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 and the NSA Bilateral Implementation Plan Guidance.

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: Enhanced Vocational Education and Training (VET) Data and Evidence is a joint initiative between the Australian Government and the Queensland Government.

REPORTING AND PAYMENTS

Reporting

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

2. Queensland 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, 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.

3. 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.

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.

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

The Enhanced VET Data and Evidence policy initiative includes a number of measures. The following relates to the VET Data Streamlining (VDS) program only.

VET Data Streamlining: Queensland opts-in to the VDS program and commits to:

- completing transition to the National VET Data System by 31 December 2028;
- transitioning State Training Authority to the VET Information Standard by 31 December 2028; and
- supporting TAFE with their transition to the National VET Data System and the VET Information Standard if and as needed.

1) Specify activities that support the VDS program.

Queensland will:

1) assist in the development of the National VET Data System, which includes:
    a. providing relevant Subject Matter Experts (SME's) and business expertise in all phases of the development lifecycle of the National VET Data System;
    b. providing effective participation during key program phases from the analysis to the formal design review process;
    c. aligning our internal information and communication technology (ICT) systems development (and technical integration) with the development of National VET Data System;
    d. co-developing any 'nominated' state specific rules (Queensland will be using the indirect reporting pathway) and national validation and business rules, relevant reference data and metadata requirements, and adjusting or updating business processes to suit the final product;
    e. assisting in the developmental testing of the National VET Data System, including User Acceptance Testing (UAT) with appropriate SME's and resources provided;
    f. actively participating in both Queensland's and National VDS Program governance activities;
    g. supporting VDS implementation and operational go-live activities; and
    h. assisting various stakeholder groups with ongoing sector support during the bedding down period of the new standard and the National VET Data System.
2) transition relevant Department of Trade, Employment and Training (DTET) data systems to the National VET Data System. This is a key requirement to create the indirect pathway. This will include our specific ICT and operational changes, which are required to be completed by our resources, including the full end-to-end integration of our new (future state) ICT systems to the National VET Data System by 31 December 2028.
3) The following timeline is indicative and non-binding:
    a. Queensland will target the commencement of the 2028 calendar year to go live with the State Training Authority (STA) systems integrated with the National VET Data System and commence transition of Queensland-funded registered training organisations (RTOs).

b. The following indicative timeline supports this transition approach.
    i. Milestone 2, detailed planning complete: December 2025.
    ii. Detailed design complete: end 2026.
    iii. Queensland DTET build complete: late 2027.
    iv. Integration and User Acceptance Testing complete: early 2028
    v. Integration to the VDS as an indirect state – commences transition in 2028.
    vi. Transition of Queensland-funded RTOs and all TAFEs commences 2028.
    vii. Queensland-funded RTOs transition complete: December 2028

2) Specify activities that support the VET Information Standard.

Queensland will:

1) assist the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), as the national data custodian, in the development of the new VET Information Standard, which includes:
    - effective participation in the design lifecycle, including analysis, input, and design review and feedback process;
    - co-design state specific data elements and associated rules where required;
    - provide Subject Matter Expertise in all phases of the development lifecycle;
    - provide appropriate resources during the technical design, physical design and testing of the VET Information Standard and the National VET Data System; and
    - actively participate in governance forums and discussions.
2) transition DTET systems to the new VET Information Standard.
    - transition DTET systems to the VET Information Standard by 31 December 2028. Queensland will consider transition arrangements and timelines as part of Milestone 2.

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

Queensland's proposed reporting approach will be:

The indirect pathway – where funded RTOs submit Total VET Activity Data to DTET as their State Training Authority who will collect and then submit data to the National VET Data System (on their behalf). DTET is using DTET ICT systems, which are connected to the National VET Data System via application programming interface (API), to submit data. Indirect for Queensland means no direct connectivity between Queensland funded RTOs and the National VET Data System.

4) Specify the State's collection and submission processes.

Queensland will support the proposed approach for state specific collections and submissions, noting the following:

- DTET will support RTOs to submit VET activity data progressively to the National VET Data System (via the indirect pathway solution), but no less frequently than quarterly or as agreed under the Data Provisioning Requirements (DPRs).

- DTET may require funded RTOs to submit VET Activity Data more frequently (but not less) than quarterly to the National VET Data System to meet state specific contractual obligations.
- DTET will support RTOs to meet their reporting requirements by submitting their VET Activity Data to the National VET Data System (via our API connection to the National VET Data System) as often as possible, but no less frequently than quarterly or as agreed under the DPRs submission timeframe.

Queensland will support the collection of metadata related to VET activity data submitted by RTOs to the National VET Data System to enable states to monitor compliance with State specific contracts and regulators to monitor compliance with the DPRs.

5) Specify activities to support inclusive and robust governance.

As part of the VDS planning phase, DTET established an internal VDS Program Board and a supporting VDS Working Group in early 2023. Both groups have executive and operational level membership, and they were introduced to support a more centralised VDS governance approach and to support key decision-making across multiple business areas. The Queensland Skills Senior Officials' Network (SSON) representative Chairs the VDS Program Board and DTET's Data and Analytics executive Chairs the VDS Working Group. To date, Queensland has successfully delivered all VDS contractual obligations (under the interim 12-month agreement), which demonstrates the effectiveness of Queensland's internal VDS governance.

Queensland commits to participating in the VDS program delivery governance processes endorsed by SSON as part of the VDS program reset on 24 April 2024. Queensland agrees to implement any changes to governance as agreed by SSON over the life of the program. Queensland commits to providing additional details of the State specific program governance model and arrangements (for example, changes to project board, governance requirements, and how decisions are made) as part of the project management plan in Milestone 2.

6) Specify approach to project management and reporting

Queensland commits to providing a detailed project management plan as part of Milestone 2, which will include details of how Queensland will manage its State-specific VDS transition project using its preferred contemporary, fit-for-purpose program and project governance, and delivery methodology.

Queensland further commits to:

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

Gate Reviews

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

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

Queensland commits to actively participating in the VDS program Gate Review process endorsed by SSON on 24 April 2024 as part of the VDS governance reset. These are:

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

Enhanced VET Data and Evidence - evaluation arrangements

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

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

Enhanced VET Data and Evidence - Funding arrangements

Details of funding	**2025-26**	**2026-27**	**2027-28**	**2028-29 $**
Commonwealth contribution	$1,900,000	TBA	TBA	TBA

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

MILESTONES FOR ENHANCED - VET DATA AND EVIDENCE

Milestone	Evidence	Payment Value Up to (Commonwealth funded)	Commonwealth reporting period
Milestone 1: Initial payment on agreement of bilateral implementation plan (expected July 2025)	1: Bilateral implementation plan agreed with the Commonwealth	$950,000	Payment will be made on execution of the implementation plan.
Milestone 2: Completion and acceptance of detailed State-specific program management planning artefacts	2: Commonwealth acceptance of State-specific program management planning artefacts, including: • VET Data and Streamlining roadmap • project management plan • detailed project Schedule • resource / procurement plan • risk management plan and key risks • payment schedule • agreed delivery payment milestones • State specific reconciliation report template	$950,000	31 March 2026
Future milestones to be agreed prior to 30 June 2026 (as per clause A136 of the National Skills Agreement) following delivery of the project management plan at Milestone 2.			

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

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

The Honourable Andrew Giles MP
Minister for Skills and Training
24 / 7 / 2025

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

The Honourable Ros Bates MP
Minister for Finance, Trade, Employment and Training
19 / 6 / 2025