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 South Australia (SA) 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, SA will acknowledge the Commonwealth's contribution with the following statement: This is a joint initiative between the Australian Government and the South Australian 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. SA 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, SA 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), SA 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):

SOUTH AUSTRALIA PREAMBLE

The implementation plan outlines six actions to strengthen the VET workforce in South Australia:

- **Action A**: develop a South Australian VET Workforce Supply and Development Framework to articulate the state's response to the VET Workforce Blueprint
- **Action B**: support excellence and development of the Adult Community Education (ACE) workforce, in support of the foundation skills policy initiative
- **Action C**: trial *industry professional to VET educator* pathway models
- **Action D**: pilot support for new (early career) educators to aid their professional transition, quality teaching and retention
- **Action E**: support experienced VET educator to complete higher level qualifications
- **Action F**: pilot a *practitioner as researcher* pathway to develop capability in evidence-based practice and educational leadership.

The expenditure for each action reflects the following:

1. South Australia's $5.06m investment focuses on purchasing training and professional development products, and small pilot and implementation rounds. This is new funding.
2. The Commonwealth's $5.06m investment supports additionality and amplification of initiatives, and the development, testing and implementation of a productivity offset framework.

This results in the following relative contributions:

	Commonwealth contribution	South Australian contribution	Total value
Action A	$750,000	$750,000	$1,500,000
Action B	$250,000	$150,000	$400,000
Action C	$1,220,000	$1,000,000	$2,220,000
Action D	$460,000	$650,000	$1,110,000
Action E	$1,860,000	$2,020,000	$3,880,000
Action F	$520,000	$490,000	$1,010,000
TOTAL	**$5,060,000**	**$5,060,000**	**$10,120,000**

(a) Activities that support the VET workforce (clause A128 refers).

ACTION A: **Develop a South Australian VET Workforce Supply and Development Framework**	The VET Workforce Blueprint identifies practical actions at the national, state and territory and local level to grow, develop and support a sustainable, high-quality VET workforce, including strategic initiatives to: • attract people to the workforce through strategies which support sustained growth • retain and develop the current workforce to address retention barriers, support career development and build capability • improve VET workforce data to inform future workforce and succession planning. The NSA VET Workforce policy initiative provides $10.12m matched funding. The South Australian VET workforce supply and development framework will articulate the state's responses to the blueprint. The framework will describe the state's VET workforce profile and priority state actions to address local workforce supply and development opportunities for 2024-28, aligned to the blueprint. The framework will include a focus on workforce supply and workforce development of educators through Supporting Educator Excellence and Development (SEED), and test delivery models and partnership approaches that support educators through their career including: • Preparing to train (entry) • Early career educators (onboarding) • Experienced educators (upskilling) • Lead or Expert educators (skills deepening and specialisation). This will include a dedicated First Nations workforce approach, which will be co-designed with the South Australian Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations' Network (SAACCON). This will align with the South Australian Aboriginal Adult Education Strategy in development, and local Closing the Gap measures. **Alignment to VET Workforce Blueprint:** • Opportunity 1: Building a better understanding of the VET workforce • Action 6: Localised and bespoke First Nations strategies.
Objective	To develop a comprehensive framework for South Australia that describes the local context and priority actions for VET workforce issues such as attraction, retention, career development and succession planning, to guide the state's response to the blueprint.
Delivery method	The framework will be developed by Skills SA in consultation with key stakeholders, including the South Australian Skills Commission (SASC), TAFE SA, the Industry Training Provider Association (ITPA), the Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia (ITECA), unions and RTOs delivering subsidised training in South Australia. The framework will be published on the Skills SA website, along with annual evaluation reports and case studies. The framework will be refined, and initiatives scaled up based on the outcomes of trials, evaluation and the implementation of the VET Workforce

	Blueprint. An external, independent evaluator will be engaged, this is further detailed under the 'evaluation' section. South Australia has workforce approaches supporting its teaching workforce that present opportunities for alignment and application for the VET sector teaching workforce.
Expected reach and additionality	The framework will align with, and respond to, the VET Workforce Blueprint and include actions such as: • Trialling supported pathways models for industry professionals who are interested in VET teaching, in partnership with RTOs seeking staff and employers. This will include piloting a targeted regional and First Nations pathway (see Action C). • Piloting supports for new (early career) VET educators to aid their professional transition, quality teaching and retention. This will include developing an induction program and mentoring capability and capacity (see Action D). • Supporting experienced VET educators to access higher level qualifications through a structured upskilling program. This will include broadening the qualifications educators can deliver, including in areas of skill shortage (see Action E). • Trialling an approach to develop practitioners as researchers and facilitate the development and dissemination of evidence-based practice guidance and resources (see Action F). Actions will be delivered on the principles of nurturing educator collegiality and shared reflective practice to maximise the benefits of investment. Further actions will be identified to progress other priorities in the Blueprint (including shared Commonwealth and state actions) and in consultation with RTOs. This includes activities to support the First Nations VET workforce and support Closing the Gap. Actions will be supported in South Australia by existing investment in the VET system such as: • Subsidised training in Training and Education (TAE) qualifications and skill sets, and other training packages, and fee free places awarded from 2023. • Equipment and Capital Grants to support state-of-the-art training facilities, contemporary infrastructure and technology and industry-relevant equipment aligned with areas of skill demand. • Skill Shortage Solutions to develop innovative, practical and industry-informed models for addressing current and emerging skills shortage areas. Models are driven by partnerships and are highly collaborative. South Australia notes that TAE-qualified workers are an identified skill shortage occupation in the Australian Government's 2023 Skills Priority List. • Course development grants to support the development or redesign and test short courses and training materials and learning resources for an existing course that is not available in South Australia. • Professional development for educators and Learner Support Service (LSS) case managers to build capability in supporting inclusive education environments and practices that help all students to succeed in training.

Amount of additional investment - Commonwealth	Amount of additional investment – State*	Planned start date	Planned end date
$750,000	$750,000	Launch of framework on 30 September 2025	31 December 2028

ACTION B: Support excellence and development of the Adult Community Education (ACE) workforce	**SEED: Supporting (ACE) educator excellence and development** Recent (2023) Skills SA surveying of ACE educators and their capability indicated higher than expected levels of current expertise and experience which is an opportunity for supporting collegial communities of practice and pathways to TAE qualified practice in either ACE or VET, or both simultaneously. South Australia's Foundation Skills implementation plan outlines a strategic suite of actions to strengthen, expand, and enhance Adult Community Education (ACE) delivery and outcomes. Achieving these goals will require targeted investment in growing the ACE educator workforce and building their professional capability. A tailored, collaborative approach—developed in partnership with ACE providers and peak bodies—will underpin efforts to meet key foundation skills targets and drive long-term success. South Australia understands from its profiling of ACE educators, there is capacity to develop teaching capability and capacity for VET in community contexts, and sees this as a supply-side opportunity under its proposed framework to deliver the VET workforce policy priority. This action will build on the Skills SA Foundation Skills Tutor pilot to build workforce capability to provide foundation skills support to complement, and as an alternative, to bridging units. **Alignment to VET Workforce Blueprint:** • Opportunity 2: Attracting people into the VET workforce, particularly teachers, trainers and assessors • Opportunity 3: Making it easier for high-quality teachers, trainers and assessors to enter and stay in the VET workforce • Action 7: National Foundation Skills Strategy • Action 9: Scaling up and piloting innovative VET workforce pathways to support workforce capacity and capability.
Objective	To support educator professional development that: 1. grows communities of practice in the ACE sector 2. makes available funded (on a free or low-cost basis) education and training for ACE practitioners to enhance and elevate delivery towards excellence 3. assists transition to new curriculum and use of supporting resources (see South Australia's Foundation Skills implementation plan). Offering scholarship-based pathways that: 1. support entry-level skill building for ACE educators wanting to formalise their delivery— 'ACE Ignite'. Minimum: 21 scholarships per year from 2026 (63 total)

	Target: 30 scholarships per year from 2026 (90 total) 2. support skills deepening tailored for ACE educators—'ACE Accelerate'. Minimum: 21 scholarships per year from 2026 (63 total) Target: 30 scholarships per year from 2026 (90 total). Offering a professional development program to develop ACE educator capability. Minimum: 35 educators engaged per year from 2026 (105 total) Target: 50 educators engaged per year from 2026 (150 total). An objective of this action is to support educators who wish to deliver in both ACE and VET spaces**, particularly those in regional areas** to help address local workforce challenges and opportunities.		
Delivery method	A professional development program will be developed in consultation with contracted ACE providers and relevant peak bodies (including Adult Learning Australia (ALA) and Community Centres SA (CCSA)) and be available to ACE providers and their educators. This will include potential content delivery by peak organisations and specialist providers contracted through a panel selection process. Scholarships will be offered annually and will leverage and be aligned to scholarships offered to support the South Australian VET workforce for additional impact. The program will be published on the Skills SA website, along with annual evaluation reports and case studies; and will be refined and initiatives scaled up based on the outcomes of delivery, evaluation and emerging opportunities to support foundation skills IP outcomes. A Foundation Skills Tutor program will be implemented as part of the VET Workforce implementation plan. It is referenced here only to note that ACE educators will be offered places given the approach seeks to provide tutor support to achieve identified foundation skills gaps following an Upfront Assessment of Need.		
Expected reach and additionality	A focus on this action as a support for the roll-out of other actions in South Australia's Foundation Skills implementation plan will be a priority. PD and scholarships will be demand-driven and can be scaled if there is significant uptake. Both will have regional sensitivity in particular, to support regional ACE delivery (for access and uplift) and practice (for excellence).		
Amount of additional investment - Commonwealth	**Amount of additional investment – State**	**Planned start date**	**Planned end date**
$250,000	$150,000	1 July 2025	31 December 2028

ACTION C: **Trial industry professional to VET**	According to the Jobs and Skills Australia 2023 Skills Priority List, Vocational Education Teachers is an identified skill shortage occupation in South Australia and nationally.

educator pathway models	Key barriers for the attraction of educators include: • lack of professional profile and clear pathways for industry experts to become educators • time and cost of completing Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (DEWR, 2024). The VET Workforce Blueprint consultation paper (DEWR, 2024) notes Certificate IV in Training and Assessment graduates may not be employed as VET educators. Skills SA administrative data shows that from 2020 to 2022, around half of students (48 per cent) enrolled in a publicly subsidised place in Certificate IV in Training and Assessment have not completed the qualification. The completion rate for fee free places awarded from 2023 is not yet known. Entry-level skill sets are supported on the state's subsidised training list; however, utilisation is low. It is unclear whether this due to supply or demand. Skills SA will engage with RTOs seeking to hire educators to co-design and trial a stepped approach (using locally developed non-accredited courses and accredited training, including skill sets) for industry professionals to move into VET educator roles. The Commonwealth's approval of the proposed design of the trial will be sought prior to its implementation. Features to be trialled include: • 'Ignite' scholarship as an incentive to attract new entrants and support their completion of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and into employment. South Australia has tested a scholarship approach founded on shared commitment and return of benefits to the sector. • Work experience/practicum component to training. • Productivity offsets for RTO staff involved in supervision and mentoring of placement students. • Promotional videos of VET educator career journeys, to use in recruiting for the pilots and by RTO partners. • Possible joint appointments and/or industry release. The model will be adapted and trialled in **at least one regional/non-metropolitan area per year** over three years. Skills Shortage Solutions (existing initiative) may be further leveraged and expanded to support innovative, partnership-driven and industry-informed solutions to VET workforce shortages, including entry pathway models. A dedicated stream will be co-designed with an RTO reference group and introduced in 2025-26. The evaluation of the Foundation Skills Tutor pilot (existing initiative) will inform opportunities to build and connect entry points for specialist support staff. This action also aligns to action B supporting ACE educator excellence and development and South Australia's implementation plan for the foundation skills policy initiative. **Alignment to VET Workforce Blueprint:** • Opportunity 2: Attracting people into the VET workforce, particularly teachers, trainers and assessors

	• Opportunity 3: Making it easier for high-quality teachers, trainers and assessors to enter and stay in the VET workforce • Action 4: Targeted, coordinated and sequenced promotion strategies • Action 5: Encourage and facilitate increased industry involvement to response to challenges • Action 10: Workforce attraction, support and retention initiatives. **References:** DEWR (Department of Employment and Workplace Relations) (2024) *Consultation Paper – Developing a blueprint for the VET workforce*, Australian Government.
Objective	To trial models that enable and promote entry pathways into the VET workforce and increase the number of individuals completing the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and being employed as an educator through: • increased awareness and understanding of VET career opportunities and requirements • scaffolds (including financial supports) for skill industry professionals to be VET educators to reduce barriers • supporting RTOs to address specific VET educator shortages in their organisation, and • supporting relationships between RTOs and employer partners. South Australia expects this action will support workforce growth of VET educators (particularly in industry shortage and specialist areas) and sufficient educators to deliver to demand and need for training.
Delivery method	An RTO reference group will be established to support design, development and implementation of Action C and Action D. SASC, TAFE SA, ITECA and ITPA will be invited. The stepped pathway model will be trialled over six intakes (two per year), subject to demand. Scholarship and productivity offset grants will be managed by Skills SA in partnership with industry bodies. The model will be adapted and trialled: • in **at least one regional/non-metropolitan area per year** over three years (to be identified based on RTO interest and need), and • for First Nations people, in partnership with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) RTOs. This action will align to action B supporting First Nations educators in South Australia's implementation plan for the Closing the Gap policy initiative. An external, independent evaluator will be engaged to assess the outcomes of this model, further detail is provided within the 'evaluation' section.
Expected reach and additionality	The trials will aim to lift the volume and completion rate of TAE entry-level courses that are currently supported through subsidised training, particularly graduates who are residing in a regional area and/or are First Nations. There is an opportunity to scale up based on demand. Scoping work will include gaining intelligence about:

	• recruitment and attraction strategies used by RTOs • current and persistent shortages at qualification levels, training packages and location • destinations of recent graduates of TAE entry-level courses and considering the effectiveness of the models trialled in this context, including for representation of First Nations people and people living in non-metropolitan areas in the VET workforce. This data can inform state and national perspectives on the VET workforce in South Australia and will assist to baseline and inform subsequent intakes. Activity targets: • Minimum 7 providers engaged in recruitment pilots each year from 2026 (21 total). Target: 10 providers per year (30 total). • Minimum 42 individuals engaged each year from 2026 in stepped approach to TAE (126 total). Target: 60 per year (180 total). • Minimum 35 scholarships per year from 2026 (105 total). Target: 50 scholarships per year (150 total). • Minimum 18 individuals receive productivity offset as part of framework trial per year from 2026 (54 total). Target:25 per year (75 total). • Minimum 2 case studies are developed per year from 2026 (6 total). Target: 4 case studies per year (12 total).		
Amount of additional investment - Commonwealth	**Amount of additional investment – State***	**Planned start date**	**Planned end date**
$1,220,000	$1,000,000	1 July 2025	30 June 2028

ACTION D: **Pilot supports for new (early career) educators to aid their professional transition, quality teaching and retention**	A consistent observation from studies across all education and training sectors, including VET, is that the first year of a teacher's career heavily influences their longevity in the profession (Dias-Lacy and Guirguis, 2017). In the VET context, early career VET educators are undergoing a significant change to their professional identity – "from being experts in their trade to novices in pedagogy" (Gagnon and Dubeau, 2023). The blueprint consultation (DEWR, 2024) indicates persistent perceptions that the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment is not fit-for purpose and doesn't sufficiently prepare educators. While comprehensive induction programs to support the transition from novice to proficient are well-established and tested for new educators in the schooling sector, there is no similar program available to VET educators. Anecdotally, RTO inductions are often limited, focusing on site inductions and mandatory training, in part due to a high proportion of casual employment. A recent NCVER publication (Schlesinger, 2023) indicated that 71.5 per cent of respondents who were new VET educators were "sometimes, not usually or never" supported. Skills SA will engage with an RTO reference group to design induction products for early career educators in their first, second and third years of

	teaching; and develop a mentoring program. Mentoring is identified as a high value induction activity in the literature; of all the induction strategies available, practice-focused mentoring by one or more expert peers, is particularly powerful for supporting transitions from industry professional to educator. The Commonwealth's approval of the proposed scope for supports to be piloted will be sought prior to development. Features to be trialled include: • induction resources and products (microcredentials) mapped to TAE units which support reinforcement and application of the Certificate IV, reflective practice and extension of skills in priority areas such as supporting diverse learners and foundation skills, digital capability • practice videos to demonstrate application of key teaching approaches, and tips for early career educators • a microcredential supporting mentoring for educators, along with associated learning resources • bursaries for educators and/or RTOs to support release time, and reimbursement of travel and accommodation costs in select circumstances (for example, early career educators in regional areas) • wage supplements for the first six months of teaching practice where new industry experts in priority areas (e.g., trades and specialist occupations) enter teaching roles where wage levels present as a barrier • a good practice induction guide for RTOs. Additional measures may be trialled to support **early career educators in regional areas**. **Alignment to VET Workforce Blueprint:** • Opportunity 3: Making it easier for high-quality teachers, trainers and assessors to enter and stay in the VET workforce • Opportunity 5: Providing more support for early career teachers, trainers and assessors • Action 9: Scaling up and piloting innovative VET workforce pathways to support workforce capacity and capability • Action 10: Workforce attraction, support and retention initiatives • Action 12: consider the impact of TAE Training Package and other relevant qualifications. **References:** DEWR (Department of Employment and Workplace Relations) (2024) *Consultation Paper – Developing a blueprint for the VET workforce*, Australian Government. Dias-Lacy SL and Guirguis RV (2017) 'Challenges for New Teachers and Ways of Coping with Them', *Journal of Education and Learning*, 6(3):265-272. Gagnon N and Dubeau A (2023) 'Building and Maintaining Self-Efficacy Beliefs: A Study of Entry-Level Vocational Education and Training Teachers', *Vocations and Learning,* 1-22. Schlesinger K (2023) *Connecting new educators: a strategy for empowerment*, International Specialised Skills Institute, Carlton, accessed 27 Jul 2023.
Objective	To trial supports and products that enable effective transitions from industry expert to novice/early career educators and result in:

	• increased teaching effectiveness and confidence of early career VET educators as dual professionals • increased satisfaction of RTOs with the skills of early career VET educators • increased status of the profession and retention of early career VET educators • contemporary industry practice informing training delivery.
Delivery method	An RTO reference group will be established to support design, development and implementation of Action C and Action D. SASC, TAFE SA, ITECA and ITPA will be invited. Opportunities to leverage Orbis, the South Australian Department for Education's provider of educator professional learning, co-designed with industry experts using the latest research and adult learning principles, will be explored. The induction program, mentor training and practice videos will be accessible through a Learning Management System (LMS), which will be structured to model good practice in synchronous and asynchronous delivery. Early career educators will sign up to the LMS, which will support a basic register of early career teachers to support data collection approaches. Induction and mentoring will be supported by the development and validation of microcredentials through the course development grants process. Bursaries and wage supplements will be managed by Skills SA in partnership with relevant industry bodies. TAE diploma-qualified educators will be invited to apply to become mentors; this includes alumni of the Accelerate Scholarships delivered by Skills SA in 2022 and 2023. The supports in this action will be adapted and trialled: • in **at least one regional/non-metropolitan area per year** over three years (to be identified based on volume of graduates) • for First Nations people, in partnership with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) RTOs • for casual, part-time and full-time educators in different RTO types and sizes. Outcomes of piloted supports will be reported and evaluated by an external, independent evaluator. This is further detailed under the 'evaluation' section.
Expected reach and additionality	The pilot will aim to engage 60 per cent of graduates of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment who have undertaken their training through a subsidised, fee free place and/or scholarship. Products will be shared with other jurisdictions. Scoping work will include gaining intelligence about RTO expectations of early career educator skills and knowledge, and existing induction practices by RTOs (particularly examples of good practice), and the good practice induction guide will support complementarity. Activity targets:

	• Minimum 14 educators trained as mentors per year from 2026 (42 total). Target: 20 educators per year (60 total). • Minimum 49 first year educators are mentored per year from 2026 (147 total). Target: 70 educators per year (210 total). • Minimum 49 second year educators are mentored per year from 2026 (147 total). Target: 70 educators per year (210 total). • Minimum 70 first year educators undertake structured induction per year from 2026 (140 total). Target: 100 educators per year (200 total). • Minimum 70 second year educators undertake structured induction per year from 2027 (140 total). Target: 100 educators per year (200 total). • Minimum 70 third year educators undertake structured induction per year from 2028 (70 total). Target: 100 educators per year (100 total). • Minimum 2 case studies are developed per year from 2026 (6 total). Target: 4 case studies per year (12 total).		
Amount of additional investment - Commonwealth	**Amount of additional investment – State***	**Planned start date**	**Planned end date**
$460,000	$650,000	1 January 2026	31 December 2028

ACTION E: **Support experienced VET educators to complete higher level qualifications**	The VET Workforce Blueprint consultation paper (DEWR, 2024) notes that: • The sector is under increasing pressure to retain skilled and experienced professionals • Professional support and career progression is crucial to developing and retaining the workforce. There is currently a lack of clear career progression pathways and incentives. • It can be challenging for educators to access high-quality and relevant professional development, particularly those employed in non-permanent roles, and in regional and remote areas. The Training and Education (TAE) training package includes diploma qualifications and skill sets to support upskilling and career progression, which are supported through the state's Subsidised Training List. The 2020 NCVER report on the Australian VET workforce found that a small share (16.2%) of educators had a diploma or higher-level teaching qualification (Knight et al., 2020). This aligns with relatively low activity and completion rates in TAE diplomas in publicly subsidised training in South Australia – Skills SA administrative data for 2020 and 2021 shows that around 39 per cent of enrolments resulted in a qualification. To stimulate uptake, in 2022 Skills SA piloted a scholarship model to encourage educators to undertake diploma level teaching qualifications. 49 VET trainers and assessors from 22 RTOs (including TAFE SA) were awarded an Accelerate Scholarship, which included funding to reduce the cost to the individual for study (e.g., purchasing release time/leave). To date, 60 per cent have completed one or two diplomas.

	The 2020 NCVER report also found that, while 89 per cent of educators held a Certificate III or higher qualification in their industry or main field of training delivery, only 37 per cent held a diploma or higher (Knight et al., 2020). Skills SA will build on the Accelerate Scholarships pilot, in consultation with a VET educator reference group, to support more educators to attain higher level qualifications in teaching and their main field of training delivery and develop their educational leadership through a structured upskilling program. The Commonwealth's approval of the proposed scope for the Accelerate Scholarships pilot will be sought prior to its implementation. Key features of the approach include: • trialling an expansion of Accelerate Scholarships to include TAE graduate diploma qualifications and higher-level qualifications in industry-specific training packages (including industry placements and release) • identifying and trialling stepped pathways to higher-level teaching qualifications, focused on priority topics and leveraging skill sets/accredited training (for example, building on existing activity to support professional development for educators in inclusive education) • continuation and expansion of the scholars and alumni network to connect educators and support reflective practice through special interest groups and/or communities of practice • support for scholars to undertake an action learning project that supports application of study and develops reflective practice skills • case studies for educators that promote the value and career opportunities of undertaking higher level qualifications. Additional measures may be trialled to support **educators in regional areas**. **Alignment to VET Workforce Blueprint:** • Opportunity 3: Making it easier for high-quality teachers, trainers and assessors to enter and stay in the VET workforce • Opportunity 4: Supporting professional learning, career progression and industry currency • Opportunity 6: Developing and resourcing staff to support learners with diverse and complex needs • Action 5: Encourage and facilitate increased industry involvement to respond to challenges • Action 7: National Foundation Skills Strategy • Action 9: Scaling up and piloting innovative VET workforce pathways to support workforce capacity and capability • Action 10: Workforce attraction, support and retention initiatives • Action 11: Professional learning for industry and pedagogical priorities. **References:** DEWR (Department of Employment and Workplace Relations) (2024) *Consultation Paper – Developing a blueprint for the VET workforce*, Australian Government. Knight G, White I and Granfield P (2020) *Understanding the Australian vocational education and training workforce*, NCVER.
Objective	To increase and expand supports for experienced VET educators to complete higher-level qualifications and their application through their participation in

	professional networks supporting reflective and advanced practice, resulting in: • increased number of VET educators with a higher-level teaching qualification • increased number of VET educators with a higher-level industry qualification (educators therefore have more qualifications on their 'scope' to teach) • increased workforce capacity for training product design and delivery • increased retention and skills-based development and succession pathways for VET educators.
Delivery method	An educator reference group of past scholars and educational leaders responsible for teaching staff, will be established to aid development and implementation of three intakes (one per year, subject to demand) and alumni events and opportunities. Scholarships will be managed by Skills SA. Expertise will be procured in action learning to support project delivery, and content will be accessible through an LMS, which will be structured to model good practice in synchronous and asynchronous delivery. Scholars and alumni will be featured on the Skills SA website, along with case studies promoting the value of upskilling. State-supported subsidised training will be leveraged where appropriate. Skills SA will also support educators to share their specialist knowledge and practice through this action to return a benefit to the VET sector and industry as a whole, for example representing South Australian practice at a national level. An external independent evaluator will be engaged to measure outcomes of expanded supports for experienced VET educators. This is further detailed under the 'evaluation' section.

Expected reach and additionality	The action will aim for a 5% lift in the number of VET educators with a higher-level qualification, from a range of RTOs and discipline areas. There is an opportunity to scale up based on demand. Alumni activities will aim to actively engage 60 per cent of scholarship completers, including as mentors to support early career educators. Scoping work will include gaining intelligence about: • career goals and aspirations of educators, and enablers and barriers to achieving these • outcomes and succession opportunities for educators with higher-level qualifications. Activity targets: • Minimum 28 scholarships for TAE diplomas per year from 2026 (84 total). Target: 40 scholarships per year (120 total). • Minimum 14 scholarships in action learning per year from 2026 (42 total). Target: 20 scholarships per year (60 total). • Minimum 14 scholarships for high education qualifications in adult language, literacy and numeracy per year from 2026 (42 total). Target: 20 scholarships per year (60 total). • Minimum 14 scholarships for industry qualifications per year from 2027 (28 total). Target: 20 scholarships per year (40 total). • Minimum 2 case studies are developed per year from 2026 (6 total). Target: 4 case studies per year (12 total).		
Amount of additional investment - Commonwealth	**Amount of additional investment – State***	**Planned start date**	**Planned end date**
$1,860,000	$2,020,000	1 July 2025	31 December 2028

ACTION F: **Pilot a practitioner as researcher pathway to develop capability in evidence-based practice and educational leadership**	Across education sectors, educators are increasingly expected to use quality evidence to inform their teaching practice to understand where students are at in their learning, choose appropriate strategies and interventions to support learning, monitor and assess student progress and evaluate their teaching effectiveness. Figgis (2009, p.3, quoted by NCVER n.d.) states that VET practitioner-researchers are "practitioners who actively think about changing their practice share certain attributes… [they are] (i) reflective, (ii) responsive to and respectful of learners, (iii) closely engaged with local enterprises; and (iv) reach out to learn from and share their knowledge with other practitioners. These four qualities appear to establish the bedrock from which practitioners can set out to seriously consider rebuilding their practice". This indicates shared benefits from educators generating, disseminating, applying and reflecting on evidence in practice – for students, the educators themselves and their peers, employers and other VET sector stakeholders.

	Skills SA will pilot a structured *practitioner as researcher* pathway for educators seeking to develop capability and become educational leaders in evidence-based practice, curriculum development and institutional improvement. The pathway will leverage NCVER resources, and include: • 'Elevate' scholarships to support educators to undertake action research and attend and present at relevant conferences. This may include support to complete higher education courses • engagement of specialist mentors with research expertise • development and validation of a practitioner as researcher short course (micro-credential), which supports a systematic, reflective approach through action research methodologies • establishment of a community of practice focused on educational research and its application • developing and sharing research for use by peers through presentations and workshops, including at a dedicated South Australian educator symposium in October for World Teachers' Day. This action should be read as complementary to action E. **Alignment to VET Workforce Blueprint:** • Opportunity 3: Making it easier for high-quality teachers, trainers and assessors to enter and stay in the VET workforce • Opportunity 4: Supporting professional learning, career progression and industry currency • Opportunity 6: Development and resourcing staff to support learners with diverse and complex needs • Action 5: Encourage and facilitate increased industry involvement to respond to challenges • Action 9: Scaling up and piloting innovative VET workforce pathways to support workforce capacity and capability • Action 10: Workforce attraction, support and retention initiatives • Action 11: Professional learning for industry and pedagogical priorities. **References:** Figgis J (2009) *Regenerating the Australian landscape of professional VET practice: practitioner-driven changes to teaching and learning*, NCVER. NCVER (National Centre for Vocational Education Research) (n.d.) *VET Practitioner Resource: Practitioners as researchers*, NCVER, accessed on 31 January 2024.
Objective	To trial a *practitioner as researcher* pathway that strengthens and diversifies educator career progression and builds educational leadership and capability in evidence-based practice, resulting in more effective teaching. To provide regular and ongoing opportunities for educators to share and model evidence-based practice across RTOs.
Delivery method	Expertise to design and trial this pathway will be sought through a partnership with NCVER, ACER and potentially universities involved in educational and adult education research. Applications for a scholarship and supports will be competitive and demonstrate how the action research will progress the

	evidence base for VET educators and learners. Scholarships will be managed by Skills SA with relevant partners. The South Australian educator symposium will feature a combination of in-person and virtual sessions, which will be recorded and available to view for a three-year period. Educators supported in this action could be engaged as specialist mentors that are encouraged to return a benefit to other (peer) educators.		
Expected reach and additionality	The pilot will award up to 60 educators with support to progress action research, either individually or in a team, and publish and present their results. The initial call for submissions will focus on effective practice in supporting diverse students (including First Nations, students with disability, carers, etc) and foundation skills development (including digital capability). Research will be published and available publicly. Activity targets: • Minimum 14 scholarships per year from 2026 (42 total). Target: 20 per year (60 total). • 1 symposium event for VET educators per year from 2026, engage a minimum of 200 educators at each symposium (target: 500 educators engaged). • Minimum 2 case studies are developed per year from 2026 (6 total). Target: 4 case studies per year (12 total).		
Amount of additional investment - Commonwealth	**Amount of additional investment – State***	**Planned start date**	**Planned end date**
$520,000	$490,000	1 January 2026	31 December 2028

Measures to strengthen the VET workforce - approach to matched funding arrangements (clause A126 refers).

Details of matched funding	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total
Commonwealth contribution	$2,250,000	$1,125,000	$1,125,000	$560,000	$5,060,000
State contribution	$2,250,000	$1,125,000	$1,125,000	$560,000	$5,060,000
Total	$4,500,000	$2,250,000	$2,250,000	$1,120,000	$10,120,000

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

Performance Indicators

- Action A: **Support from key stakeholders** for the South Australian framework.
- Action B: **Number of ACE educators** with teaching qualifications.
- Action C: **Number of RTOs** engaged; **Completion rate** of scholarship recipients; **Proportion of scholarship recipients** moving into VET delivery.
- Action D: **Retention rate** of supported educators; **Proportion of RTOs** represented in induction and mentoring.
- Action E: **Number of educators** with higher-level teaching and/or industry qualifications; **Proportion of RTOs** benefitting from educators with high-level qualifications.
- Action F: **Number of educators** with published/presented research; **Contribution of South Australian educators** to evidence base on teaching and learning.

Measures to strengthen the VET workforce – reporting

Initiatives that support attraction of the VET workforce

- Number of RTOs, employers and individuals engaged in stepped approach
- Number and proportion of individuals completing TAE entry-level qualifications, including First Nations people and people living in regional areas
- Number and proportion of graduates moving into the professional VET workforce, including First Nations people and people living in regional areas
- Student satisfaction with training and support
- Employer satisfaction with supports and quality of TAE graduates in pilot
- Case studies that highlight arrangements benefitting industry and RTOs

Initiatives that support retention of the VET workforce

- Number and proportion of TAE graduates engaged in induction and mentoring, including First Nations people, people living in regional areas and educators employed on a non-permanent basis
- Number and proportion of RTOs represented in induction and mentoring
- Number of mentors trained and delivering, including First Nations people and people living in regional areas
- Student satisfaction with induction and mentor supports, and confidence as an educator
- Employer satisfaction with induction and mentor supports in supporting the performance of their early career educators
- Number of RTOs aware of and using good practice induction guide
- Case studies that demonstrate the impact of induction and mentoring supports for educators, RTOs and students

Initiatives that build capability and support career development and succession planning

- Number of scholarships offered
- Number and proportion of VET educators that complete a higher-level qualification and/or stepped pathway
- Number and proportion of RTOs benefitting from educators with higher-level qualifications
- Number of action research projects undertaken and published/presented
- Number and proportion of VET educators engaged in the scholar and alumni networks, special interest groups, communities of practice, South Australian educator symposium and other professional development
- Satisfaction of educator engagement to achieve professional development goals
- Case studies that demonstrate the value and impact of higher-level qualifications on practice and practitioners as researchers.

Measures to strengthen the VET Workforce – contribution to the goals of the NSA

- Measures to strengthen the VET workforce will support, grow and retain a quality VET workforce. This is a key objective of the NSA and a key deliverable of the *Skilled. Thriving. Connected*.
- Investment in the VET workforce supports quality delivery of training and improves the capability and capacity of training providers to deliver locally designed and responsive products aligned to the skills required by industry and communities.
- The South Australian VET workforce framework will articulate the state's responses to the blueprint. The frame will describe the state's workforce profile and priority state actions to address local workforce supply and development opportunities for 2024-28, aligned to the blueprint.
- Professional development and supported pathways to practitioner professionalisation and skills deepening can contribute to high quality training and expert delivery. Arguably, this development can also contribute to effective pathways and transitions.

Measures to strengthen the VET workforce - evaluation arrangements

An external, independent evaluator will be engaged to evaluate the framework and the pilot initiatives as they are delivered. The intent is for evaluation to be ongoing over the trial period and build into the scope of pilots. Evaluation will identify successful models that can be expanded and opportunities to improve existing service offerings to improve workforce supply, retention and professionalism. Annual reports will be published on the Skills SA website at the end of each year, and include:

- What lessons were learned during implementation
- What adjustments were made along the way
- Observed results and comparison against expectations
- Whether results varied across cohorts, RTOs and regions
- Cost-efficiency of the initiatives.

The evaluation framework will consider:

1. **Appropriateness**, including alignment to the VET Workforce Blueprint, how well the actions address the specific needs and context of South Australia's VET workforce and the extent and quality of engagement with key stakeholders.
2. **Effectiveness**, including the extent to which the performance indicators for each action have been met, and impact of the actions on the VET workforce, including improvements in educator skills, retention rates, and career progression.
3. **Efficiency**, including the cost-effectiveness of each action (resources invested to outcomes achieved), areas for improvement in implementation processes, and potential to scale successful models and initiatives.

Evaluation methods will include quantitative and qualitative data collection:

- Surveys and questionnaires to collect data from educators, RTOs and employers on their experiences and satisfaction with the initiatives.
- Administrative data on enrolments, completions and employment outcomes to measure the success of actions.
- Performance metrics tracked, such as the number of scholarships awarded, completion rates and retention rates.
- Interviews and focus groups to gather detailed feedback and insights
- Case studies to highlight successful implementation and best practices, and educator professional pathways (actual and ideal)
- Observations to help assessment of quality and effectiveness
- (where relevant) Student satisfaction and completion data.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Linkages

This Implementation Plan and associated activities have strong connections with the following policy initiatives;

- Closing the Gap
- Improving Completions
- Fee Free TAFE tranche 2
- Foundation skills

In each activity has identified alignment to the actions of the draft VET Workforce Blueprint and these have been specified in the relevant section of this plan.

Dependencies

Actions B through to E will be implemented post-action A.

Student experience

Reporting and evaluation activities will capture educator experiences as students/learners.
The views of students of educators will be included in the evaluation framework as appropriate.

Engagement arrangements

Key stakeholders have provided insights, ideas and perspectives about implementing the Blueprint in South Australia to support the development of this plan. Stakeholders were supportive of an implementation approach that:

- is underpinned by collaboration, co-design and co-implementation
- prioritises educator recruitment and retention initiatives and building on good practice
- enhances educator professionalism through quality professional development and educator pathways, including a focus on industry currency
- is sensitive to the interdependency of developing the VET workforce with broader systems supporting quality, products and funding.

Ongoing engagement with stakeholders will be undertaken to support implementation of the activities outlined in the Implementation Plan, and identify emerging opportunities throughout the implementation period.
Key stakeholders for each activity have been identified in the relevant section.

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 agreed with Commonwealth	$506,000	N/A
Milestone 2: Commonwealth acceptance that South Australia has operated measures to support the VET workforce to 31 March 2026, including: • developed a South Australian VET Workforce Supply and Development Framework and evaluation framework (ACTION A) • co-designed a First Nations VET workforce approach for South Australia (ACTION A) • co-designed an ACE workforce approach for South Australia (ACTION B) • developed proposed design of the trial industry professional to VET pathway models (ACTION C) • commenced pilots of industry professional to VET educator pathway models with RTOs (ACTION C) • commenced pilots for inducting early career educators (ACTION D), and • commenced Accelerate scholarships to support experienced educators to complete higher level qualifications (ACTION E).	Report signed by relevant South Australian senior official with responsibility for skills that outlines progress implementing measures to support the VET workforce to 31 March 2026 and includes or attaches: • the South Australian VET Workforce Support and Development Framework • First Nations VET workforce approach • ACE workforce approach • Commonwealth approval of the proposed design of the trial industry professional to VET pathway models prior to its implementation, and • Evaluation framework.	$1,744,000	31 March 2026
Milestone 3: Commonwealth acceptance that South Australia has operated measures to support the VET workforce to 31 March 2027, including: • delivery of ACE workforce approach including ACE Ignite and ACE Accelerate scholarships to ACE educators (ACTION B)	Report signed by relevant South Australian senior official with responsibility for skills that outlines progress implementing measures to support the VET workforce to 31 March 2027 and includes or attaches: • specified case studies • evaluation report for activity delivered in 2026.	$1,125,000	31 March 2027

• delivery of industry professional to VET educator pathway models with RTOs and individuals (ACTION C) • delivery of induction and mentoring supports to early career educators (ACTION D) • delivery of Accelerate scholarships to experienced educators (ACTION E), and • commencement of practitioner as researcher pathway (ACTION F).			
Milestone 4: Commonwealth acceptance that South Australia has operated measures to support the VET workforce to 31 March 2028, including: • delivery of ACE workforce approach including ACE Ignite and ACE Accelerate scholarships to additional ACE educators (ACTION B) • delivery of industry professional to VET educator pathway models with an additional RTOs and individuals (ACTION C) • delivery of induction and mentoring supports to additional early career educators (ACTION D) • delivery of Accelerate scholarships to additional experienced educators (ACTION E), and • delivery of practitioner as researcher pathway to experienced educators (ACTION F).	Report signed by relevant South Australian senior official with responsibility for skills that outlines progress implementing measures to support the VET workforce to 31 March 2028 and includes or attaches: • specified case studies • evaluation report for activity delivered in 2027.	$1,125,000	31 March 2028

Milestone 5: Commonwealth acceptance that South Australia has operated measures to support the VET workforce to 30 September 2028, including: • delivery of ACE workforce approach including ACE Ignite and ACE Accelerate scholarships to additional ACE educators (ACTION B) • delivery of industry professional to VET educator pathway models with additional RTOs and individuals (ACTION C) • delivery of induction and mentoring supports to additional early career educators (ACTION D) • delivery of Accelerate scholarships to additional experienced educators (ACTION E), and • delivery of practitioner as researcher pathway to additional experienced educators (ACTION F).	Report signed by relevant South Australian senior official with responsibility for skills that outlines progress implementing measures to support the VET workforce to 30 September 2028 and includes or attaches: • specified case studies • evaluation report for activity delivered in 2028.	$560,000	30 September 2028
Milestone 6: Commonwealth acceptance that South Australia has operated measures outlined in this plan to support the VET workforce to 31 December 2028.	Report signed by relevant South Australian senior official with responsibility for skills that outlines progress implementing measures to support the VET workforce to 31 December 2028 and includes or attaches: • a final outcomes and evaluation report.	Nil	31 December 2028
	Total	**$5,060,000**	

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
22 / 9 / 2025

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

The Honourable Blair Boyer MP
Minister for Education, Training and Skills
15 / 9 / 2025