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

PRELIMINARIES

1. This implementation plan (Plan) is made between the Commonwealth of Australia (Commonwealth) and Western Australia under the 2024–2028 National Skills Agreement (the NSA) and should be read in conjunction with the NSA.

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

3. Once executed, this implementation plan and any updates agreed with the Commonwealth, will be appended to the NSA and will be published on the Commonwealth's Federal Financial Relations website (https://federalfinancialrelations.gov.au).

4. This implementation plan is expected to expire on 31 December 2028 (in line with the NSA), or on the completion of the initiative, including final performance reporting and processing of final payments against milestones.

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

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

TAFE Defence Centre of Excellence

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

Priorities addressed:

(a) Gender equality
(b) Closing the Gap
(c) Developing Australia's sovereign defence capability
(d) Ensuring Australia's digital and technological capability

The **TAFE Defence Centre of Excellence (COE)** at **South Metropolitan TAFE (SMT)** will build on existing capability in vocational education and training (VET) to develop Western Australia's defence industry workforce to successfully undertake crucial defence work that will strengthen Australia's sovereign defence capability.

The defence industry is a key pillar of the State Government's strategy for economic diversification and job creation, contributes an estimated $3 billion each year to the State economy, and directly

employs more than 3,000 people[1]. Underpinned by major projects planned or underway, Western Australia's defence industry is expanding rapidly.

The Defence COE will contribute to Australia's national endeavour of significantly uplifting sovereign defence capability aligned with the national defence agenda as set out in:

- The Defence Industry Development Strategy
- Pillar 1 and 2 of the AUKUS Agreement
- AUKUS Submarine Workforce and Industry Strategy
- The Defence Strategic Review
- The Naval Shipbuilding and Sustainment Plan
- The Surface Combatant Fleet Review

Under the AUKUS Optimal Pathway, nuclear-powered submarines will be maintained at HMAS *Stirling* as part of Submarine Rotational Force-West from 2027. This is expected to create 500 direct jobs in Western Australia over the period 2027-2032. Up to $8 billion over the next decade will be invested by the Commonwealth to expand HMAS *Stirling*, creating around 3,000 direct jobs in Western Australia.

Australia's existing Collins class submarine fleet is undergoing a life-of-type extension (LOTE) at Osborne shipyard in South Australia. The LOTE will keep the Collins class submarine operationally capable and available into the 2040s, supporting Australia's transition to nuclear-powered submarines. Western Australia will play a key role in the sustainment of the Collins class submarines with maintenance occurring at the Henderson maritime precinct.

The Commonwealth's response to the *Independent Analysis of Navy's Surface Combatant Fleet* outlines plans for a general-purpose naval frigates program comprising 11 ships, of which eight ships are planned to be built in Henderson, Western Australia. Further, a fleet of six Large Optionally Crewed Surface Vessels (LOSVs) and additional Evolved Cape Class Patrol Boats are planned to be built at Henderson. In addition, a strategic shipbuilder pilot between the Commonwealth and Austal will see Army's Landing Craft Medium and Heavy (Littoral Manoeuvre Vessels) built in Henderson. Maintenance for Navy's fleet will be delivered through the Regional Maintenance Centres, one of which is located in Western Australia. These activities are estimated to create at least 1,200 new local jobs in Western Australia over the next decade.

The Defence COE will be integrated into SMT's defence facing campuses. These campuses are strategically located within the maritime industrial and commercial precinct near the Stirling Submarine Naval Base at Garden Island in Western Australia, enabling a natural synthesis between defence, industry, and specialist trainers. This creates a training and collaboration model which is easily accessible and convenient for external stakeholders, industry, higher education providers and the public.

Importantly, the Defence COE will collaborate closely with other States and Territories, the Commonwealth, and industry stakeholders, including other defence Centres of Excellence. In addition to addressing the national priority of developing Australia's sovereign naval shipbuilding and sustainment capability, the Defence COE will contribute to gender equity, Closing the Gap, and ensuring digital and technological capability.

Description	The Defence COE will be capable, in collaboration with the network of Western Australian TAFE colleges, of addressing the skills and workforce needs across all five defence domains: • Maritime

[1] ABS, Australian Defence Industry Account, experimental estimates, 2022-23 financial year

	• Air • Land • Space • Information and Cyber Western Australia is positioned at the forefront of Australia's defence commitments under AUKUS and will be the homeport and sustainment location for Australia's conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines. The State will also host regular visits by our allied partners' submarines under Submarine Rotational Force–West, deliver on the Australian Government's commitment for continuous naval shipbuilding, and continue to sustain Collins class conventional submarines through to their retirement. As an immediate national security priority, the Defence COE will focus on: • Skills to support Australia's nuclear-powered submarine capability and upskill the workforce undertaking nuclear-powered submarine sustainment work in Western Australia. • The full range of skills training in support of naval shipbuilding, sustainment and maintenance activities undertaken in Western Australia that contribute to the national effort to bolster defence capability. Based on recent Commonwealth Government commitments, Western Australia will also be the home of a consolidated Defence Precinct at Henderson which will host depot-level maintenance for nuclear-powered submarines as part of AUKUS, as well as broader continuous naval shipbuilding and sustainment activities. The Defence Precinct will also facilitate the construction of new landing craft for the Australian Army. SMT will work with Government and Industry to ensure the training and workforce requirements to support AUKUS and the consolidated Defence precinct. SMT will adapt to the priorities of Government and Defence. The Defence COE will also cover the full range of skills training support of naval shipbuilding, sustainment, safety, and maintenance activities undertaken in Western Australia. The Defence COE will build the workforce pipeline through existing initiatives such as the successful national Defence Industry Pathway Program (DIPP) and WA's Year 9 Career Taster Program, and collaborate with universities to support pathways into critical engineering and related programs for the defence industry workforce. New training courses and/or skillsets will be developed to meet the new skills required by industry over time. The Defence COE will leverage existing forums and work closely with: the Skills and Training Academy; the Office of Defence Industry Support, with a focus on development of the supply chain; the Department of Defence, including the Royal Australian Navy; the Australian Submarine Agency; ASC Pty Ltd; and Austal, CIVMEC and other defence industry stakeholders, including small and medium enterprises.

	SMT has well established relationships with universities, TAFEs, and state government departments from across Australia that support the defence industry. SMT is currently working with TAFE SA and sharing best practice and implementation advice for the Defence Industry Pathways Program in South Australia. In collaboration with defence focused training providers in other jurisdictions, the Defence COE will develop complementary and mutually reinforcing training activities to minimise duplication and leverage collective capability to enhance the broader national defence skills base. In addition, the Defence COE will continue to engage with key State and Commonwealth Government agencies such as the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Defence West, Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation, and the WA Defence Industry Workforce Office of the Department of Training and Workforce Development (DTWD) which is responsible for strategic workforce planning for all defence capability domains including maritime. The Defence COE will forge university, national and international partnerships to develop up-to-date curriculum, skill sets, micro-credentials, higher apprenticeships, and deliver training in specialist and secure facilities where necessary. SMT has undertaken study tours to the UK in December 2023 and a tour to the US in June 2024 to explore delivery models, licencing arrangements, and potentially establish partnerships with UK and US nuclear skills educators. This has identified new nuclear VET training pathways that are required to support the AUKUS endeavour and the new product development will be managed by the Defence Centre of Excellence. ASA has engaged SMT to have suitably qualified and experienced lecturing staff from SMT participate in the US Navy's Accelerated Training in Defence Manufacturing (ATDM) program. Through this program cutting-edge industry practices and advanced methodologies will be integrated into current and future training curriculum with selected international partners (AUKUS) to ensure that future students receive education and training that are both current and relevant. The Defence COE will: 1. Coordinate and collaborate: i. across other national skills centres of excellence, including the Defence's Skills and Training Academy, located in South Australia. ii. university partnerships for curriculum design and delivery, including articulation agreements between sectors. iii. with unions, industry, defence employers and contractors. iv. with Commonwealth and State Government agencies – the Department of Defence, Royal Australian Navy, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (Defence Skills Taskforce), Australian Submarine Agency, ASC Pty Ltd, Skills and Training Academy, Defence West, WA DTWD and other key government and defence industry stakeholders. 2. Develop and deliver higher apprenticeships, specifically:

	i. develop innovative curriculum and learning resources and practices, including online program development. ii. provide VET trainer development and support with focus on industry placements to develop expertise and maintain currency. iii. consult with industry and employers, including with Original Equipment Manufacturer providers. iv. operate state of the art learning technology such as defence-specific digital platforms, digital twinning, Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality, and innovative training solutions. v. provide cyber support for secure operations of digital assets and delivery. 3. Design, implement, and administer a range of skills initiatives and supports that will improve completions in defence industry occupations, specifically provide intensive learner support and mentoring, including one-on-one tutoring, particularly for priority groups such as First Nations students, people with disability, and women: i. provide intensive learner support and mentoring, including one-on-one tutoring, particularly for priority groups such as First Nations students, people with disability, and women. *Extension (adding a WID Cyber Qual of the Women in Defence (WID) Industry Scholarship Program:* Pathways for women are vital in securing a sovereign workforce to support the sustainment of nuclear-powered submarines in Western Australia. The current WID scholarship program is limited to Engineering (Electrical). Under the Defence Centre of Excellence, it is proposed the existing Women in Defence Engineering Scholarship be extended beyond 2023-24 and increased from 20 to 40 places per annum and proposes to include a new stream (additional training product) in cyber security, which is an industry priority. *ii. Establishment of the Defence Industry Pathways Program School-Based Traineeship:* Pathways for school students are vital to growing Western Australia's sovereign workforce to support the sustainment of nuclear-powered submarines. It is proposed that a School-Based Traineeship using the successful DIPP as a model be established to create 40 traineeships per annum over four years. The program will target year 11 school students, and provide them with valuable exposure, skills, and articulation to various career options in the defence industry through an 18-month traineeship (Certificate III in Defence Industry Pathways). The proposal includes the payment of trainee wages for one day a week, along with Group Training Organisation costs and tuition and resource fees, under the management of SMT. iii. Develop an *Uplift Retention and Completion Strategy* to inform improved VET completion strategies nationally. Between 2025-26 and 2027-28 the Defence COE will: • Conduct research to identify current factors that impact on VET completions. • Based on research findings develop strategies to generate an uplift in completions (Uplift retention/completion strategy).

	• Develop cost benefit analysis for each strategy and seek endorsement from the Industry Advisory Board. • Collaborate and share learnings with other jurisdictions through participation at Skills and Training Academy National SC. • Subject to Industry Advisory Board endorsement develop staged implementation plan. • Develop report to measure uplift (pre and post implementation). • Collaborate and share learnings with other jurisdictions through participation at Skills and Training Academy National SC. • Implement agreed strategies, including developing a report to measure uplift (pre and post implementation). • Collaborate and share learnings with other jurisdictions through participation at Skills and Training Academy National SC. **OTHER NATIONAL SKILLS AGREEMENT OBJECTIVES FOR CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE** **1. National leadership in the delivery of education and training.** Building on SMT's demonstrated leadership and experience chairing TAFE Cyber, a consortium of TAFE Colleges across Australia supporting training and skills development in cyber security, Western Australia will commit to the Defence COE operating in such a way that it: • Plays a national leadership role with employers, unions, universities, Jobs and Skills Councils, and other relevant stakeholders to identify, develop and deliver education and training solutions that meet industry needs across Australia. • Partners with TAFEs and other public providers across Australia to assist them with non-financial support to build their capability and capacity to deliver defence industry related training. It is important to note that SMT and Wodonga TAFE are Joint Technical Trades Training Service (JTTTS) partners, whereby SMT is the only training provider responsible for the delivery of training to support the needs of the Royal Australian Navy and Army in Western Australia. Under this contract with Wodonga TAFE, SMT commenced training delivery in January 2024. In the first four months of 2024, SM T delivered training to 105 members of the Royal Australian Navy in the areas of engineering, transport, and defence. Furthermore, the Navy's Fleet Support Unit West has approached SMT via the JTTTS to upskill their current workforce to support Submarine Rotational Force-West. **2. Enriching students' learning experience, supporting industry needs and enabling applied research programs.** The Defence COE will implement solutions to enable students to successfully complete defence industry training including traineeships and apprenticeships. In consultation with stakeholders this may include: • Intensive learner support tailored to specific student needs through the introduction of a "at risk management" system and provision of tailored support services. This involves data mining of student

	attendance and resulting information and identifying students at risk of attrition and introducing early intervention measures. • Development of an integrated pastoral care service for the defence training qualifications cluster that has greater oversight of Employer and Student needs. • Additional academic support including language, literacy, numeracy, and foundation skills. Given higher education pathways and dual sector pathways are new to the sector and largely undeveloped, free career advice and guidance including assistance to navigate VET and higher education pathways will be developed and implemented in consultation with industry, universities, students, and specialist career advisers. • Specialist career advice and support for ex-serving Australian Defence Force (ADF) members to transition into defence industry employment by matching skills and experience with defence industry roles and training options to fill skills gaps. • Industry mentoring programs drawn from past graduates and success stories that reflect the diversity of the community. Opportunities to develop training products and enable applied research embedded in all key activities undertaken by the Defence COE informed through extensive consultation and collaboration across the TAFE and university network and other relevant parties as required. To ensure a nationally cohesive approach in training program development, the Defence COE will collaborate closely with the Skills and Training Academy in South Australia designated as a national asset under the AUKUS Submarine Workforce and Industry Strategy. SMT welcomes any future opportunities to engage with the Skills and Training Academy in SA on new products, insights, and shared learnings. **3. Innovative delivery of tertiary education, including development and delivery of higher apprenticeships in areas of high skills need.** Given the importance of higher skills to support the nation's sovereign defence capabilities, the success of the higher apprenticeship initiative is paramount. The Defence COE will co-design with industry and education providers wrap-around support and two-way apprentice-employer-RTO engagement to ensure successful implementation, evaluation, and scalability of the higher apprenticeship model. The Defence COE will lead and facilitate the development of innovative curriculum and learning resources and delivery practices with defence industry stakeholders including: • Consult and collaborate with industry, other TAFE centres of excellence, universities, and defence stakeholders to design and develop new higher apprenticeships. • Undertake two-way apprentice-employer-training provider engagement to ensure successful implementation, evaluation, and scalability.

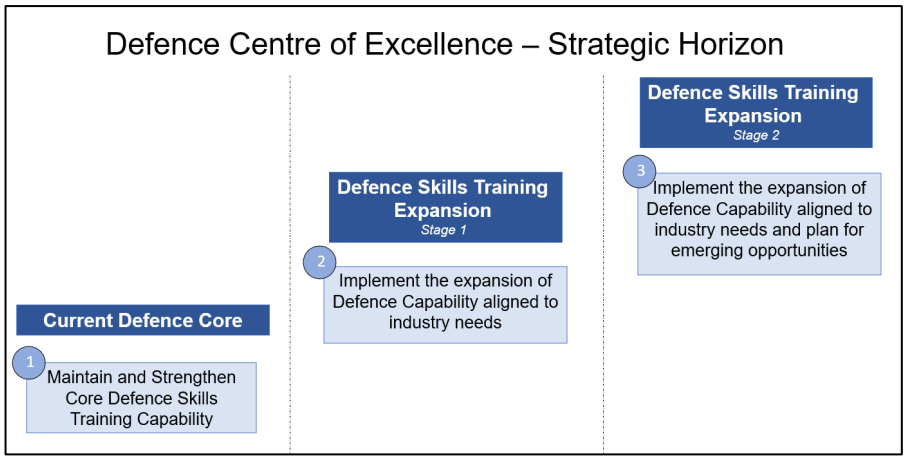
	• Undertake a formal pilot and evaluation product development process introducing new higher apprenticeships to identify areas for improvement. • Consider different support mechanisms including value add and effective wrap around support for apprentices, employers, and industry to successfully adopt the new concept and model. The Defence COE will also forge university partnerships at a national and international level to develop innovative and contemporary curriculum solutions including: • New defence industry qualifications, skill sets and micro-credentials. • Training in specialist and secure facilities. • New digital technology platforms and equipment. • Cyber support for secure operations of digital assets. SMT is in consultation with Australian Submarine Agency across multiple levels of the organisation. The ASA Technical division focuses on all aspects that underpin nuclear science from a higher education (university level). SMT will continue to engage with ASA and should opportunities arise that interface and collaborate at the VET level, SMT will provide advisory services. **4. Enabling organisational innovation and teaching and training excellence.** The Defence COE will align with the national VET Workforce Blueprint and other agreed workforce priorities. The Defence COE will collaborate closely with relevant stakeholders to develop a VET Practitioner Capability Plan to secure and maintain defence industry trainers and ensure the trainer culture fosters growth and professional maturation of students to become valuable assets to the defence industry. The Defence COE will play a key role in developing the capability of trainers and assessors which go beyond the levels required under Training and Assessment Education standards. This is especially the case with regard to delivery of nuclear skills for the defence industry, unprecedented in Australia, and will require high levels of practitioner support. Teaching and training excellence strategies may include: • VET trainer development and support with a focus on industry placements to maintain currency and contextualise expertise. • Third-party delivery partnerships of defence training. • Co-design of innovative approaches with industry to train and upskill the Defence VET practitioner workforce. • Continuous industry engagement that enables the Defence COE trainers and training product strategists to ensure curriculum meets industry skill needs. **5. Develop and leverage local industry, university, and community expertise.**

	The Defence COE will be the primary gateway for industry to address defence industry skills requirements and consult on training solutions for workforce development in Western Australia, networked nationally and working in partnership with industry, unions, and university stakeholders. The Defence COE will collaborate closely with these stakeholders through established governance structures and a new 'Community of Practice' to share learnings and best practice to ensure the national TAFE system benefits from the Defence COE. Increasing employer capability to support improved student completions will feature strongly and may include enhancements to industry work placements, apprenticeships, and strengthening mentoring arrangements. *Industry* The Defence COE will leverage SMT's long-standing partnerships with defence industry stakeholders to design and deliver the emerging skills needed by industry. This includes the Department of Defence, Royal Australian Navy, Australian Submarine Agency, Department of Training and Workforce Development, shipbuilding primes such as ASC, Austal, CIVMEC, and Industry Associations representing the interests of employers and small and medium enterprises in the defence industry. Consultation and collaboration will extend into other states and territories with the Defence COE to also work closely with the: • Skills and Training Academy in South Australia. • Office of Defence Industry Support. • Department of Defence, Royal Australian Navy, and the Australian Submarine Agency. In addition, SMT facilitates the Australian Centre for Energy and Process Training (ACEPT) at its Munster campus, which is a world-class, specialist training facility aligned with training requirements of the oil and gas, processing, and resources industries. SMT's ACEPT facility provides beneficial training synergies to the Defence COE that supports skills development in innovation and automation in Western Australia's growing defence industry. *Community* The Defence COE will engage with schools to grow the pipeline of workers and inspire the next generation to pursue STEM studies and careers in the defence industry. Students may be offered opportunities through school-based traineeships, including DIPP or through Year 9 career taster programs. Local government and community-based organisations will be engaged to inform programs and matters such as community development, infrastructure and facility planning and design. Given SMT's presence within the Global Advanced Industry Hub in the Western Trade Coast precinct, the Defence COE is well positioned to upskill workers transitioning from adjacent sectors impacted by structural change. In addition, a specialist defence industry team at the Rockingham Jobs and Skills Centre located at SMT's Rockingham campus provides free career counselling,

	job search, and training support services for all Western Australians including students, jobseekers, workers, and community members. *University* Western Australia recognises the mutual benefits of collaboration between the VET and higher education sectors and commits the Defence COE to actively engaging with relevant universities for the purpose of developing partnerships that support and deliver on its objectives. These partnerships could take different forms, and are likely to evolve over time, but could include: • University representation in Defence COE governance structures. • Exchanging expertise and experience in the design and delivery of education and training relevant to the Defence COE, including higher apprenticeship pathways. • Establishing credit recognition arrangements and entry pathways between VET and higher education for education and training relevant to the Defence COE. • Joint opportunities for applied research relevant to the Defence COE. • Utilising the Defence COE network of education providers, defence industry and stakeholders to inform design and development of new training solutions for emerging skills required by industry. Prominent levels of collaboration already exist between SMT and Western Australian universities through the WA Defence Industry Articulation Catalogue to identify defence industry pathways and articulation arrangements between VET and university education with a current focus on qualifications in engineering, information technology, and cyber security. The Defence COE will also inform the State Government's recently launched '*The Other Force*' website which enables Western Australians to navigate vocational and tertiary pathways for in-demand occupations in the defence industry. *Unions* The Defence COE will leverage existing productive working relationships with relevant unions to assist with understanding the implications for industrial instruments and processes covering training product design including apprenticeships and traineeships. Unions will be consulted as the scope of work expands into emerging skills areas including advanced manufacturing and requirements to support Australia's nuclear powered submarine program. *Jobs and Skills Councils* The Defence COE will work with Jobs and Skills Councils in a nationally networked approach across industry engagement arrangements with other States and Territories to ensure consistency and coherence in training product development, industry buy-in, workforce planning, and avoiding duplication of effort and training products. This includes Jobs and Skills Councils with defence industry coverage including the Manufacturing Industry Skills Alliance, Industry Skills Australia and Public Skills Australia and others as required.

	6. Partner and network with stakeholders. The Defence COE will strengthen SMT's existing partnerships and expand its stakeholder network to explore and support new defence industry initiatives by engaging with: • Other national defence skills centres of excellence including the Skills and Training Academy in South Australia. • Higher education providers. • Unions, industry, defence employers and contractors. • Industry associations. • Intrastate and Interstate TAFEs. • Cooperative Research Centres. • Department of Defence, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Defence West, Department of Training and Workforce Development and other government stakeholders. • Private Registered Training Organisations and Group Training Organisations. **7. Engaging with and expanding opportunities for priority cohorts.** The Defence COE will offer training opportunities that support outcomes for priority cohorts including gender diverse, First Nations peoples, school leavers and youth supported by well-recognised programs including: • Skills requirements to support Australia's nuclear-powered submarine capability requirements and upskill the Western Australian workforce undertaking nuclear-powered submarine sustainment work. • Year 9 Career Taster Programs. • Women in Defence Industry Scholarship Program. • Defence Industry Pathways Program (currently Commonwealth funded until June 2026). • Defence Industry Internship and Graduate Scholarships. • School Based Traineeship programs. • Aboriginal School Based Traineeships programs. • Pre-apprenticeships and pre-traineeships. • Apprenticeship and Traineeship Re-engagement Incentive. The Defence COE will also target jobseekers and existing workers looking to upskill, re-skill or transition to employment in the defence industry. This includes mature age job seekers looking to return to the workforce and supporting experienced veterans with gap training to pursue a career in the defence industry. This includes specialist defence industry staff to work closely with veterans to leverage existing capabilities and determine skill requirements for AUKUS roles. The Defence COE will support learners well beyond the standard requirements for RTOs. This includes working closely with industry to facilitate mentoring opportunities and placing students with employers to gain valuable industry experience through specialist defence industry career and pathway advice including specialist support for defence veterans. This

	includes higher apprenticeship pathways which are new to the sector and largely undeveloped.
Delivery Method	The Defence COE will operate as a business unit of SMT under usual administrative arrangements, with an Industry Advisory Body like the ACEPT at Henderson. The advisory body will include key defence industry stakeholders, government, Jobs and Skills Councils, employers, universities, regulators, and unions. SMT's product development process is based on an Industry and Curriculum Advisory Group for each product/initiative. The composition of the group will include a range of industry, unions, regulators, and other tertiary institutions from state and national levels. SMT currently oversees a 26-member industry advisory group comprising these stakeholders and the ASA in the development of a nuclear mindset unit of competency. Partners include: • Defence industry primes • ASA • Australian Manufacturers Workers Union • Curtin University • Henderson Alliance (representing second tier supply chain) • State Industry Training Council • Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation • Department of Defence SMT will establish the Defence COE Industry Advisory Board comprised of representatives from relevant industry, government, union, tertiary providers, and community). The Defence COE will develop training products and deliver skills training or establish partnerships to cover: • The full range of naval shipbuilding, sustainment and maintenance activities undertaken in Western Australia that contribute to the national effort to bolster defence capability. • Skills requirements to support Australia's nuclear-powered submarine capability requirements and upskill the Western Australian workforce undertaking nuclear-powered submarine sustainment work. The Defence COE Strategic Horizon for expanding defence skills training is from 2024 to 2028 and illustrated below.



The Defence COE will connect with other TAFE Centres of Excellence and universities to develop and provide contemporary teaching and learning assessment approaches and practices that build skills to ensure Australia's digital technological capabilities relating to defence, along the lines of the Associate Degree in Applied Technologies (designed and co-delivered by SMT and the University of Western Australia) for careers in Industry 4.0 manufacturing and/or engineering in the defence industry.

The Defence COE will consult with industry and relevant Jobs and Skills Councils to inform its offerings and implementation of modern technologies such as digital twinning and Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality to provide state of the art training experiences.

SMT will develop a nuclear skills framework as part of the Defence COE informed by a study tour exploring potential delivery models, curriculum licencing arrangements and strategic partnerships with UK and US educational institutions. SMT is currently developing an entry level unit of competence focusing on the establishment and development of a nuclear mindset which is under consideration by the Australian Submarine Agency.

Stage 1 from 2024 ➡	Stage 2 from June 2025 ➡	Stage 3 from 2027 onwards
Product Development		
Industry demand driven product development	Industry demand driven product development	Industry demand driven product development.
Lead product development accreditation for defence related training at a national level to develop and maintain the position of 'a leader in defence industry training product development' in Australia	Maintain and strengthen position of 'a leader in defence industry training product development' in Australia	Maintain and strengthen position of 'a leader in defence industry training product development' in Australia
Develop Nuclear Skills Framework (NSF)	NSF Product Launch stage I	NSF Product Launch stage II

	Programs		
	Collaboration with universities, industry and Jobs and Skills Council (JSC) on higher apprenticeships	Collaboration with universities, industry and JSC on higher apprenticeships	Collaboration with universities, industry and JSC on higher apprenticeships
	Develop People Capability Plan to secure and maintain defence industry trainers	Implement people capability plan (Stage I)	Implement people capability plan (Stage II)
	Proactive engagement with industry, regulators, universities, and national bodies to drive research and development	Proactive engagement with industry, regulators, universities, and national bodies to drive research and development	Proactive engagement with industry, regulators, universities, and national bodies to drive research and development
	The Defence COE will provide advanced manufacturing skill sets, designed, and developed for existing workers, to advance their knowledge in engineering and manufacturing to take advantage of higher skilled roles in the defence industries. These include skill sets in: • Non-destructive testing • Computer Normal Control (CNC) Operations • CNC Conversational Programming • Computer Aided Design (CAD) Course • Coded Welding Flux Cored Arc • Coded Welding Gas Tungsten Arc • Coded Welding Manual Metal Arc Welding (Pipe) • Fluid Power • Welding Supervisor		
Expected reach and additionality	The Defence COE will be integrated into SMT's network of campuses with defence capability and deliver defence related training and related activities. This includes the following campuses: Naval Base – This defence trades specialist facility boasts state of the art fabrication and composites workshops, and welding simulators. The Naval Base campus sits in the heart of the shipbuilding precinct south of Perth. Munster – This campus is a state-of-the-art specialist training facility for the mining, oil and gas, engineering, and resources industries. It has a purpose-built Applied Engineering facility including automation and CNC milling. It also has a mechatronics room that deals with circuit design and simulation software. This campus is home to the Women in Defence Scholarship Program. Rockingham – SMT's largest campus offers a wide variety of courses. It houses a purpose-built workshop and contemporary equipment for delivery of fabrication and mechanical fitter and machinist training. This campus also has		

	four CNC machines to provide students with firsthand maritime defence manufacturing experience. Fremantle – this campus features state-of-the-art equipment and world class simulator technology for specialist training across the maritime, engineering and logistics industry areas. This campus is also home to the DIPP. **Additionality** The Defence COE Strategic Horizons (One to Three) will achieve additionality and address defence industry's skills needs through the following key high-level deliverables: • Establish the Defence COE governance framework and related governance policies and procedures. • Develop a Defence COE Business Plan to identify new priority VET products and where relevant the extension and expansion of existing defence programs. • Expand the remit of existing programs to cover expansion of the Defence Industry Pathways Program as a school-based traineeship and the Women in Defence Scholarship Program into the cyber domain. • Establish a Curriculum Advisory Group to investigate and explore the design and delivery of higher-level apprenticeships in defence industries. • Develop and implementation of a Defence VET Practitioner Capability Plan to strengthen SMT's and other training partners organisational capability to meet 'defence readiness' requirements. • Establish a Community of Practice inclusive of a network of defence partnerships nationally and internationally so to share intellectual property and good practice. The Department of Training and Workforce Development will provide expertise in strategic workforce planning to the Defence COE. This will be in collaboration with Defence West, the State Government agency responsible for the development of the defence industry in Western Australia, Department of Defence, the Australian Submarine Agency, ASC Pty Ltd, Skills and Training Academy in South Australia, Jobs and Skills Australia and relevant Jobs and Skills Councils, and the State's Industry Training Council network.

TAFE CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE

Amount of investment – Commonwealth	**Amount of investment – State**	**Planned start date**	**Planned end date**
$3.25 million	*$3.25 million*	1 July 2024	30 June 2028

IMPROVED COMPLETIONS – ESPECIALLY FOR PRIORITY GROUPS

Amount of investment – Commonwealth	Amount of investment – State	Planned start date	Planned end date
$4.05 million	*$4.05 million*	1 July 2024	30 June 2028

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

VET Improved Completions – approach to matched funding arrangements (clause A144 refers)

Details of matched funding ($millions)	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	Total
TAFE Centres of Excellence	$0.850	$0.800	$0.800	$0.800	*$3.250*
VET Improved Completions	$0.525	$1.175	$1.175	$1.175	*$4.050*

Note: The WA Government will provide details of matched funding contributions at the end of each financial year, commencing 1 July 2024 until 30 June 2028. Final payments under this implementation plan may be reduced where the total contribution, including financial commitments made under the terms of this agreement extend beyond 30 June 2028, by the WA Government over the life of the project does not align with the Commonwealth contribution.

TAFE Centres of Excellence – reporting

The Defence COE will report annually on activities and progress towards achievement of Defence COE priorities. This will include stakeholder feedback on performance and engagement. Progress and outcomes measured against quantitative and qualitative indicators.

Quantitative indicators

Key quantitative measures include:

- Enrolments and completions in defence industry programs.
- Defence COE graduate employment outcomes including entering defence industries.
- Total number of students enrolled in defence programs accessing the following support mechanisms:
  - Intensive and tailored learner support.
  - Language, literacy, numeracy, and foundation skills programs.
  - Support from Jobs and Skills Centres.
  - Industry mentoring programs.

Qualitative indicators

Key qualitative measures include:

- Establishment of the Defence COE Industry Advisory Group.
- Articulation and pathways from schools to VET to university for the defence industries.
- Establishment of new defence programs.
- Completion of the VET Practitioner Capability Plan.

Additional Priority Group Indicators

The Defence COE will report regular progress and outcomes annually for the following priority cohorts:

- Total number of gender diverse students enrolled across Defence COE programs each year.
- Total number of gender diverse graduates across Defence COE programs each year.
- Total number of Defence COE graduates obtaining employment in defence industries each year.
- Women in defence industry case studies and success stories.

The Defence COE will track progress of secondary school students participating in the DIPP School-based Pathways Program and Year 9 Career Taster programs including:

- Total number of secondary school students enrolled in Defence COE programs.
- Total number of secondary school graduates across Defence COE programs.
- Total number of secondary school graduates pursuing further studies or employment pathways in defence industries.
- Secondary school student case studies and success stories.

The Defence COE will also track progress of First Nations' students and students with a disability undertaking defence skills training including:

- Total number of First Nations students enrolled and graduated from defence programs.
- Total number students with a disability enrolled and graduated from defence programs.
- Student case studies and success stories.

Additional qualitative and quantitative measures may be identified and agreed with the Commonwealth through the development of the evaluation plan, where these are necessary for the efficient, effective, and transparent operation and evaluation of the Defence COE. Acceptance of the evaluation plan will not be unreasonably withheld.

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

Refer sections above

TAFE Centres of Excellence - evaluation arrangements

A Defence COE Evaluation Framework will be submitted in two stages:

- 2026 – Completion of a formative interim evaluation of the Defence COE to inform future policy (and change direction if necessary).
- 2028 – Completion of the final summative evaluation that will evaluate all operational aspects. of the Defence COE and the extent to which it has met its key objectives set in 2024.

The Defence COE through a mixed method approach will consider in its evaluation:

- Quantitative and qualitative indicator findings, including priority groups.
- Student experience and engagement surveys.
- Graduate outcomes surveys.
- Employer experience surveys.
- Stakeholder engagement and perspectives surveys and lessons learnt workshops (Industry Advisory Group, Community of Practice, National TAFE networks, and other working groups and collaborations).

The final Evaluation Report will include key findings, what worked well, lessons learnt and continuous improvement strategies.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

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

Linkages

The Defence COE intersects with the following national priorities:
Improved VET Completions for Priority Groups by increasing the number of initiatives and partnerships that increase training participation and completions for women, First Nations people and other priority cohorts in critical defence trades and higher apprenticeships.

Nationally networked TAFE Centres of Excellence that allow for a partnership between industry, universities, agencies, and governments to develop the defence industry workforce and strengthen Australia's sovereign defence capability.

Supporting, growing, and retaining a quality VET workforce through development of a Defence VET Practitioner Capability Plan with key industry partners and defence stakeholders to maintain and build defence industry trainers.

Establishing **Sovereign Capability** including advanced manufacturing skills to support **digitalisation** of the economy and **A Future Made in Australia**.

Dependencies

- Tri-partisan and multilateral defence arrangements outside the VET system, including AUKUS.
- The scale, scope, and timing of private industry investment in defence projects.
- Tri-partite agreements related to training product delivery for the defence industry and other intersecting fields, including higher apprenticeships with the university sector.
- Pre-established industrial arrangements and enterprise agreements relating to higher apprenticeships.
- Timeliness and endorsement by governing parties of proposals for higher level apprenticeships.
- Jobs and Skills Councils work programs.
- Engagement of other TAFE centres of excellence.

Student Experience

The Defence COE will gauge the level of student engagement and experiences through a mixed method approach including:

- Quantitative and qualitative indicators to monitor VET completion rates and effectiveness of support mechanisms.
- The evaluation of student experiences through case studies and student surveys covering issues such as cultural safety and access.

In exploring the design and development of higher-level apprenticeships, the student experience will be considered in:

- The design and evaluation of new wrap around support initiatives to promote successful higher apprenticeship outcomes.
- The design and evaluation of articulation arrangements and joint delivery of higher apprenticeship programs with universities to identify program improvements needed for a seamless student and employer experience.

Engagement arrangements

Covered above.

Reporting

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

Developed in collaboration with the Commonwealth post-commencement of this policy initiative.

MILESTONES AND PAYMENTS

The Commonwealth will make payments subject to the performance report demonstrating the relevant milestone has been met. After the initial payment, second and subsequent milestone payments will be assessed and processed annually. By the end of September each year, and in accordance with NSA clause A69(d), WA will provide evidence of what has been delivered in the previous financial year, except for deliverables due between 1 July 2028-31 December 2028 where milestone payments may be assessed and processed earlier than September 2029. Payments will be processed once performance reports have been assessed and accepted.

Year 1 2024-2025

Policy initiative	Milestone	Evidence	Payment Value up to (Commonwealth funded)	Commonwealth reporting period
TAFE Centres of Excellence	**MILESTONE 1: 15 DECEMBER 2024** Initial payment of this bilateral implementation plan for establishment of the Defence Centre of Excellence (including VET Improved Completions elements).	Bilateral implementation plan agreed with Commonwealth.	$650,000	N/A
TAFE Centres of Excellence	**MILESTONE 2: 15 JUNE 2025** Commonwealth acceptance that WA has established the Defence COE and implemented a governance framework demonstrated by: • Establishing the Defence COE Industry Advisory Group and appointing a Chair. • Establishing Defence COE governance structure, roles, and responsibilities. • Commenced recruitment and appointment of personnel. • Developed a Defence COE operational plan that specifies deliverables to be achieved over the NSA, including associated timeframes. • Developed a stakeholder engagement program including a Defence COE Community of Practice.	Report signed by WA senior official with responsibility for skills that outlines key activities of the Defence COE in the reporting period and includes or attaches: • Terms of reference and membership of the Defence COE Industry Advisory Group. • Defence COE governance and organisational structure and recruitment status of positions. • Defence COE operational plan. • Stakeholder engagement program including Defence COE Community of Practice. • Evidence (if applicable) that the Commonwealth were consulted on the nature and content of any events, announcements, promotional activity, or publicity related to the Defence COE.	$200,000	30 September 2025

VET Improved Completions	**MILESTONE 3: 15 JUNE 2025** Commonwealth acceptance that WA has undertaken Defence COE Improved Completions activities, to be shown by: • Establishing a Defence Industry Pathway Program (DIPP) School Based Traineeship Advisory Group. • DIPP School Based Traineeship implementation plan developed in consultation with the Advisory Group. • Develop implementation plan for the expanded Women in Defence Industry Scholarship. • Executing delivery agreement with selected DIPP School Based Traineeship pilot school. • Recruiting a Group Training Organisation (GTO) and host employers to support the DIPP School Based Traineeship.	Report signed by WA senior official with responsibility for skills that outlines key activities of the Defence COE in the reporting period and includes or attaches: • Defence COE operational plan. • Terms of reference and membership of the DIPP School Based Traineeship Advisory Group. • Implementation and evaluation plan for the DIPP School Based Traineeship and expanded Women in Defence Industry Scholarship. • Delivery arrangements in place for the DIPP School Based Traineeship.	$525,000	30 September 2025

Year 2 2025-2026

Policy initiative	Milestone	Evidence	Payment Value up to (Commonwealth funded)	Commonwealth reporting period
TAFE Centres of Excellence	**MILESTONE 4: 15 DECEMBER 2025** Commonwealth acceptance that the Defence COE has progressed operations demonstrated by: • Achievement of specified deliverables up to 15 December 2025 in the Defence COE operational plan submitted to the Commonwealth as part of the reporting for Milestone 2. • Collaboration and shared learnings with other TAFE's where applicable through engagement with the Australian Submarine Agency Skills and Training Academy and the Teaching and Learning Centre of Excellence. • Developing a Defence VET Practitioner Capability Plan focussed on emerging skills.	Report signed by WA senior official with responsibility for skills that outlines key activities of the Defence COE in the reporting period and includes or attaches: • Progress against achievement of deliverables specified in the Defence COE operational plan to 15 December 2025. • Updated Defence COE operational plan to 15 December 2026. • Documented collaboration and shared learnings with defence industry stakeholders and linkages with other NSA Specific Policy Initiatives including Improving Completions, Foundation Skills, Closing the Gap, National TAFE Network. • Evidence (if applicable) that the Commonwealth were consulted on the nature and content of any events, announcements, promotional activity, or publicity related to the Defence COE. • Project plan for development of the Defence VET Practitioner Capability Plan and stakeholder engagement strategy.	$450,000	30 September 2026
VET Improved Completions	**MILESTONE 5: 15 DECEMBER 2025** Commonwealth acceptance that WA has undertaken Defence COE Improved Completions activities, to be shown by: • Achievement of specified deliverables up to 15 December 2025 in the Defence COE operational plan submitted to the Commonwealth as part of the reporting for Milestone 3. • The DIPP Schools-based Traineeship commences in Semester 2, 2025.	Report signed by WA senior official with responsibility for skills that outlines key activities of the Defence COE in the reporting period and includes or attaches: • Progress against achievement of deliverables specified in the Defence COE operational plan to 15 December 2025. • Updated Defence COE operational plan to 15 December 2026.	$1,175,000	30 September 2026

	• Implementation Women in Defence Industry Scholarship from Semester 2 2025. • Conducting research to identify current factors that impact on VET completions.	• Document describing the rollout of DIPP Pilot School Based Traineeship to participating school(s). • Report on the Women in Defence Industry Scholarship including course enrolments, and outcomes achieved. • Research findings and strategies developed to generate uplift in completions (Stage 1 Uplift Retention and Completion Strategy).		
TAFE Centres of Excellence	**MILESTONE 6: 15 JUNE 2026** Development of a Nuclear Skills Product Feasibility informed by the Nuclear Skills Framework demonstrated by: • Establishing a Product Advisory Group including representatives from the Australian Submarine Agency Skills and Training Academy. • Developing nuclear related training product, skills curriculum, and associated course accreditation submission.	Report signed by WA senior official with responsibility for skills that outlines key activities of the Defence COE in the reporting period and includes or attaches: • Details of the Product Advisory Group including terms of reference and membership. • Product feasibility, business case, strategic and implementation plan. • Endorsed nuclear skills curriculum accreditation by the Training Accreditation Council.	$350,000	30 September 2026

Year 3 2026-2027

Policy initiative	Milestone	Evidence	Payment Value up to (Commonwealth funded)	Commonwealth reporting period
TAFE Centres of Excellence	**MILESTONE 7: 15 DECEMBER 2026** Commonwealth acceptance that the Defence COE has progressed operations demonstrated by: • Achievement of specified deliverables up to 15 December 2026 in the Defence COE operational plan submitted to the Commonwealth as part of the reporting for Milestone 4. • Collaboration and shared learnings with other TAFE's where applicable through engagement with the Australian Submarine Agency Skills and Training Academy and the Teaching and Learning Centre of Excellence. • Implementation of nuclear related training product. • Implementation of Defence VET Practitioner Capability Plan • Interim evaluation of Defence Centre of Excellence	Report signed by WA senior official with responsibility for skills that outlines key activities of the Defence COE in the reporting period and includes or attaches: • Progress against achievement of deliverables specified in the Defence COE operational plan to 15 December 2026. • Updated Defence COE operational plan to 15 December 2027. • Documented collaboration and shared learnings with defence industry stakeholders and linkages with other NSA Specific Policy Initiatives including Improving Completions, Foundation Skills, Closing the Gap, National TAFE Network. • Evidence (if applicable) that the Commonwealth were consulted on the nature and content of any events, announcements, promotional activity, or publicity related to the Defence COE • Evaluation of Nuclear Skills Framework as outlined in Milestone 6. • Implementation plan for the Defence VET Practitioner Capability Plan. • Formative interim evaluation of the Defence COE	$800,000	30 September 2027
VET Improved Completions	**MILESTONE 8: 15 DECEMBER 2026** Commonwealth acceptance that WA has undertaken Defence COE Improved Completions activities, to be shown by: • Achievement of specified deliverables up to 15 December 2026 in the Defence COE operational plan submitted to the	Report signed by WA senior official with responsibility for skills that outlines key activities of the Defence COE in the reporting period and includes or attaches: • Progress against achievement of deliverables specified in the Defence COE operational plan to 15 December 2026.	$587,000	30 September 2027

	Commonwealth as part of the reporting for Milestone 5. • Evaluation of DIPP School Based Traineeship and Women in Defence Industry Scholarship. • Development of Uplift Retention and Completion Strategy in consultation with the Community of Practice to inform improved VET completion strategies nationally.	• Updated Defence COE operational plan to 15 December 2027. • Evaluation of DIPP School Based Traineeship and Women in Defence Industry Scholarship. • Report of Uplift Retention and Completion Strategy.		
VET Improved Completions	**MILESTONE 9: 15 JUNE 2027** Commonwealth acceptance that WA has undertaken Defence COE Improved Completions activities, to be shown by: • Evaluation of DIPP School Based Traineeship. • Evaluation of Women in Defence Industry Scholarship. • Developing recommendations paper for higher level apprenticeships. • Implementation of Uplift Retention and Completion Strategy.	Report signed by WA senior official with responsibility for skills that outlines key activities of the Defence COE in the reporting period and includes or attaches: • Evaluation of DIPP School Based Traineeship and Women in Defence Industry Scholarship. • Formative evaluation of Uplift Retention and Completion Strategy. • Higher level apprenticeships implementation plan.	$588,000	30 September 2027

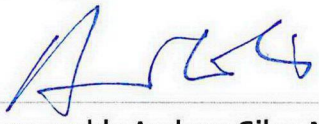
Year 4 2027-2028

Policy initiative	Milestone	Evidence	Payment Value up to (Commonwealth funded)	Commonwealth reporting period
TAFE Centres of Excellence	**MILESTONE 10: 15 DECEMBER 2027** Commonwealth acceptance that the Defence COE has progressed operations demonstrated by: • Achievement of specified deliverables up to 15 December 2027 in the Defence COE operational plan submitted to the Commonwealth as part of the reporting for Milestone 7. • Collaboration and shared learnings with other TAFE's where applicable through engagement with the Australian Submarine Agency Skills and Training Academy. • Recommendations from Nuclear Skills Framework evaluation report applied and implemented. • Report on implementation of the Defence VET Practitioner Capability Plan.	Report signed by WA senior official with responsibility for skills that outlines key activities of the Defence COE in the reporting period and includes or attaches: • Progress against achievement of deliverables specified in the Defence COE operational plan to 15 December 2027. • Updated Defence COE operational plan to 30 June 2028. • Documented collaboration and shared learnings with defence industry stakeholders and linkages with other NSA Specific Policy Initiatives including Improving Completions, Foundation Skills, Closing the Gap, National TAFE Network. • Evidence (if applicable) that the Commonwealth were consulted on the nature and content of any events, announcements, promotional activity, or publicity related to the Defence COE. • Summative evaluation of Nuclear Skills Framework highlighting insights and learnings. • Formative evaluation of Defence VET Practitioner Capability Plan.	$650,000	30 September 2028
VET Improved Completions	**MILESTONE 11: 15 DECEMBER 2027** Commonwealth acceptance that WA has undertaken Defence COE Improved Completions activities, to be shown by: • Achievement of specified deliverables up to 15 December 2027 in the Defence COE operational plan submitted to the Commonwealth as part of the reporting for Milestone 8. • Rollout plan of DIPP School Based Traineeship.	Report signed by WA senior official with responsibility for skills that outlines key activities of the Defence COE in the reporting period and includes or attaches: • Progress against achievement of deliverables specified in the Defence COE operational plan to 15 December 2027. • Updated Defence COE operational plan to 30 June 2028. • Evaluation of DIPP School Based Traineeship and Women in Defence Industry Scholarship.	$587,000	30 September 2028

	• Implementation Women in Defence Industry Scholarship. • Development of a higher-level apprenticeship strategy leveraging industry, university and community expertise underpinned by successful apprenticeship completion and scalability.	• Documentation on development of higher apprenticeship pathways in partnership with industry.		
TAFE Centres of Excellence	**MILESTONE 12: 15 JUNE 2028** Commonwealth acceptance that WA has undertaken Defence COE Improved Completions activities, to be shown by: Achievement of specified deliverables up to 30 June 2028 in the Defence COE, to be shown by: • Achievement of specified deliverables up to 30 June 2028 in the Defence COE operational plan. • Report on the outcomes of the Defence VET Practitioner Capability Plan	Report signed by WA senior official with responsibility for skills that outlines key activities of the Defence COE in the reporting period and includes or attaches: • Progress against achievement of deliverables specified in the Defence COE operational plan to 15 June 2028. • Summative evaluation of Defence VET Practitioner Capability Plan.	$150,000	30 September 2028
VET Improved Completions	**MILESTONE 13: 15 JUNE 2028** Commonwealth acceptance that WA has undertaken Defence COE Improved Completions activities, to be shown by: • Achievement of specified deliverables up to 30 June 2028 in the Defence COE operational plan submitted to the Commonwealth as part of the reporting for Milestone 11. • Implementation of the DIPP School Based Traineeship and the Women in Defence Industry Scholarship. • Implementation of Uplift Retention and Completion Strategy.	Report signed by WA senior official with responsibility for skills that outlines key activities of the Defence COE in the reporting period and includes or attaches: • Progress against achievement of deliverables specified in the Defence COE operational plan to 30 June 2027. • Evaluation of DIPP School Based Traineeship and Women in Defence Industry Scholarship. • Documentation for higher apprenticeships which may include evidence of enrolments, course outline and course accreditation. • Summative evaluation of Uplift Retention and Completion Strategy.	$588,000	30 September 2028

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

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



The Honourable Andrew Giles MP
Minister for Skills and Training

20 / 1 / 2025

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



The Honourable Simone McGurk MLA
Minister for Training and Workforce Development

08/01/2025