

News Service 101 – Jobs-Skills Summit paper, Labour market strong, Productivity performance inquiry, TAFEs excel, Women in trades, Safety – SWMS & SWPs for apprentices, multimeters, AS/NZS3000 Wiring Rules Committee, Industry news

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

News Service this week covers:

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1. GOVT JOBS & SKILLS SUMMIT ISSUES PAPER



Australian Government
The Treasury



Jobs +
Skills
Summit

The Australian Government has released the much-awaited issues paper for the forthcoming Jobs and Skills Summit.

Promotion for the background to the paper on the Government Treasury website, states, “The Jobs and Skills Summit (the Summit) will bring together Australians, including unions, employers, civil society, and government, to discuss our shared economic challenges and propose both immediate and long-term solutions. The goal of the Summit is to find common ground on how Australia can build a bigger, better trained and more productive workforce; boost real wages and living standards; and create more opportunities for more Australians.

Australia’s economy and labour market face complex challenges. While the unemployment rate is at historic lows, a tight labour market has also brought challenges including widespread and acute skill shortages. Even before COVID-19, nominal wage growth had been weak and real wages had not risen significantly for around a decade. The ongoing effects of COVID-19, high inflation, rising interest rates, global economic uncertainty and disrupted supply chains further compound these challenges, which are holding back the potential of our economy and country.”

The Summit is expected to cover five broad themes:

- “Maintaining full employment and growing productivity.

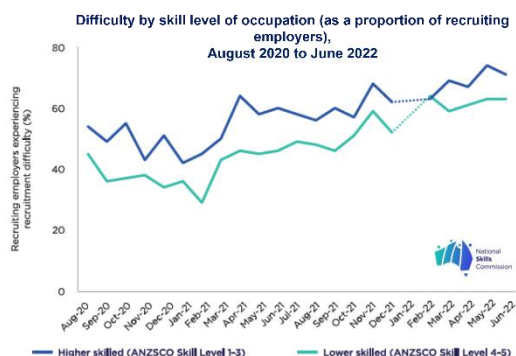
- Boosting job security and wages.
- Lifting participation and reducing barriers to employment.
- Delivering a high-quality labour force through skills, training and migration.
- Maximising opportunities in the industries of the future.

Throughout the Summit there will be a strong overarching focus on women’s experiences of the labour market and the challenges of ensuring women have equal opportunities and equal pay.

This Issues Paper outlines the labour market challenges associated with these five themes. It is intended to provide Summit participants and the broader community with a common understanding of these issues so that we can begin working towards solutions to our shared economic challenges and ensure the labour market delivers good outcomes for all. ...”

[DOWNLOAD A COPY OF THE ISSUES PAPER HERE](#)

2. NSC LABOUR MARKET UPDATE SHOWS STRONG GROWTH FOR JUNE 2022 QUARTER



Source: NSC, Recruitment Experiences and Outlook Survey, June 2022.
Please note: Disaggregated recruitment difficulty data was not publishable in January 2022; hence data points from December 2021 to February 2022 have been joined by a dotted line.
Source: Figure 13: Difficulty by skill level of occupation (as a proportion of recruiting employers), August 2020 to June 2022

The National Skills Commission (NSC) issued its latest update of the labour market for the June quarter indicating conditions have been strong, with growth in labour demand and supply. The 18 August 2022 issued webpage news states, “Over the 3 months to June 2022, record highs were reached for total employment, the participation rate and the employment-to-population ratio. The unemployment rate fell to its lowest rate since 1974.

Data from the NSC gives us further insights on the state of the labour market.

The Internet Vacancy Index (IVI) shows that job advertisements reached their highest levels since 2008 in June 2022. Job advertisements were up by 80.3% (or 135,200 job advertisements) compared to pre-COVID levels.

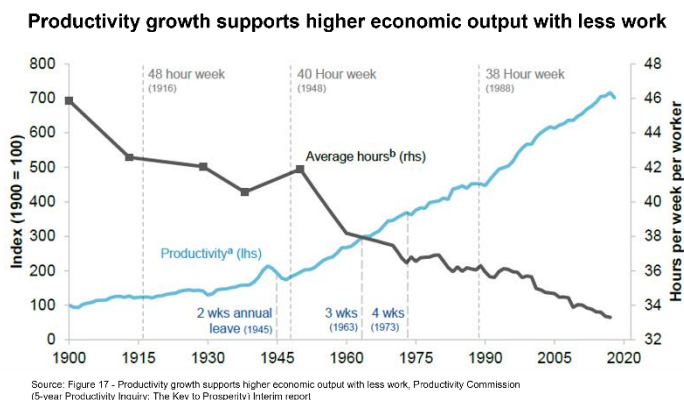
Recent results from the Recruitment Experiences and Outlook Survey (REOS) reinforce this strength of labour demand, with the proportion of employers recruiting (currently or in the past month) sitting at 58% in June 2022, an increase of 2 percentage points since March 2022. Recruitment difficulty has increased further over the most recent quarter.

The Survey of Employers who have Recently Advertised (SERA) indicates a tightening labour market. Over the year to May 2022, employers filled a smaller proportion of advertised vacancies (58%) compared to the year to May 2021 (60%). The vacancy fill rate declined for 51 out of 63 six-digit ANZSCO occupations surveyed in both 2020-21 and 2021-22. ...

Recent OECD data points toward similarly tight labour markets in many other countries, highlighting increasing global challenges for employers in finding workers with the required skills.”

[READ MORE HERE](#)

3. PRODUCTIVITY INQUIRY'S INTERIM REPORT - SEEKS SUBMISSIONS



The Productivity Commission has published its interim report, “[5-year Productivity Inquiry: The Key to Prosperity](#)” and is seeking a second round of submissions to the report’s findings and suggested recommendations. The report was published on 1 July 2022.

Readers are invited to examine the interim report and forthcoming focus area interim reports for this inquiry and comment by written

submission to the Productivity Commission, preferably in electronic format, by 7 October 2022.

The Commission advises it will shortly release a number of focus area interim reports, hold further discussions with participants (including public hearings), and review additional submissions received before preparing the inquiry final report. The final report will be forwarded to the Government in February 2023.

The inquiry is undertaken pursuant to parts 2 and 3 of the Productivity Commission Act 1998. The Treasurer, as per the Act has requested the Productivity Commission undertake an inquiry into the Australia’s productivity performance and provide recommendations on productivity-enhancing reform.

The inquiry is the second of a regular series, undertaken at five-yearly intervals, to provide an overarching analysis of where Australia stands in terms of its productivity performance. The first report, *Shifting the Dial* was completed in 2017.

These areas of policy focus are:

- Innovation policy and diffusion of new processes and ideas
- Data policy, digital technology and cyber security
- A productivity-friendly business environment
- A skilled and educated workforce

Commission insights

The Commission provides some interesting insights in the interim report, into the importance of focusing on productivity performance in our economy and everyday lives. These insights along with the report are worthy of a close review. The report covers productivity growth (the essence of prosperity); forces shaping Australia’s productivity challenge; and enablers for future productivity growth. The collection insights are replicated below:

Insight 1.1 – Productivity growth is a recent historical phenomenon and over the past 200 years has led to massive growth in living standards around the world.

Insight 1.2 – Productivity growth benefits the average Australian by increasing their purchasing power. The average worker can consume more, better quality, and novel goods and services, while working fewer hours.

Insight 1.3 – Almost all sustained increases in real wages are underpinned by improvements in labour productivity growth.

Insight 1.4 – Being more productive means that the average Australian can consume more higher quality and completely new goods and services.

Insight 1.5 – Being more productive means that the average Australian can spend fewer hours at work to achieve a given level of consumption if they choose to.

Insight 1.6 – Consumers have received large benefits from productivity growth, including the capacity to benefit from a broad government social safety net.

Insight 1.7 – Productivity growth is an imperfect measure of wellbeing, but higher productivity growth means more opportunities for individuals, businesses and government to devote resources to directly improving wellbeing.

Insight 2.1 – Australia’s productivity is growing at its lowest rate in 60 years, consistent with a broad-based slowdown in productivity growth among advanced economies.

Insight 2.2 – The increasing share of people in the workforce has shielded Australia from some of the effects of slowing productivity growth, but sustaining an ever-increasing share of people in the workforce (and maintaining their income levels), is neither possible nor desirable.

Insight 2.3 – Closing the productivity gap to our OECD peers requires working smarter so that Australia can have higher GDP per capita without having to work longer.

Insight 2.4 – Australia’s relative global productivity performance is strong in the goods sector, which includes mining and agriculture. Services are comparatively less productive on average, but our rankings are improving.

Insight 2.5 – Similar to other advanced economies, the services sector dominates the Australian economy. This reflects both the impact of higher incomes on consumer preferences, and the fact that productivity gains have been harder to secure in many service industries — making services relatively more expensive. Australia’s industry structure also reflects our areas of comparative advantage (which for example, leads to a reliance on imported manufactured goods) and demographic factors such as an ageing population.

Insight 2.6 – Productivity growth in the goods sector is faster than in services. However, reflecting their diversity, the variation in growth rates across the services subsectors is substantial.

Insight 2.7 – COVID-19 prompted an acceleration in the general uptake of digital technologies and showed that in a crisis, governments, businesses and households can adapt quickly. The challenge is for Australia to achieve a sustained productivity dividend following the pandemic by embedding the efficiency gains from online activity and services.

Insight 2.8 – Innovation in services industries is less about inventing ‘things’ and relies more heavily on diffusing ideas and adapting business models. But this can be difficult for businesses operating away from the productivity frontier, and in sectors where government funding and regulation have a heavy influence.

Insight 2.9 – The large volumes of data produced by our increasingly digitised and services-oriented economy can be used to improve productivity. While there were good examples of effective data use during the COVID-19 response, Australia compares poorly internationally on use of data-driven technologies.

Insight 2.10 – A high skilled workforce is more important in an economy where jobs increasingly involve non-routine tasks, and use of digital technologies and data manipulation.

Insight 2.11 – Tight labour market conditions in Australia strengthens the need for workers to be allocated to their highest valued use. It also highlights the importance of access to skilled labour from other countries, which can help alleviate demand pressures and enhance productivity by improving the quality and diversity of skills in the labour market.

Insight 2.12 — Climate change presents risks to the Australian economy, especially for industries that utilise the environment as a key input. Selecting forms of abatement and mitigation to cost effectively achieve Australia’s net zero by 2050 commitment will be challenging given the inherent uncertainty about future technological breakthroughs.

Insight 2.13 - As an increasingly services-based economy, Australia can benefit from greater global trade and integration in many service industries.

Final submissions are due by **Friday 7 October 2022**.

[DOWNLOAD A COPY OF THE INTERIM REPORT HERE](#)

4. TAFEs EXCEL IN VET PARTICIPATION - NCVER DATA SHOWS



TAFE Directors Australia, 22 August TDA Newsletter reports that a total of 4.3 million students were enrolled in nationally recognised VET in 2021, a 9% increase over the previous year, according to NCVER.

The article states, “The ‘Total VET students and courses 2021’ data shows that approximately 24% of Australians aged 15 to 64 years participated in nationally recognised VET.

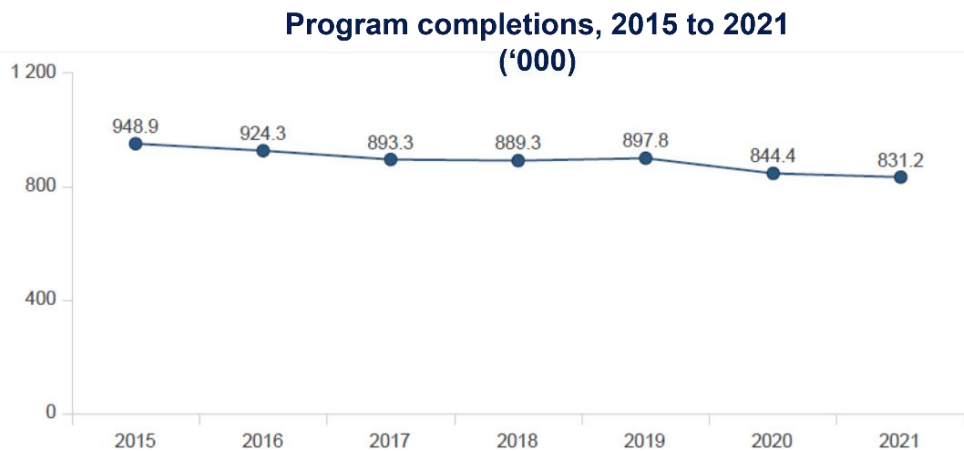
The figures show that:

- TAFE institutes saw a 4.7% increase in program enrolments from 782,135 in 2020 to 818,930 in 2021
- Program completions at TAFEs increased by 3.7 per cent from 208,370 to 216,020
- TAFEs continued to have a clear focus on delivering nationally recognised qualifications and skill sets, rather than stand-alone subjects
- TAFEs continued to have above average representation from students who identify as indigenous and those with a disability
- 51% of students at TAFE were aged between 15 and 24 years; while 49% were aged 25 years and over, reflecting TAFEs importance to Australians at all stages of their careers
- In terms of socio-economic status, just over 40% of TAFE students were in the bottom two quintiles of social-economic disadvantage
- TAFEs are delivering nearly 30% of all program enrolments, particularly in crucial fields such as nursing, electrotechnology, plumbing, engineering fabrication and mechanical trade and in emerging areas such as cyber security
- TAFEs are the dominant providers of foundational, preparatory and pathway qualifications such as spoken and written English, tertiary preparation and skills for education and training pathways

TDA is very pleased that TAFE institutes and dual sector universities continue to be the trusted, quality providers in the VET sector.”

Historical time series

The following figure show nationally recognised VET activity from 2015 to 2021 for program completions.



Note: Program completions for 2021 are preliminary only, and will be revised upwards with the release of *Total VET students and courses 2021* (Figure 10)

[READ MORE HERE](#)

5. FOCUS ON WOMEN IN MAE RIVERINA SHOWCASE DAY



The Agrifood and Electrotechnology ITAB's will host **FREE** showcase days for Manufacturing, Agrifood and Electrotechnology (MAE) industries in partnership with Casella's Family brands.

An exclusive event for female participants aged 16-64, careers advisors & influencers.

Held in the Riverina (Yenda) in industry, attendees will have the opportunity to:

- **meet and talk with female industry leaders**
- **gain hands-on experience**
- **access the latest career information**
- **ask questions and have them answered by industry experts**
- **register and reserve a place for obligation free opportunities to do work experience with local MAE industries**
- **free networking lunch**

Showcase day participants numbers are limited and registrations are essential.

WHEN: Wednesday, 31 August 2022, 9:30 am to 2.00pm

[REGISTER CLOSES 24 AUGUST 2022 FOR THIS FREE AND EXCITING EVENT](#)

For more information contact Melissa by email mae@agrifooditab.com.au or call 0421830056; or visit the [agrifooditab website](#)

[Download the flyer here](#)

6. MODULE 5 - SAFE WORK METHOD STATEMENTS (SWMS)



SafeWork NSW's series of [Construction Site Supervisor workshops](#) currently covers 6 topics. Each workshop session has a duration of around two-hours. SafeWork NSW expects that the catalogue of topics will continue to grow both proactively and in response to emerging issues.

See all six topic areas [HERE](#).

This week we promote **Module 5 – Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS)** given the heightened importance of safe work practices and recent incidents that highlighted breakdowns in use and compliance of safe work procedures in the workplace.

The virtual workshop is designed to further develop a construction site or trade supervisors' skills in understanding:

- What the WHS legislation requires you to do with respect to Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS)
- When a Safe Work Method Statement is required
- What a Safe Work Method Statement should contain
- What is high risk construction work.

This virtual workshop is designed for anyone who:

- is employed as a construction site or trade supervisor, manger, or foreman
- formally or informally supervises less experienced workers

WHEN: Wednesday, 28 September 2022, 10:00 am AEST (ONLINE)

[REGISTER HERE](#)

7. TRAINING APPRENTICES IN THE USE OF SWPS



Apprentices are introduced to a culture of safety from the first days of their apprenticeship.

They progressively learn knowledge and skills to become autonomous managers of:

- their own safety,
- the safety of others in the workplace, and
- the safety of those who come after the job; the users of the electrical equipment – commercial, industrial and household users.

RTOs and employers (including host employers and GTOs) reinforce and embed this safety culture. Supervisors and RTO teachers/trainers s work together to instruct apprentices in safe work practices.

The **starting point is to clearly understand the risk management process** – hazard identification, risk assessment, risk management (hierarchy of risks) and review.

Before starting any task there must be a risk assessment. This is done collaboratively, with supervisors, electricians and apprentices working together.

Then, apprentices are introduced to Safe Work Procedures (SWPs) which show how the risk management process is followed in different situations. These are not obscure documents that sit on the shelf; they are living documents

- In the classroom apprentices should be introduced to SWPs throughout their training. When RTOs introduce apprentices to safety in the workplace (e.g. UEECD0007) they should support their instructions by providing SWPs relevant to the different topics.
- At work, SWPs are introduced to apprentices as they encounter new situations and which they sign, together with their supervisors, when they have read and understood them.

Safe work procedures address the hazards associated with specific tasks and environments. They set out:

- An introduction
- The hazards
- The risks
- Risk Controls – where appropriate, following the hierarchy of control.
- References (to legislation, regulations, codes of practice and standards)

Typically, SWPs in the Utilities and Electrotechnology industry cover:

- Tasks – such as testing and tagging equipment.
- Different environments – such as confined spaces
- Workshop tools – drills, etc.
- Hazardous materials – such as PCBs
- Incidents and situations – such as accidents on the job

So, they cover a wide variety of topics. There are a lot of them.

Apprentices and technical support assistants

It is particularly important to introduce students to safe work practices before they undertake their work experience. When they are introduced to new tasks or new working environments, they should be alerted to the ways to manage any relevant risks.

RTOs (encompassing TAFEs) have limited classroom time available for addressing work health and safety topics, placing a lot of reliance on work experience to gain competence to work safely in different situations. However, it is a critical and ideal time to inculcate the principles and good practices. Ideally, RTOs should encourage apprentices to request from their employer a folder in which to keep their own SWPs. Individual SWPs can be easily removed and replaced with updated versions. Additional employer generated SWPs can be added in appropriate sections of the folder.

Where Group Training Organisations (GTOs) are involved, there is split responsibility for apprentices' safety. The GTO is the employer, with ultimate responsibility for the safety of their students. Host companies where apprentices gain work experience have on-the-job responsibility for their safety. A signed SWP provides both the GTO and the host employer with some evidence that particular safety issues have been addressed.

SWPs currently available

To help RTOs and micro-employers, model SWPs have been created in Word format. They can be downloaded for FREE as Word documents which can be used as is for learning purposes or edited/adapted to individual users' requirements.

Each Model SWP illustrates the use of the risk management process applied to different situations. They are set out as follows:

- Date of last revision
- An introduction
- Hazards
- Risks
- Risk Controls (recognizing the hierarchy of controls where applicable)
- References to legislation, Codes, Standards, etc.
- A verification sign-off panel
- A disclaimer

Importantly they also feature a verification panel which can be signed by employees and countersigned by their supervisor to indicate they are competent to work safely on a specific task. It is recommended that signatures should not be more than a year old.

There are quite a lot of SWPs on the site. They are designed to be used as required. For example, if an employer plans to send a new employee to work on a roof, make sure they have signed the SWP first. They can also support in-house refresher training.

The index of SWPs cover:

- Electrical work
- Hazardous Materials
- People
- Mitigating the consequences of risk
- Work environments
- Workshop and tools

Available to download for free

To access the freely available model SWPs visit the web site at www.esproject.com.au

8. MULTIMETER SAFETY IN AUSTRALIA



The Queensland Electrical Safety Office wrote an article in the 26 July edition of ECD (Electrical Comms Data) eNewsletter regarding the importance of correctly selecting and using multimeters in the performance of electrical work. A key selection action is to select a multimeter that meets the Australian safety standard.

The article was prompted by a series of recent electrical incidents involving multimeters, highlighting the risks of using them when incorrectly rated or inadequately insulated for the job.

The article states, “To meet Australian safety requirements, a multimeter must be designed, constructed and tested to Australian safety standard AS 61010.1:2003, which is based on international standard IEC 1010. It should also be verified by independent lab testing. A multimeter tested to these standards has been checked to ensure its internal components are designed and constructed to protect the operator from hazards including electric shock and burns in environments with high electrical risk.

A marking alone is no guarantee the multimeter has been tested to the standard, particularly if it was purchased overseas. Always seek further evidence the product has been tested by a reputable lab to the correct electrical safety standard.

A multimeter complying with the Australian standard should also be supplied with instructions for safe use and maintenance including:

- the intended use of the equipment for which it is designed for measurement
- instructions for use (in English)
- an explanation of the measurement category ratings marked on the meter, such as Category 4.

Measurement category

The measurement category rating of multimeters considers the working voltage and a maximum transient voltage that could be encountered in a particular electricity network environment.

The Australian standard has four measurement categories to cover different levels of exposure to transient spikes or spikes of voltage that can occur from a mains distribution system. ...

Remember — check your multimeters are safe for their intended use by:

- looking for the correct electrical safety standard
- seeking evidence of independent type testing to that standard
- checking warning labels or markings on the multimeter
- understanding the right measurement categories for the task.

Measurement is one of the few situations where live work is legal, so: choose the correct highest measurement category for the range of work you do; select a quality multimeter supported by independent type testing; and always buy from reputable suppliers.

For more information, Standards Australia has a [detailed guide](#) to selecting a safe multimeter in HB187-2006.”

[READ MORE HERE](#)

9. NECA's DIRECTOR LEADS AS/NZS 3000 COMMITTEE



The National Electrical and Communications Association (NECA) reports in its 18 August 2022, NECA NSW eNews 19/22, that NECA's Policy and Technical Director, Paul Brownlee has been appointed Chair of EL-001, Wiring Rules Committee. The article states, "In August, Standards Australia announced a new Chairperson of EL-001, the peak committee for the Wiring Rules, and it is with great pride that we announce NECA National Policy and Technical Director, Paul Brownlee as the person to lead AS/NZS3000 into the next phase.

Paul has been involved in the electrotechnology industry for his entire working career and has extensive experience in testing, connections of new and upgraded installations, process and policy preparation, inspections of electrical work and electrical investigations into accidents and deaths.

Paul has previously worked on the NSW Solar Bonus Scheme implementation and has advised on the ASP scheme, contestable metering, ring fencing and Australia Standards.

Under his new appointment with Standards Australia, Paul will be focused on the continued evolution of the EL-001 standard to ensure its relevance to the trade and broader electrical contracting industry.

It would be remiss not to acknowledge the enormous contribution of Gary Busbridge who held this position for a number of years. The hard work Gary has put in throughout his tenure has ensured the Wiring Rules has remained relevant and continued to be the peak standard in the industry.”

10. PANEL HIGHLIGHTS - HVAC&R SKILLS CRISIS AND SECTOR INVISIBILITY



Leading a feisty discussion on the HVAC&R skills crisis: Panellists at ARBS 2022 Chairman's Lunch (from left): Ura Sarfejoo, Robert Beggs, Grace Foo, Steve Smith, and panel moderator Tony Arnel.

Report, Lindy Hughson at Climate Control News (CCN) reports in the 17 August 2022 ARBS 2022 special edition newsletter of the skills crisis seriously impacting the HVAC&R industry. The article states, “The HVAC&R industry's skills crisis and lack of visibility were the hot button topics at the ARBS 2022 Chairman's lunch yesterday, where panellists Grace Foo, Steve Smith, Ura Sarfejoo and Robert Beggs weighed in with their expert insights and possible solutions. The discussion was ably led panel moderator and ARBS chair, Prof Tony Arnel.” ...

Arnel described the pandemic years as a transformative time, and a period which has brought into focus the importance of the HVAC&R industry. Environmental policy and health and well being have emerged as the highest priority for businesses and individuals alike, he said, citing a recent PwC report that found 72 per cent of Australian employees now value health and wellness above all other workplace benefits, including remuneration.

"Our industry sits at the intersection of many trends that are reshaping the world. And yet, despite being central to the future of our nation, and indeed our planet, the HVAC&R sector remains hidden from view... collectively we have to do a lot more to bring this industry into the spotlight," Arnel said.

"As we all know as well, very alarmingly, we face a massive skills shortage at a time when we need more, not less talent across the economy.

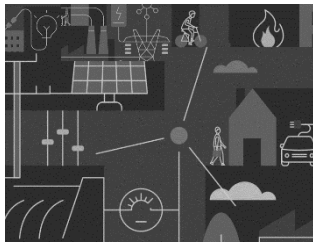
"Almost a third of Australian businesses are struggling to hire the right skills... but the HVAC&R sector's situation is even more challenging. Skills for our sector are in the shortest supply of any job category. We cannot hire our way out of this problem. We need to work together to find fresh ways of attracting and retaining talent." ...

Ura Sarfejoo, leader for digital solutions and sustainable infrastructure for Johnson Controls ANZ, who has worked in the HVAC&R industry for over 20 years and has been an AIRAH board director since 2019, made a compelling argument for increasing diversity as a solution to the talent shortage.

"We need to make our industry more attractive to women, and it's not about making it 'cool and sexy' -- if you're looking for that you've come to the wrong place. We need to look at the talent base out there and work out how we can bring them into the industry and make them want to stay and be proud of it."

[READ MORE HERE](#)

11. NATIONAL ENERGY PARTNERSHIP – WE HAVE LIFT OFF



EnergyInsider, a joint publication of Energy Networks Australia (ENA) and the Australian Energy Council (AEC) in its 18 August 2022 edition, explores in more detail the outcomes of last week's meeting of Energy Ministers' Meeting and what we can expect.

The article states, "When most of us plan a trip overseas we often don't give much thought to how the pilot will get there. It is much more enjoyable to think about cocktails in the sun, rather than what flight path the plane will take. Those sorts of details are probably best left to the pilot and air traffic control. Specially trained, they have an overall view of the skies, what planes are landing where and when and what capacity the airport has to land the planes and allow holiday makers to disembark.

The energy transition is much the same. While the average person is concerned about climate change and Australia's destination to net zero, the how is best left to governments, market bodies and energy businesses.

Most sensible people seem to accept these days that Australia's transition to a renewable energy future is essential. Exactly how we get there is the subject of much debate – which is why last week's Energy Ministers' Meeting was so important.

So, fasten your seat belts and keep your chairs upright, we are about to take a nose dive into the communique from the Energy Minister Meeting and what that might mean for energy customers and the sector.

View from the top

Shortly after the election of the Labor Government and the appointment of Chris Bowen as the Federal Energy Minister in May, Australia was hit with an energy crisis due to a range of factors that put energy security and power prices firmly back on the political agenda.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

For more, contact [Jemma Townson](#), Energy Networks Australia

If you would like to contribute to this News Service, please feel free to write to the undersigned accordingly. Thank you.

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WEBSITE: Electrical Safety Project: www.esproject.com.au - provides information about improving electrical Safe Work Practice and exemplar Safe Work Procedures (SWPs) for use in training, or adaptation by micro-businesses and self-employed in the utilities and electrotechnology industries.