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

## PRELIMINARIES

1. This implementation plan is made between the Commonwealth of Australia (Commonwealth) and Western Australia (WA) 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, WA will acknowledge the Commonwealth's contribution with the following statement: Measures to strengthen the VET workforce is a joint initiative between the Australian Government and Western 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 Agreement, or the final payment is processed.

6. WA will provide to the Commonwealth a traffic light status and activity summary on all policy initiatives.

7. WA's activities will be reported using current templates developed by WA.

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

10. Where a payment is due at a reporting period, WA will complete 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):

The Western Australian Government has made a commitment to focus on priority training areas that will address skills shortages in the State. Skills shortages have been a focus of the WA Skills Summits and the Commonwealth's Jobs and Skills Summit, with innovative solutions to address skills shortages and the need to build a bigger, better trained and more productive workforce. WA's Fee Free and *Lower fees, local skills* initiatives provide free and subsidised training in priority industry areas with known skills shortages within the VET workforce.

Western Australia has seen record levels of training over the last few years, with the introduction of free and low fee training contributing to around 165,000 course enrolments in publicly funded training in 2024. The commitment to continue free and low fee training over the next few years will put further pressure on TAFE colleges to retain and attract skilled lecturers to deliver high quality training to fulfil these commitments.

TAFE lecturers contribute to improving the skills of Western Australians undertaking vocational education and training (VET) to enter the workforce or upskill and reskill into other pathways to support the State's economy.

The strategies, which can be allocated into two key actions, align with the workforce planning requirement for TAFEs and support all aspects across the life cycle for a WA TAFE lecturer:

1. TAFE Workforce support – initiatives that will have an impact across the sector.
2. TAFE Lecturer support – initiatives that will provide direct support to lecturers.

Initiatives align with VET Workforce Blueprint Opportunity 8.

**TAFE Workforce support**

**a) Workforce Planning ($1.2 million)**

The development of a WA VET Workforce Framework with a focus on current and future workforce needs will recognise the critical role the WA TAFE workforce has in delivering high-quality training that meets local industry needs and student demand. The WA VET Workforce Framework will guide the development of individual operational-level workforce plans for TAFE colleges, including strategies to build the First Nations VET workforce, and a contemporary TAFE Lecturer capability framework. This will support future attraction and retention campaigns, and broader sector planning aligned with identified future skills priorities and industry forecasts.

Retaining skilled trainers and assessors in a competitive job market is important to allow TAFEs to continue to meet their service delivery obligations, particularly in priority industry areas and the regions. The development of a contemporary TAFE Lecturer Capability Framework and customised local model for use with career conversations and progression through levels is expected to help support better retention of TAFE lecturers.

This initiative aligns with VET Workforce Blueprint Opportunity 1, Actions 1 assisting TAFE Colleges with identifying needs mapped to skills priorities.

**b) Attraction and recruitment ($1.0 million)**

TAFEs often experience difficulties attracting, recruiting, and retaining lecturers when the labour market is competitive and offers more lucrative opportunities in other sectors. For example, the resources sector building and construction, where there is high demand and/or higher salaries.

This is most acutely felt in regional TAFE colleges. The pool of lecturers is often drawn from people currently or recently working in industries and making a shift to 'give back' to their industry by training the next generation of skilled workers.

The TAFE attraction and recruitment campaign will build on the previous TAFE Lecturer recruitment campaign, targeting key areas, priority cohorts and/or regions in line with the WA VET Workforce Framework and individual TAFE Workforce Plans

The campaign will be backed by market research that will:

- investigate the motivators and barriers to seeking TAFE lecturer employment;
- measure industry professionals' awareness of TAFE lecturing as a profession; and
- identify what support they may need to transition into TAFE lecturing.

The research will seek feedback from current lecturers, ex-lecturers, skilled professionals who may not have considered lecturing as a career.

This initiative aligns with VET Workforce Blueprint Opportunity 2 Attracting people into the VET workforce, particularly teachers, trainers, and assessors, with:

- **Actions 4 -** Develop targeted, coordinated, and sequenced promotion strategies and activities to boost the profile of VET workforce careers and attract more people into the sector, and
- **Action 6 -** Develop localised and bespoke First Nations strategies to build the First Nations VET workforce. These will be developed from the ground up in partnership with First Nations organisations.

**TAFE Lecturer support**

**c) Support for lecturers to support students with complex needs ($8.3 million)**

With the introduction of fee free training options in 2023, WA TAFE colleges have reported an increase in the number of students with complex needs and/or behaviour issues, with many of these needs not captured through the standard enrolment process.

Having lecturers well supported to effectively manage students with complex behavioural needs is important to ensure the physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing for students is cared for and they are set up for success, in addition to the traditional wraparound services such as foundation skills support. Staff feeling well-equipped and supported also has a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning, personal and social development and helps in reducing stress, contributing to increased lecturer retention.

A behaviour management framework will be developed to support the psychological and physical safety of lecturers, by creating and maintaining safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environments. The framework and subsequent program will help lecturers manage disruptive classrooms and students in an adult learning environment, address frequent interruptions to learning, build inclusive practices and manage escalations in behaviour.

The TAFEs will work together to develop the behaviour management framework and customise the framework to meet local needs.

The framework will support a training and professional development program, including resources, to support lecturers on:

- strengthening understanding of student needs, duty of care and current legislative requirements;
- understanding and managing student diversity;

- understanding whole-of-college approaches;
- providing strategies to manage diverse or challenging behaviour in the classroom, including proactive, preventative and de-escalation approaches; and
- identifying action(s) needed for the student, resources, and tools to assist.

The professional development program will be rolled out across TAFE colleges for all lecturers and will support new and experienced trainers to lift student learning outcomes. It is estimated around 300 lecturers will participate in the program annually.

Physical and human resources will also be made available to support lecturers. For example, the establishment of dedicated support person(s) for lecturers to refer students with complex behaviour and/or diverse needs, which will allow the behaviour to be addressed and allow lecturers to continue to teach the rest of the class.

Each TAFE will have different resource needs, related to the number of students, established services, student cohorts, distance, regionality and scale of operations. The initiative will allow TAFEs the flexibility to determine what they require to support their lecturers and students.

This initiative aligns with VET Workforce Blueprint:

- **Opportunity 4** - Supporting professional learning, career progression and industry currency, Action 11 - Implement targeted professional learning to address key industry and pedagogical priorities, including embedding best practice in inclusivity, respect and gender issues into training delivery and VET workforce culture.
- **Opportunity 5 -** Providing more support for early career teachers, trainers and assessors, Action 12 - monitor and evaluate the impact of the Training and Education (TAE) Training Package to ensure it supports teachers, trainers and assessors in the VET workforce, and promote the undertaking of higher-level qualifications to provide opportunities for ongoing practitioner development.
- **Opportunity 6 -** Developing and resourcing staff to support learners with diverse and complex needs. This opportunity will be realised through a collection of actions that will support the VET workforce to better support different learner cohorts through targeted, context-specific actions.

**d) Mentoring ($4.7 million)**

Once new staff are recruited, there is a process to transition to working as a lecturer, particularly for those coming direct from industry. Once new lecturers are recruited, there is an onboarding process, which includes learning about the VET sector, how to teach and train adults in a competency-based training environment, organisational ways of working and how to deal with learners who may have complex behavioural and learning issues, including additional literacy, language and numeracy requirements.

The importance of mentoring new lecturers cannot be understated. For many it is often a new experience to manage the compliance requirements, learn new and complex systems and the practice of teaching young people or adults against regulated training package requirements. A supportive, respectful relationship is valuable to provide guidance and feedback to new lecturers, while encouraging the professional growth and autonomy of the mentee. A positive initiation into working as a TAFE lecturer also assists with increased retention of staff.

The mentoring program will provide experienced lecturers the time to supervise and mentor new staff in their role as lecturers and VET practitioners. The program will include the development of a range of practical online and hardcopy resources to support and develop lecturer capability.

Mentoring support for VET trainers and assessors will be different across TAFEs, locations and industry areas and would be tailored to the needs and context of the individuals, the organisation and industry area. The program will provide flexibility to implement at local level, depending on need and circumstances and is estimated to include around 100 participants per year across the TAFE colleges.

Effective mentoring could include:

- one-on-one coaching;
- direct observation and feedback;
- reflective practice guidance;
- role modelling sharing resources;
- networking opportunities; and/or
- emotional support and encouragement.

Onboarding initiatives could include:

- induction to sector, systems, organisation, policies, expectations;
- pedagogy/approach for dealing with adult learners and managing diverse and challenging classroom behaviour;
- overview of learning and assessment plan, training materials, assessment tools, marking guides, RPL;
- access to system e.g. Blackboard, Share Point, CELCAT timetable, MS Teams, online delivery tools; and
- information on new RTO Standards and supporting compliance requirements, such as audit and validation processes.

This initiative aligns with VET Workforce Blueprint:

- **Opportunity 3** - Making it easier for high-quality teachers, trainers, and assessors to enter and stay in the VET workforce, Action 10 Develop initiatives to attract people into, and support and retain people in, VET workforce careers, and
- **Opportunity 4** - Supporting professional learning, career progression and industry currency, Action 11 Implement targeted professional learning to address key industry and pedagogical priorities, including embedding best practice in inclusivity, respect and gender issues into training delivery and VET workforce culture.

**Intersection with other initiatives**

The Measures to strengthen the VET workforce initiative intersects with other state and national initiatives, as well as other Specific Policy Initiatives (SPIs) developed under the NSA. Intended junctures specifically include, Closing the Gap, and the VET Workforce Blueprint.

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

Each TAFE has different workforce needs that are aligned to meet their service delivery requirements, community service obligations, student cohort, regional and industry needs. Each TAFE will need to determine the specific action(s) to support its VET workforce, in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

Building the First Nations VET workforce will be embedded into the Framework and developed in partnership with current First Nations TAFE lecturers and leverage the partnerships established through the Closing the Gap SPI.

| Commonwealth Investment ($) | State Investment ($) | Planned Start Date | Planned End Date |
|---|---|---|---|
| $7,610,000 | $7,610,000 | 1 October 2025 | 31 December 2028 |

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

| Details of matched funding | 2025-26 | 2026-27 | 2027-28 | 2028-29 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Commonwealth | $1,310,000 | $2,200,000 | $2,200,000 | $1,900,000 | $7,610,000 |
| WA Contribution | $1,310,000 | $2,200,000 | $2,200,000 | $1,900,000 | $7,610,000 |
| Total | $2,620,000 | $4,400,000 | $4,400,000 | $3,800,000 | $15,220,000 |

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

**Performance Indicators**

The holistic approach to supporting the TAFE VET Workforce does not lend easily to clear indicators. WA will report the following indicators at least annually (once implemented in line with milestone timing):

- Case studies showcasing implementation
- Samples of frameworks, strategies, resources developed
- Quantitative data where available such as:
  - number of lecturers supported through programs, including demographics if relevant and/or available
  - number of lecturers released to be mentors
  - number of new lecturers recruited
  - attraction and retention

The same metrics cannot be used to compare colleges, as the regional colleges have unique challenges specific to the regions in which they operate, including difficulty in attracting and retaining qualified staff, accessing specialist trainers, different workload pressures, different access to equipment, mentoring and professional development, and higher costs of transportation and delivery.

**Evaluation arrangements**

A range of strategies such as surveys, workshops and focus groups may be used to review the effectiveness, efficiency and appropriateness of the strategies and activities implemented under each initiative. A summary outcome report will be prepared for internal reference and consideration as part of the WA VET Workforce Framework. A copy of the evaluation will be included in the WA's reporting to the Commonwealth.

The evaluation approach and effort will be proportional to the funding allocation for each initiative. The Department will fund the evaluation for this initiative, to maximise funding to the TAFEs. Department resourcing and capacity will determine the design, scale of evaluation and timing.

## MILESTONES AND PAYMENTS – MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN THE VET WORKFORCE

| Milestone | Evidence | Payment Value Up To (Cwth funded) | Commonwealth reporting period |
|---|---|---|---|
| Milestone 1:<br>Initial payment on agreement of bilateral implementation plan | Bilateral implementation plan agreed with Commonwealth | $770,000 | N/A |
| Milestone 2:<br>Commonwealth acceptance that WA has commenced implementation, demonstrated by:<br>• a project plan and scope for WA VET Workforce Framework<br>• workforce attraction and retention market research<br>• a project plan and scope for the Behaviour Management Framework and Mentoring Program. | Report signed by WA senior official with responsibility for skills that outlines the key activities undertaken for this initiative to 31 March 2026 and includes evidence of:<br>• A project plan and scope for WA VET Workforce Framework.<br>• Scope for and engagement of services to undertake the TAFE attraction and retention market research.<br>• A project plan and scope for Behaviour Management Framework.<br>• A project plan and scope for Mentoring program. | $540,000 | 31 March 2026 |
| Milestone 3:<br>Commonwealth acceptance that WA has progressed development of initiatives to strengthen the VET workforce, to be demonstrated by:<br>• Development of the WA VET Workforce Framework<br>• Development of a TAFE attraction and retention campaign.<br>• Development of behaviour management framework.<br>• Development of Mentoring program guidelines. | Report signed by WA senior official with responsibility for skills that outlines the key activities undertaken for this initiative to 30 September 2026 and includes evidence of:<br>• Approved WA VET Workforce Framework, including:<br>  ○ operational level workforce plans templates for TAFE colleges.<br>  ○ Lecturer Capability Framework.<br>• Approved behaviour management framework<br>• Approved Mentoring program and guidelines.<br>• Approved communication to TAFE colleges regarding the resources.<br>• Approved TAFE attraction & retention campaign. | $2,200,000 | 30 September 2026 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Milestone 4:<br>Commonwealth acceptance that WA has commenced implementation of initiatives to strengthen the VET workforce, to be demonstrated by:<br>• Quantitative and qualitative data to indicate the impact of the implementation of the<br>  ○ WA VET Workforce Framework<br>  ○ TAFE workforce plans<br>  ○ Lecturer capability framework<br>  ○ Mentoring program<br>  ○ Advertising campaign | Report signed by WA senior official with responsibility for skills that outlines the key activities undertaken for this initiative to 30 September 2027 and includes evidence of:<br>• Number of TAFE workforce plans developed including First Nations workforce plan.<br>• Preliminary outcomes of the:<br>  ○ TAFE workforce plans<br>  ○ Lecturer capability framework<br>  ○ Mentoring program<br>  ○ Advertising campaign<br>Evidence to include qualitative and quantitative data where available (e.g. data on number of lecturers commenced program in the reporting period, resources) | $2,200,000 | 30 September 2027 |
| Milestone 5:<br>Commonwealth acceptance that WA has continued to implement measures to strengthen the VET workforce, to be demonstrated by a final evaluation report of:<br>• Quantitative and qualitative data to indicate the impact of the implementation of the<br>  ○ WA VET Workforce Framework<br>  ○ TAFE workforce plans<br>  ○ Lecturer capability framework<br>  ○ Mentoring program<br>  ○ Advertising campaign | Report signed by WA senior official with responsibility for skills that outlines the key activities undertaken for this initiative to 31 December 2028 and includes evidence of final review and evaluation Outcomes of the:<br>  ○ TAFE workforce plans<br>  ○ Lecturer capability framework<br>  ○ Mentoring program<br>  ○ Advertising campaign<br>Evidence to include qualitative and quantitative data where available (e.g. data on number of lecturers commenced program in the reporting period, resources) | $1,900,000 | 31 December 2028 |
| | **Total** | **$7,610,000** | |

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

17/11/2025

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

**The Honourable Amber-Jade Sanderson BA MLA**
Minister for Energy and Decarbonisation; Manufacturing; Skills and TAFE; Pilbara

/ / 2025

28 OCT 2025