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

PRELIMINARIES

1. This implementation plan is made between the Commonwealth of Australia (Commonwealth) and South Australia 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, South Australia will acknowledge the Commonwealth's contribution with the following statement: NSA Closing the Gap is a joint initiative between the Australian Government and South Australian Government.

REPORTING AND PAYMENTS

Reporting

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

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

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

Payments

1. The Commonwealth will make payment subject to performance reporting demonstrating the relevant milestone has been met.

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

3. Where a payment is due at a reporting period (31 March and/or 30 September), South Australia 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.

4. 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.

CLOSING THE GAP (Clause A93 to A103 of the NSA)

1) Approach to partnering with First Nations communities and organisations (clause A101 refers). This refers to Closing the Gap Priority Reform 1: Formal partnerships and shared decision making.

The South Australian Government through Skills SA has partnered with South Australian Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Network (SAACCON), South Australian Aboriginal Education and Training Consultative Council (SAAETCC) and South Australia's three ACC RTOs: Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia (AHCSA), Tauondi Aboriginal College, and Nunkuwarrin Yunti, to develop this NSA Closing the Gap implementation plan.

Aboriginal Partnership Committee
The South Australian Government, through Skills SA within the Department of State Development, will establish an Aboriginal Partnership Committee by March 2026 to finalise the draft Aboriginal Adult Education and Training Strategy and develop the first three-year Action Plan (Strategic Action Plan) under the Strategy.

This Partnership Committee will be a formal partnership mechanism, aligned with the Strong Partnership Elements identified in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, including that:

- The Partnership Committee is accountable and representative
- The Partnership Committee is governed by a formal agreement
- Decision-making by the Partnership Committee is shared between government and Aboriginal people.

The Partnership Committee will be supported by a South Australian Government Secretariat, with SAAETCC providing additional secretariat support and advice to the Aboriginal members of the Partnership. The Partnership Committee will provide a sustained forum to drive Aboriginal community-led outcomes on Closing the Gap in the VET system.

Community of Practice
In parallel, SAAETCC will convene a Community of Practice (CoP) for ACC and FNO RTOs. The CoP will share expertise, advise on emerging training needs, support co-design of new initiatives, and align South Australian activity with national-level Aboriginal-led forums. The CoP will also interact with the Partnership Committee to help inform direction and provide advice where required.

Funding will support Secretariat services, participation costs for non-government Partnership Committee members and the convening of the CoP until the end of the NSA in December 2028.

Commonwealth Investment ($)	State Investment ($)	Planned Start Date	Planned End Date
$33,500	$33,500	November 2025	December 2028

2) Activities for expanding investment in the capability, sustainability, and growth of the Aboriginal Community Controlled (ACC) and First Nations owned (FNO) training sector (clause A102a refers), delivered in partnership with First Nations Peoples. This refers to Closing the Gap Priority Reform 2: Building the Community-Controlled sector.

Development and Sustainability Grants

To ensure the ongoing development, sustainability and growth of South Australia's three established ACC RTOs, development and sustainability grants will be provided to:

- Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia (AHCSA)
- Nunkuwarrin Yunti
- Tauondi Aboriginal College.

This proposed action has been developed in partnership between Skills SA, SAACCON, SAAETCC and the three established ACC RTOs.

This directly supports Priority Reform 2 by strengthening the capability and long-term sustainability of the ACC RTOs as training providers. The focus of funding is on building and maintaining the viability of the RTO operations, including but not limited to governance, compliance, workforce development and training delivery systems, to ensure each RTO can continue to deliver culturally relevant, high-quality vocational education and training to Aboriginal communities. Funding will be underpinned by defined milestones and acquittals.

AHCSA and Nunkuwarrin Yunti

Grant funding provided to AHCSA and Nunkuwarrin Yunti will be linked to milestones that respond to the outcomes of recently undertaken external reviews of their RTO operations. AHCSA and Nunkuwarrin Yunti initiated these reviews independent of government, which provide an independent evidence base on organisational capability and training delivery, and their recommendations will guide each RTO's internal Action Plan. Release of funding under this action will be staged against progress in implementing agreed review-based actions, ensuring alignment between investment and long-term sustainability of RTO operations.

AHCSA and Nunkuwarrin Yunti will develop and implement ACC RTO Action Plans, separate from the Strategic Action Plan of the Aboriginal Partnership Committee, informed by the external Human Services Skills Organisation (HSSO) Capability Analysis / Function review. The ACC RTO Action Plans will cover the duration of the NSA and will set out clear milestones for each year of the agreement. The ACC RTO Action Plans will be updated annually to reflect progress achieved and any changes in priority.

Funding will be released annually upon achievement of agreed milestones under the ACC RTO Action Plans. This will ensure alignment between investment and long-term organisational sustainability. Both AHCSA and Nunkuwarrin Yunti will retain discretion, in consultation with its Board, to prioritise the order in which actions are addressed, based on internal risk assessments and organisational capacity.

Tauondi

The 'Delivering for Community' initiative between the South Australian Government and Tauondi represents a strategic sustainability investment, designed to strengthen Tauondi's long-term capability, independence, and resilience as an ACC multi-sector RTO, rather than merely a program-based funding arrangement. This initiative commenced prior to the execution of the Implementation Plan and will extend to the conclusion of the National Skills Agreement (NSA) in December 2028.

Initiative milestones will reflect grant-supported activities, including uplifts to compliance, workforce development, and student support functions.

Annual reporting and the provision of audited financial statements to Skills SA are included within the initiative's grant terms.

Key objectives of 'Delivering for Community' include:

- *Engagement*
  Strengthen Tauondi's engagement with government and community partners to enhance visibility, collaboration and opportunities for commercial and funding growth. This includes active participation in agreed governance processes, transparent financial reporting, and ongoing discussions with Skills SA and other agencies to support a sustainable operating model.
- *Sustainable operating model*
  Support Tauondi's continued transition to a sustainable business model aligned with its Strategic Plan, focused on strengthening its three divisions (Training, Support, and Business). This includes activities to diversify revenue sources, expand service delivery models through technology, and broaden client reach across sectors and locations.
- *Training and support outcomes*
  Increase Tauondi's training and support delivery to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners and organisations, growing both enrolments and revenue from publicly subsidised and fee-for-service activities. Support the development of culturally safe learning environments, contextualised training content, and mentoring services that enhance student completion rates and Aboriginal workforce retention.
- *Planning, change management and business outcomes*
  Enhance Tauondi's organisational capability through strategic planning and operational improvements that strengthen its capacity to deliver structured cultural services, education, and training on a sustainable basis. This includes business development activities that position Tauondi as a recognised hub for culturally informed training and support services.
- *Social and foundational skills outcomes*
  Enhance social and community outcomes through a strong focus on foundation skills development, including literacy, numeracy, and digital literacy. These core skills are critical enablers of both individual empowerment and collective wellbeing. Strengthening foundation skills builds learner confidence, supports lifelong learning, and enables fuller participation in education, employment, and community life. This ensures that Tauondi's programs deliver social as well as economic impact, supporting stronger families, communities, and cultural continuity.

Since the commencement of the NSA and up to the end of the 2024-25 financial year, South Australia has made an initial investment of $1.9 million to Tauondi through the State's contribution under this policy initiative.

During this period, the grant has supported Tauondi's ongoing business and commercial development, delivering steady year-on-year growth. This growth is attributed to the strategic execution of Tauondi's sustainability plan which has led to significant reform in their training delivery, business diversification, and organisational strengthening across multiple sectors, which demonstrates the impact of Aboriginal Community-Controlled leadership. Key outcomes to date include:

- Increased student participation and course demand, supported by the delivery of Fee-Free First Nations places and the consolidation of Tauondi's course scope to strengthen delivery capability and capacity.
- Growth in revenue and diversification of income sources, including the establishment of new business ventures such as the Tauondi Driving School and Pathways Centre.
- Development of new strategic and business directions through the Tauondi Strong plan, outlining priorities for sustainability and growth in the coming years.
- Improved organisational stability and financial health, with early indicators of workforce regrowth and sustained improvements in Tauondi's operational position.

Community of Practice

In addition to the ACC RTO-specific development and sustainability grants set out above, further sector-wide initiatives will be designed and implemented through the Aboriginal Adult Education and Training Strategy and the Strategic Action Plan. These initiatives will be informed by advice from the CoP to ensure they reflect shared priorities across the sector, and drive investment in the ACC RTO and FNO RTO sector.

Commonwealth Investment ($)	State Investment ($)	Planned Start Date	Planned End Date
$6,525,000	$6,525,000	October 2025	December 2028

3) Approach for contributing to activities to grow the First Nations VET workforce and boost cultural competency of mainstream RTOs (refer clause A102b). This refers to Closing the Gap Priority Reform 3: Transforming government organisations.

Aboriginal Adult Education and Training Strategy and first three-year Action Plan
The Aboriginal Partnership Committee will finalise the draft Aboriginal Adult Education and Training Strategy and develop the first Strategic Action Plan.

The Strategic Action Plan will include specific measures aligned with Priority Reform 3: Transforming government organisations, together with measures associated with growing the First Nations VET workforce and boosting cultural competency across the broader training system. Measures may include:

- Strengthening student supports
- ACC RTO and First Nation Owned RTO workforce development and tailored professional learning for Aboriginal trainers and staff
- Strengthening career pathways into training and assessment roles for Aboriginal people
- Aboriginal-led programs to develop cultural competency and cultural safety training and accreditation processes

Commonwealth Investment ($)	State Investment ($)	Planned Start Date	Planned End Date
$2,147,500	$2,147,500	October 2025	December 2028

Closing the Gap - approach to matched funding arrangements (clauses A97 and A102 refers) – to be reconciled over the life of the NSA.

Details of matched funding	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total
South Australian Government contribution	$400,000	$1,500,000	$1,866,708	$2,122,298	$1,550,770	$1,266,224	$8,706,000
Commonwealth contribution	$0	$0	$1,975,000	$3,072,000	$2,502,000	$1,157,000	$8,706,000
Total contribution	$400,000	$1,500,000	$3,841,708	$5,194,298	$4,052,770	$2,423,224	$17,412,000

The South Australian 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 South Australian Government over the life of the project does not align with the Commonwealth contribution.

The expenditure for the initiatives detailed in this implementation plan reflects the following:

1. The South Australian Government will contribute $6.806 million in new funding to deliver the actions outlined in this implementation plan. This represents new investment under the NSA to support the delivery of Closing the Gap priorities in South Australia.
2. South Australia has also made a proactive investment in these priorities by providing $1.900 million in funding to Tauondi under the 'Delivering for Community' Initiative, which commenced on 1 January 2024.
3. The Australian Government will provide an equal contribution of $8.706 million, jointly funding these activities with the South Australian Government.

Performance Indicators

Priority Reform 1: Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision-Making

- Establishment of the Aboriginal Partnership Committee by March 2026.
- Completion and endorsement of the Aboriginal Adult Education and Training Strategy.
- Development of the first three-year Strategic Action Plan.
- Implementation of the first three-year Strategic Action Plan.

Priority Reform 2: Building the Aboriginal Community Controlled Sector

- AHCSA and Nunkuwarrin Yunti finalise ACC RTO Action Plans responding to external review recommendations.
- Progress against key milestones identified in the ACC RTO Action Plans, are verified through milestone reporting.
- Extension of Delivering for Community initiative grant for Tauondi until December 2028.
- Progress against key milestones identified in the Delivering for Community initiative grant are verified through milestone reporting.

Priority Reform 3: Transforming Government Organisations

- Performance indicators will be developed by the Aboriginal Partnership Committee, aligned with the yet to be developed three-year Strategic Action Plan under the Aboriginal Adult Education and Training Strategy.

Evaluation arrangements

Evaluation will be co-designed through the Aboriginal Partnership Committee to ensure alignment with Closing the Gap commitments, community priorities, and the objectives of the Implementation Plan. The evaluation will focus on both outcomes and processes, combining quantitative data with qualitative insights.

MILESTONES AND PAYMENTS – CLOSING THE GAP

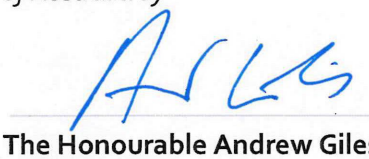
Milestone	Evidence	Payment Value Up To (Commonwealth funded)	Commonwealth reporting period
Milestone 1: Initial payment on agreement of bilateral implementation plan	Bilateral implementation plan agreed with Commonwealth	$870,600	N/A
Milestone 2: Commonwealth acceptance that South Australia has: • Established the Aboriginal Partnership Committee as referred to under Priority Reform 1 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. • Received finalised ACC RTO Action Plans from AHCSA and Nunkuwarrin Yunti responding to external review recommendations. • Confirmed the extension of Tauondi's grant agreement.	Report signed by relevant South Australian senior official that provides details of partnership arrangements, including: • The development and governance arrangements of the Aboriginal Partnership Committee. • ACC RTO Action Plans that are endorsed by each CEO and Skills SA. • Executed grant agreement extension between Skills SA and Tauondi.	$1,104,000	31 March 2026
Milestone 3: Commonwealth acceptance that South Australia has • Developed the first three-year Strategic Action Plan under the Aboriginal Adult Education and Training Strategy in partnership with the Aboriginal Partnership Committee that specifies deliverables to be achieved and associated timeframes. • Received confirmation of grant-supported activities.	Report signed by relevant South Australian senior official that provides an update on progress implementing NSA Closing the Gap measures and include details of or attaches: • The final Aboriginal Adult Education and Training Strategy. • The Strategic Action Plan, for Commonwealth approval. • Commitment to publication of the Strategic Action Plan, once approved. • Agreed performance indicators. • Development of an Evaluation Plan for the Strategic Action Plan.	$1,536,000	30 September 2026

	• Activity progress against agreed Development and Sustainability Grant deliverables. • Acquittal of grant funds provided, that demonstrate linkage between expenditure and agreed ACC RTO Action Plans (where relevant).		
Milestone 4: Commonwealth acceptance that South Australia has • Implemented measures in accordance with the first three-year Strategic Action Plan under the Aboriginal Adult Education and Training Strategy to March 2027. • Received confirmation of grant supported activities.	Report signed by relevant South Australian senior official that provides an update on progress implementing NSA Closing the Gap measures and includes details of or attaches: • Progress implementing Strategic Action Plan measures to March 2027. • Any new initiatives stemming from the Strategic Action Plan. • Activity progress against agreed Development and Sustainability Grant deliverables. • Acquittal of grant funds provided, that demonstrate linkage between expenditure and agreed ACC RTO Action Plans (where relevant).	$1,536,000	31 March 2027
Milestone 5: Commonwealth acceptance that South Australia has • Implemented measures in accordance with the first three-year Strategic Action Plan under the Aboriginal Adult Education and Training Strategy to September 2027. • Received confirmation of grant-supported activities.	Report signed by relevant South Australian senior official that provides an update on progress implementing NSA Closing the Gap measures and includes details of or attaches: • Progress implementing Strategic Action Plan measures to September 2027. • Any new initiatives stemming from the Action Plan. • Activity progress against agreed Development and Sustainability Grant deliverables. • Acquittal of grant funds provided, that demonstrate linkage between expenditure	$1,251,000	30 September 2027

	and agreed ACC RTO Action Plans (where relevant).		
Milestone 6: Commonwealth acceptance that South Australia has • Implemented measures in accordance with the first three-year Strategic Action Plan under the Aboriginal Adult Education and Training Strategy to March 2028. • Received confirmation of grant-supported activities.	Report signed by relevant South Australian senior official that provides an update on: • Progress implementing Strategic Action Plan measures to March 2028. • Any new initiatives stemming from the Strategic Action Plan. • Activity progress against agreed Development and Sustainability Grant deliverables. • Acquittal of grant funds provided, that demonstrate linkage between expenditure and agreed ACC RTO Action Plans (where relevant).	$1,251,000	31 March 2028
Milestone 7: Commonwealth acceptance that South Australia has • Implemented measures in accordance with the first three-year Strategic Action Plan under the Aboriginal Adult Education and Training Strategy to 31 December 2028. • Received confirmation of completion of grant-supported activities and final demonstration of RTO sustainability.	Report signed by relevant South Australian senior official that provides a finalised summary of implemented NSA Closing the Gap measures to December 2028 and includes details of: • A Final Evaluation Report. • Final reports from each ACC RTO, endorsed by their CEO/Board, summarising delivery of their ACC RTO Action Plan commitments and outcomes achieved. • Final acquittal of funds, including financial reporting if applicable.	$1,157,400	31 December 2028
	Total	**$8,706,000**	

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

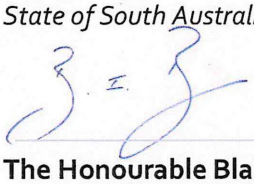
Signed *for and on behalf of the Commonwealth of Australia by*



The Honourable Andrew Giles MP
Minister for Skills and Training

20 / 11 / 2025

Signed *for and on behalf of the State of South Australia by*



The Honourable Blair Boyer MP
Minister for Education, Training and Skills

31 / 10 / 2025