platform** - a new platform to promote CPD opportunities and share best practice. The platform will be an online resource library to house and/or link relevant micro-credentials, short courses and resources that support VET workforce capability building and navigation to helpful information.
    - Aligns with Blueprint actions 9, 11 and 12.
- **CPD resources** – development of approximately 10-15 micro-credentials, short courses and resources identified as needed in consultation with training providers, TAE students, and trainers and assessors, and to fill identified gaps, to be housed on the CPD platform, noting the final amount of resources that will be supported will be dependent on the needs of the training providers, TAE students and existing trainers and assessors. Key training delivery skills needs will be identified, and generic training delivery skills prioritised to enhance training and assessment services to diverse cohorts. The scope includes the identification of existing content and CPD resources, development of new content, and the purchase of existing resources where required to fill identified skills needs gaps. CPD resources include opportunities and actions that support professional collaboration.
    - Aligns with Blueprint actions 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14.

Sustainability and retention - strengthening the workforce pipeline

Objective - strengthen the workforce pipeline by exploring initiatives that improve retention and maximise workforce utilisation.

Queensland will explore innovative and alternative approaches to workforce arrangements and identify retention initiatives. Actions will complement workforce attraction activities to deliver a continuum of initiatives that increase VET workforce participation.

- **Industry led solutions** – partner with industry to pilot innovative and alternative approaches to developing the VET workforce needed in regional communities and for specific industry sectors. Pilots will support place-based and targeted industry training workforce needs and will draw on existing relationships between RTOs, within RTOs and between industry and RTOs. Pilots may include building the capability of local workforces to undertake trainer and/or assessor training while remaining embedded in industry, resulting in reciprocal benefit. It is anticipated that approximately five pilot projects will be undertaken with flexibility in final numbers being dependent on industry and regional needs. The program will leverage learnings from existing pilots such as the Queensland Future Skills Partnership 'Tomorrow's Trainers Project', and pilots will be developed in consultation with industry and training providers to address industry and/or local needs of regional areas.

    - Aligns with Blueprint actions 5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14.
- **The retention suite –** develop a toolkit of retention activities for adoption by RTOs. Actions will promote transformational and/or structural change through increased understanding of options, opportunities and best practice for VET workforce retention. The focus is opportunities and succession planning, with the scope including RTO piloting of identified options (case study approach), and the development and testing of a 'how to mentor' program model.
    - Aligns with Blueprint actions 5, 9, **10.**

2) Engagement arrangements, including relevant partnerships with First Nations peoples:

Key stakeholders including industry, employers and RTOs will be engaged in initiatives either directly or indirectly. Initiatives will build on existing and develop new arrangements with stakeholders to ensure both additionality and to promote and implement initial to long-term activities. Initiative design will ensure diverse stakeholders / cohorts are appropriately represented and eligible in design and participation. This includes First Nations people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, veterans, women and mature-aged workers.

Implementation planning for initiatives will leverage Queensland's SAS framework, to provide quality assurance for delivery of government funded training across Queensland's private and public VET sector.

Existing networks and relationships including Queensland's Industry Skills and Jobs Advisors, Industry Workforce Advisors and Queensland's SAS network, will be accessed to ensure ongoing relevance, alignment of activities to industries with high-demand and for ongoing identification of critical trainer and assessor training delivery skills needs.

Feedback from stakeholders has identified a specific need to support the development of 'generic training delivery skills', which will be a priority under this package. Trainers and assessors will be supported to develop strategies to assist diverse learners, including First Nations people. This will include the availability of cultural awareness skills development opportunities under the Closing the Gap policy initiative.

Activities under Queensland's VET Workforce package will be complemented by the breadth of Closing the Gap initiatives, including targeted actions to support the development of the First Nations trainer workforce in response to action 6 of the VET Workforce Blueprint. Additionally, Queensland's foundation skills initiative will simultaneously support the sustainability of the foundation skills VET workforce in response to action 7 of the VET Workforce Blueprint.

Appropriate levels of flexibility will be applied to ensure responsiveness as the initiatives evolve and scale (where applicable). The scalable nature of activities, use of evidence-based policy making (informed by what is already working), co-design of initiatives and embedded best practice dissemination across the package provides for a legacy of longer-term outcomes and benefits.

Commonwealth Investment ($)	State Investment ($)	Planned Start Date	Planned End Date
$13,980,000	$13,980,000	30 September 2025	31 December 2028

Measures to strengthen the VET workforce - approach to matched funding arrangements (clause A126 refers) – to be reconciled over the life of the NSA.

Queensland's approach to meet matched funding arrangements is through investment in new and expanded innovative activities that deliver on the VET Workforce Blueprint across the three focus areas as detailed below.

Queensland's package progresses multiple VET Workforce Blueprint opportunities and actions, predominantly the following:

- Action 4 – this action articulates the need for coordinated and sequenced promotion. Complementary to national actions and activities of Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs), Queensland's attraction and awareness focus area will challenge VET workforce career perceptions, and also target the recruitment of diverse cohorts into the sector.
- Action 9 – this Blueprint action calls for investment in innovative VET workforce pathways. Initiatives under Queensland's attraction and awareness focus area will drive further exploration of traineeships for engagement with the TAE, and will leverage industry engagement to deliver new pathway programs.
- Action 10 – Queensland's package holistically, is designed to strengthen attraction and retention of the VET workforce consistent with this Blueprint action. More specifically, the attraction and awareness and sustainability and retention focus areas aim to drive innovation through exploration of new and expanded pathways and the identification of opportunities that promote workforce capacity. In addition, it is intended that career development and progression activities may also support retention through a supportive environment and uplift in workforce capability.
- Action 11 – Queensland's career development and progression initiatives focus on the identification and development of training delivery skills priorities for trainers and assessors. The key emphasis is on skills that support delivery to diverse cohorts and inclusive practices, consistent with Blueprint action 11 and opportunity 6.

Matched funding	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total
Commonwealth contribution	-	4,190,000	5,590,000	2,800,000	1,400,000	13,980,000
Queensland contribution	-	4,400,000	6,080,000	2,550,000	950,000	13,980,000
Total	-	8,590,000	11,670,000	5,350,000	2,350,000	27,960,000

Details of Qld matched funding	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total
Attraction and awareness	-	2,500,000	3,080,000	1,100,000	200,000	6,880,000
Career development and progression	-	1,000,000	1,500,000	500,000	-	3,000,000
Sustainability and retention	-	700,000	1,300,000	750,000	350,000	3,100,000
Evaluation	-	200,000	200,000	200,000	400,000	1,000,000
Total Queensland contribution	-	4,400,00	6,080,000	2,550,000	950,000	13,980,000

The Queensland Government will provide details of its matched funding contributions at the end of each financial year, commencing 1 July 2025 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.

Performance Indicators

Queensland will leverage its existing contract management arrangements to ensure the effective delivery of initiatives and ongoing oversight of actions.

Focus area 1: Attraction and awareness

1. Performance indicator: New entrant trainer/assessor outcomes (including by priority cohort).
    - Description: Tracks commencements, progression and completions of trainers/assessors who commence in the programs under this package.

- Data source: Queensland program level data (primary data collection).

Focus area 2: Career development and progression

1. Performance indicator: Website traffic and performance metrics.
   - Description: Measures the number of visitors to the CPD platform and the pathways used to additional information.
   - Data source: Inbuilt platform analytics.
2. Performance indicator: Increased trainer and assessor confidence in delivering training and assessment services (improved skills for the job).
   - Description: Measures attitudes of trainers and assessors in their ability to support diverse cohorts.
   - Data source: Targeted online survey.

Focus area 3: Sustainability and retention

1. Performance indicator: Use of flexible workforce practices.
   - Description: Number of mutually beneficial approaches to workforce flexibility implemented (post initiative implementation).
   - Data source: Program/initiative reporting.

Evaluation arrangements

Interim evaluations

Queensland will implement robust evaluation and monitoring arrangements with program partners that build on existing comprehensive monitoring of the effectiveness of training delivery holistically. Continuous evaluation and adaptation of programs and interventions based on ongoing feedback from partners and stakeholders will ensure the effectiveness of the package and ongoing alignment with industry workforce patterns.

Annual performance reports against agreed performance indicators will be supplemented with additional data whenever applicable and available until the cessation of this implementation plan. It is expected that this will include the following measures:

Quantitative measures	Qualitative measures
• Number of commencements in trainer/assessor related courses delivered under the package including detail of student location and priority cohorts. • Number of completions and non-completions. • Website traffic and performance metrics.	• Tracking of TAE participants for longitudinal analysis through Queensland student outcomes surveys. • Student and employer satisfaction levels with delivery of the programs. • Best practice information and retention toolkit dissemination.

Overarching evaluation Framework

Funding from this package and other Queensland Specific Policy Initiatives (SPI) will also contribute to a broader evaluation of all Bilateral Implementation Plans under the NSA. This overarching evaluation will engage an evaluator to assess the initiative's effectiveness, efficiency, and appropriateness holistically, ensuring insights inform continuous improvements and best practice across the national VET landscape.

By embedding a state-wide assessment framework, a robust evidence base will be enabled that acknowledges the interconnectivity of the SPIs and which supports evidence-based policy decisions and program refinements into the future. The framework will align longer-term outcomes with the NSA outcomes framework where practicable.

Final evaluation (December 2028)

An independent evaluator engaged for the overarching evaluation for the Queensland Specific Policy Initiatives as well will be tasked with designing and setting the specific milestones and timeframes to complete a comprehensive review to assess the overall impact, sustainability, and scalability of the SPIs.

In relation to the VET workforce evaluation which will be part of the overarching evaluation, it is intended the evaluation framework will use a mixed method approach to examine:

- lessons learned throughout implementation of the programs and initiatives
- any adjustments to the programs and initiatives
- results and comparison across like-programs, priority cohorts and student locations
- legacy of implementation and scalability of initiatives into the future.

Dissemination of learnings

Sharing of best practice is an embedded component of the VET Workforce package to maximise impact and understanding. Multiple channels will be leveraged to disseminate learnings including:

- online presence
- existing networks, partnerships and relationships including with SAS providers across the state
- TAFE networks
- annual reports under the NSA
- ongoing promotions of VET pathways and careers.

MILESTONES AND PAYMENTS – MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN THE VET WORKFORCE

Milestone	Evidence	Payment Value Up To (Commonwealth funded)	Commonwealth reporting period
Milestone 1: Initial payment on agreement of bilateral implementation plan	Bilateral implementation plan (BIP) agreed with the Commonwealth.	$1,390,000	N/A
Milestone 2: Commonwealth acceptance that Queensland has operated measures to support the VET workforce to 31 March 2026 including: • Attraction and retention • Career development and progression • Sustainability and retention.	Performance report signed by a Queensland senior official with responsibility for skills that outlines key progress of the VET Workforce package in the reporting period (to 31 March 2026) and includes or attaches: • update on progress of activities against agreed performance indicators • anticipated delivery dates and sequencing • key learnings, and • any completed evaluations.	$2,800,000	31 March 2026
Milestone 3: Commonwealth acceptance that Queensland has operated measures to support the VET workforce to 31 March 2027, including: • Attraction and retention • Career development and progression • Sustainability and retention.	Performance report signed by a Queensland senior official with responsibility for skills that outlines key progress of the VET Workforce package in the reporting period (to 31 March 2027) and includes or attaches: • update on progress of activities against agreed performance indicators • anticipated delivery dates and sequencing • key learnings, and • any completed evaluations.	$5,590,000	31 March 2027
Milestone 4: Commonwealth acceptance that Queensland has operated measures to support the VET workforce to 31 March 2028, , including: • Attraction and retention • Career development and progression • Sustainability and retention.	Performance report signed by a Queensland senior official with responsibility for skills that outlines key progress of the VET Workforce package in the reporting period (to 31 March 2028) and includes or attaches: • update on progress of activities against agreed performance indicators • anticipated delivery dates and sequencing • key learnings, and • any completed evaluations.	$2,800,000	31 March 2028
Milestone 5: Commonwealth acceptance of a final evaluation report and Commonwealth acceptance that Queensland has operated	Performance report signed by a Queensland senior official with responsibility for skills that outlines key progress of the VET Workforce package in the reporting period (to 30 September 2028) and includes or attaches:	$1,400,000	30 September 2028

measures to support the VET workforce to 30 September 2028, including a final evaluation report of: • Attraction and retention • Career development and progression • Sustainability and retention.	• final evaluation report • final reporting on activities against agreed performance indicators • anticipated delivery dates and sequencing • key learnings • details of final evaluation outcomes and any/other completed evaluations, and • future steps to continue embedding learnings		
	Total	**$13,980,000**	

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
10 / 11 / 2025

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

The Honourable Ros Bates MP
Minister for Finance, Trade, Employment and Training
18 / 9 / 2025