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Dear Colleagues and Friends,

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MERRY X-MAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR



This is final publication of the NSW UE ITAB News Service. During the festive season, we too will take a break.

On behalf of the NSW UE ITAB Board, we extend to our News Service readers and their families and friends our best wishes for the festive season. May it be happy and safe, and more importantly full of joy, good tides, merriment and prosperity in the new year.

We thank you for the opportunity for allowing us to share with you the latest VET, Safety and Industry news via the News Service, which started soon after the COVID-19 breakout. We hope you have enjoyed the Service thus far, and we look forward to continuing it in 2023.

We wish everyone a wonderful Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year!!

We will return with the service in February 2023.

1. A TIMELY OBITUARY TO THE VET SYSTEM - AISC



As we close out 2022, we note that the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system is again at the frontlines of a continuous battery of consultations or enquiries to effect change, all supposedly to improve the quality of outcomes, including improving apprentice completion rates and more. Yet, in real terms over many years, we have witnessed a decline in VET funding and in the quality of VET outcomes. These issues are becoming more complicated by the fact that quality training and assessment has been withering in many industry sectors because of an aging VET workforce, lack of quality recruitment and declining cohort of qualified and competent VET teachers and trainers to pass on their skills, knowledge and experiences to the next generation.

We've seen the transformation of the National Skills Commission (NSC) into another like departmental agency, in Job Skill Australia (JSA) and Skills Ministers announce new initiatives. Soon we will learn of who the array of Industry Skills Clusters will be, and the national charter they will be charged with to reshape the VET landscape into something akin to the past.

We're assured the future is rosy and the perpetual motion of ebbs and flows in new changes are for the better, as we are led through yet another round of consultations that seek to change existing practices in the notional belief that any form of change will be for the better, instead of reflecting of what is working well and where adept, making gradual improvements.

He we are after near on 30 years, starting out with a highly creative, world renowned and innovative workforce development agenda led by the National Training Board (NTB), then the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) and beyond, to finally being led by departmental units in government, we see a return to the future. Maybe the transition reflects the quality.

Emeritus Professor Tracey Horton, Chair of the soon to be annulled Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) sums up an obituary to the transition, in a paper titled, "[AISC Reflections and Opportunities Paper 2015 - 2022](#)" issued on the 29 November 2022. Some interesting excerpts from the Paper, provide a powerful and wonderful context for understanding the future:

"A recurring challenge has been industry stakeholders seeking to use training packages to pursue wider goals that lie beyond the scope of the VET system. Different interpretations of national policies and standards have also created challenges, ranging from significant implementation concerns to more technical matters. The AISC's ability to influence broader policy issues has been limited by its Terms of Reference and the time available to members, particularly as the COVID-19 pandemic brought major disruption and a renewed national focus on skills, training and workforce development.

While the Committee has worked to bring together diverse perspectives, this has been difficult at times and will remain a challenge going forwards, particularly in the absence of clearly defined objectives to ensure a shared and united focus on the common good. Regular communication and engagement with industry and jurisdictions have been key priorities for the Committee and fundamental in identifying and taking action to resolve conflicting opinions that are sometimes equally legitimate points of view. It will be vitally important for Industry Clusters to have strong, collaborative and transparent relationships. The national training system also requires industry and organisational leaders with the experience and expertise required to form strong partnerships and make the right, well-informed decisions."

...

“Thus, the AISC has operated within a system with complex shared roles and responsibilities. Industry plays a leadership role, the Commonwealth provides national policy leadership and significant funding, and the states and territories oversee the funding and delivery of training within their jurisdictions. While the various reviews have resulted in a comprehensive list of the issues experienced in the operation of the VET system, there has been less consensus in clearly articulating the desired outcomes from the system and diagnosing the specific obstacles that are preventing us from achieving those goals.”

...

“Challenges can arise in training product development. To an extent this is inevitable given the breadth of interested parties and when settling on the most appropriate training pathways in complex areas. ...”

...

“A recurring challenge has been that – in the absence of another industry ‘voice’ to government or other avenues for escalation and resolution – industry stakeholders have sought to use training packages and the AISC to pursue wider goals. That includes pursuing occupational licensing, business regulatory regimes or industrial relations changes that lie beyond the training system. As a result, some issues have proven difficult or, at times, impossible for the AISC to resolve.”

...

“The national training system has many end-users and is not and cannot be ‘one size fits all’. Attempts to be overly prescriptive cause problems. So do attempts to force consistency where sectors or jurisdictions have differing training, occupational and regulatory contexts.

In many cases, training packages elicit strong views, whether from large organisations or individual people who have been closely involved in the design and delivery of training. As a result, achieving consensus can be challenging and unanimity is rare. However, seeking to compromise can also be problematic where doing so might mean diluting skills and training outcomes.

Strong stewardship and decision-making is required to achieve the best outcomes. Often this can only be achieved through close and careful work with stakeholders via formal and informal structures. Decision-makers need to see how a wide range of views – including dissenting views – have been sought, considered and responded to.”

Professor Tracey Horton provides sage advice as to the difficulties and complexities with managing and administering a national system that ensued over the period 2015 to 2022. These observations are not new and are reflective of similar issues and complexities that go back to the mid-80s which took hold and evolved through the establishment of the National Training Board (NTB) and transition to a national VET system, with a specific underlying philosophy of a demand driven training system. We would move to a user choice model of product and provider.

Given this context and the candour Professor Tracey Horton presents in the paper, we are invited yet again to partake in a series of complex consultations that fail to focus or address some of the underlying and complex issues she raises in the paper and have been known of for a long time.

We are diverted to explore and respond to a host of consultative agendas that make us believe we can influence already preordained parameters and paradigms.

For instance, we are reassured through the [National Workforce Strategy 2022–27](#), which remains the current overarching driver of the Government’s direction and workforce reform agenda. The Strategy has five guiding principles:

1. **Use data to create transparency of the current and future workforce.**
2. **Equip Australians with in-demand skills and focus employment services on outcomes.**
3. **Remove barriers and disincentives to work.**
4. **Activate industry to design and drive change.**
5. **Target migration to fill skills and labour gaps.**

There are two key principles which have earmarked actions which will directly impact on VET activities, and more specifically product and provider. These are:

Principle	Actions to support Key Performance Indicators	NSW UE ITAB Comments
<p>2. Skill Australians and focus employment services on employment outcomes</p>	<p>Simplifying, streamlining and rationalising VET qualifications to ensure training products are more fit-for-purpose, leading to higher quality training, improved learner outcomes, and clearer employment pathways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise the Standards for RTOs to ensure they are clear and outcome-focused. Develop a framework for quality improvement and build the capacity and capability of RTOs, trainers, and assessors to shift from a compliance focus towards excellence. • Reform VET funding arrangements to drive increased participation in training that is high quality and meets current and emerging needs of industry and learners. Support an increase of STEM skills, particularly for women, across the national workforce. • Reform employment services with Workforce Australia, including better job matching and drawing on data. • Promoting skilled jobs growth through investment in higher education. 	<p>Given Professor Tracey Horton’s comments and historical knowledge of developments of national products, this proposal of simplifying, streamlining and rationalising VET qualifications evinces a level somewhat naivety, and is a back to the future view of the world.</p> <p>It is wishful thinking that requires strong national leadership and much more active engagement through capacity building to gain consensus and an opportunity yet again missed.</p> <p>The notion that a revision of the RTO standards, Training Package - units of competency or qualifications or other factors will somehow improve outcomes is wishful thinking.</p> <p>The underlying fundamentals must be addressed augmented by quality leadership.</p> <p>Three current consultations underway, seeking new ideas and products to showcase are:</p>

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Qualification Model Consultation – refer below for more details. 2. Have your say about the draft revised RTO Standards – refer below for more details. 3. Consultation underway on apprenticeship supports – refer below for more details.
<p>4. Activate industry to design and drive change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower industry, through the establishment of Industry Clusters, to manage the end-to -end process from needs identification to skills development and oversight of delivery outcomes to ensure continuous quality improvement. • Engage industry in the design and delivery of policy and support them to play a central role in training and reskilling. 	<p>The Government will soon announce the introduction of the new Industry Clusters, which will have less than a month to establish themselves.</p> <p>Stay tuned!</p>

1. [QUALIFICATION MODEL CONSULTATION:](#)

Drawn from the DEWR website: “Australian, state and territory governments are seeking your feedback on the proposed qualifications model through an [ONLINE SURVEY](#).”

This survey has fourteen (14) questions and asks for your feedback on the following:

- Training product design;
- Terminology used;
- Training delivery and approaches;
- Collaboration and engagement; and
- Implementation and transition.

There is the opportunity to provide feedback against prescribed questions, or to provide your own written feedback about the issues relevant to you. You can answer all questions or just the questions that are relevant to you and how you engage with the VET system.

The survey will close at 5pm AEDT, 17 March 2023.”

[Qualifications Reform templates and examples](#)

PWC Consulting have developed for the Government templates covering the following, which are to be used to supposedly improve learner outcome and clearer employment pathways:

- **Skill Standard Template:**
Proposed Skill Standard template that may be used as part of the proposed qualifications model.
- **Training and Assessment Requirement (TAR) Template:**
Proposed Training and Assessment Requirement (TAR) template that may be used as part of the proposed qualifications model.
[NOTE: There maybe more than one TAR per Skill Standard!]
- **Completion Rules Template:**
Proposed Completion Rules template that may be used as part of the proposed qualifications model.
- **Proposed Qualification Model Examples:**
Examples of how Skill Standards, Training and Assessment Requirements and Completion Rules may be written as part of the proposed qualifications model.

These back to the future products it is suggested, will provide the basic building blocks of the new VET system, which is said to have, “*become cluttered and difficult to navigate over the years, with over 1,200 qualifications, 1,500 skill sets, and 15,000 Units of Competency.*”

This statement somehow implies these new products will fix the complex issues alluded to above by Professor Tracey Horton, with the naïve belief that somehow, they will be able to reduce the current 15,000 Units of Competency to around 2,000 Skill Standards. The naivety is stark. Take for instance, there are 364 Unit Group occupations (4-digit level) contained in the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) classification system. There are 1,076 occupations at the 6-digit code level.

If we used the Unit Group occupations and simply assumed that there were on average 15 skill standards per occupation (364 x 15) and we assume an overlap of 40% (skill standards in common across occupations) then we would likely have 3,276 unique skill standards. That’s simple. So, the raw numbers don’t match the rhetoric. Moreover, if we took to the 1,076 occupations and removed 40% overlap, we would have around 9,684 unique skill standards.

So, the premise of the whole new agenda of skill standards being a vehicle for simplifying, streamlining and rationalising VET qualifications is flawed. Maybe 15,000 is about right!!

The issue is not the products but the management and administration arrangement around them. If there is poor leadership and poor-quality management oversight and lack of understanding by leaders of the products, we end up where we are now, claiming it’s the products’ fault and not what manages it.

Reviewing the Skill Standards

Moreover, let’s look inside the hood on the Skill Standards. They are nothing more than *curriculum masquerading as skill standards*. There is no clear definition presented of what they are. Nor is there any sense of their application to any workplace requirements such as the application of the listed knowledge and skills in a workplace to a required standard of performance. No range statement or responsibility clarity. Just a list of skills and knowledge.

‘The proposed Skill Standards are nothing more than curriculum masquerading as skill standards – supposedly for the workplace but nothing about the workplace is covered’

Reviewing the Training and Assessment Requirement (TAR) standard

It is also noted and worthy of much debate, the prospects that it might be possible to have more than one Training and Assessment Requirement (TAR) standard to one Skill Standard. How bizarre, and how will RTOs manage this utter mess where a Skill Standard will have a code and title and the Training and Assessment Requirement (TAR) standard will have a unique code and title too that somehow aligns with the Skill Standard, and there could be more than one TAR per standard.

Think about the administration nightmare for RTOs, let alone the funding and administrative arrangements that need to be reconstructed for State Training Authorities (STAs) in order to pay RTOs for government funded training.

'There is also the notion that there can be more than one Training and Assessment Requirement (TAR) standard to one Skill Standard – imagine the administrative issues for RTOs and learner transcripts and testamurs'

No evidence is provided that the proposed Skill Standard template has been tested and piloted with cohorts that depend heavily on theory and workplace practice. For example, the trades.

Simple examples are provided of management and administrative skill standards, albeit many of the prospective Skill Standards within this context are typically generic and broad. This is not the case for many trades where they are specific and, in some instances, narrow.

So, how do we know if they will work for trades or all of industry, employers, RTOs and learners?

Where is the evidence?

Recall what Professor Tracey Horton said:

"Challenges can arise in training product development. To an extent this is inevitable given the breadth of interested parties and when settling on the most appropriate training pathways in complex areas."

Where is the work that was proposed under the Honourable Steven Joyce report, *"Strengthening Skills - Expert Review of Australia's Vocational Education and Training System"* which postulated a series of new ideas and recommendations?

None of these reports went to the heart of the problem regarding the actual product in terms of specificity but continued to allude to issues that clearly pertained to management and administration of the products. This is where the tension is as pointed out by Professor Tracey Horton, and we shouldn't lose sight of the challenges and obstacles in this regard.

Many RTO trainers, teachers and instructors as well as administrative support officers and other allied operatives including employers continue to struggle with understanding the implementation issues with and specificity of current Training Package units of competency, even after more than 20 years of their existence, and we now want to change it again!

AISC did little to have in place ambassadors in the field that promoted and capacity-built individuals in RTOs, industry and allied agencies-bodies. It may have been because of its terms of reference. That understood, however, it means the failure of the system is not the products but those who managed it.

Maybe the approach might be to work with what we have and gradually improve them (units of competency), but a first priority might be to address the heart of the problem alluded to by Professor Tracey Horton, Honourable Steven Joyce, and a litany of other eminent experts involved in or reviews of the VET system. Fix what is broken not what might be working.

Don't throw the baby out with the bath water.

One could go on about the misconstruction of these new products, however the opportunity exists for stakeholders to provide feedback, which closes **at 5pm AEDT, 17 March 2023**.

2. [HAVE YOUR SAY ABOUT THE DRAFT REVISED RTO STANDARDS](#)

The National Workforce Strategy earmarked action to revise the Standards for RTOs to ensure they are clear, and outcome focused. The DEWR website in progressing this action item, states that it has consulted RTOs in order to redraft the standards. That is, "Draft revised Standards have been developed based on extensive consultation with the sector, along with analysis of other sectors, expert reviews, and research.

Previous consultation with the sector has identified that many RTOs and stakeholders find the current Standards to be complex and difficult to navigate. The revisions aim to ensure the Standards are clear and focused on quality outcomes for learners and employers. ...

Significant changes have been made to the structure and content of the Standards with the intent of strengthening the focus on quality and ensuring there is a clear and direct link between the requirements RTOs are expected to meet and the outcomes they are expected to deliver to learners."

Key changes include:

- **Structural changes:**
 - The draft Standards are structured around a framework of five Quality Areas.
 - This structure is designed make the draft Standards easier to use for RTOs and clearly link requirements with learner outcomes.
 - Requirements for RTOs have been placed under these Quality Areas and Focus Areas to ensure there is a clear link between requirements and outcomes.
- **Changes to requirements**
 - framed to accommodate the diversity of RTO types and contexts
 - written as outcome statements so that RTOs are clear on the outcome they must deliver
 - a number of requirements have been strengthened, and some new requirements have been introduced to better safeguard learners
 - address identified gaps in quality and drive improvements in areas such as learner support and wellbeing, ensuring a culturally safe environment, supporting learners with disability, and RTO governance and leadership.

Draft Standards for RTOs

This document is a clean version of the [draft revised Standards for RTOs](#). Note that the Standards do not reflect all requirements for RTOs and should be read alongside the consultation paper.

Options for feedback or learn more

- Read the consultation paper - [Read the consultation paper](#)
- Provide written feedback -
The survey will close at 5pm AEDT, 31 January 2023. [Access the survey](#)
- [Attend a face-to-face or online forum](#)

Many of the changes seem to be semantic and you have to wonder if there were instances that worked why could they have not simply remained the same. An interesting observation of change is that a deliverer may now only be required to know about a topic not be competent in it. A strange suggestion!!

It is very important that feedback be provided in relation to the proposed changes, that as stated by ASQA, have been influenced by RTO stakeholders.

3. [CONSULTATION UNDERWAY ON APPRENTICESHIP SUPPORTS](#)

The DEWR website states, “the Australian Government released the Australian Apprenticeship Services and Supports Discussion Paper. It is part of the commitment made at the Jobs and Skills Summit to work with states, territories and stakeholders to improve the apprenticeship system and drive-up completions.

The [discussion paper](#) explores the current non-financial services and supports available to seek views on how to address three key questions facing the apprenticeships system:

- What changes are needed to drive up the completion rate?
- How can apprenticeship services better encourage and support apprentices from diverse background?
- How can support services be optimised to meet the current and future needs of apprentices and employers?

Consultation is **open until 16 December 2022**. To get involved [download the discussion paper](#) and [submit your feedback](#). Your responses will inform future priorities within the Apprenticeship System.”

...

In order to grow the skilled workforce, Australian Apprenticeships need to support diversity.”

Given the recent findings of the McKell Institute of Victoria report, “[Working, Learning – Better supporting Victorian apprentices on the job, September 2022](#)”, that found widespread issues impacting apprentice completion rates and workplace conditions, the decision to review apprenticeship support services is timely and warranted. However, it is not only the front end of the apprenticeship that warrants a review, but the mainstay of the apprenticeship such as mentoring, supervision, safety and welfare and capacity of employers to provide the appropriate scope of work for apprentices that needs urgent attention.

It is not clear whether the terms of reference and the resultant findings, will in the end, lead to significant improvements both in completion rates, supervision, mentoring, safety and welfare of apprentices given the legal framework for the protection of apprentices resides with the states. This aspect, and their involvement, is critical to any proposal to improve the quality of outcomes and wellbeing of apprentices in the future.

IS IT TIME FOR A NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP COMMISSION (NAC)?

A possible model for improvement is the establishment of a National Apprenticeship Commission (NAC), with the states ushering in complementary legislation that would harmonise apprenticeship arrangements across Australia and at federal level, align with whatever new qualification and skills regime is in place, and more importantly act as a national model ambassador and quality assurance agency for apprentices and trainees.

This way, apprenticeships will gain standing and credibility in the community through national leadership. Parents will be able to pinpoint and recognise there is an august body that promotes, protects and represents a cohort of apprenticeship-based occupations that are well supported by government. That apprenticeships do provide great career prospects and opportunities.

It is only through this arrangement that the current bias of the education system to retain working age young people to year 12, all whilst corralling them towards university education can be challenged, as a viable and rewarding alternative to employment.

A possible aim for a National Apprenticeship Commission (NAC) could be as follows:

A National Vocational Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission responsible for declaring, regulating, managing and administering requirements for employment, training, mentoring and competency certification of cadets, apprentices and trainees in Australia.

The Commission would also, manage and administer recognition arrangements for non-apprenticed persons seeking formal recognition of experiences for a declared trade certificate, permit and/or endorsement related to the declared trade work.

It would encompass but not be limited to undertaking:

- advocacy and promotion of cadetships, apprenticeships and traineeships highlighting rewards and future career paths and opportunities to the community, industry, governments, and education systems;
- negotiating articulation and credit transfer arrangements with education and training institutions;
- monitoring and ensuring training organisations deliver high-quality training outcomes to cadets, apprentices and trainees;
- addressing cadet, apprentice and trainee workplace supervision and mentoring misfeasance;
- conducting continuous research and annual reporting of the quality, quantity and veracity of cadet, apprentice and trainee commencements, training and completions;
- conducting industry consultations and working with industry to improve the quality of outcomes of apprenticeships; and
- conducting workforce gap analysis and planning to determine and implement measures to address future apprentice requirements.

2023 looks like a year of more changes to the poor old struggling VET system, with no provable advantages that any of the changes proposed will be for the better or improve the quality of outcomes. None of the changes proposed have been developed from the bottom up but are clearly developed from the top down. It might be recalled that the signs of insanity are when we continue to do the same thing and expect different results. Change for change's sake is not a winning formula for those affected by it.

2. WHAT ARE THE WAYS TO SELL VET



Campus Morning Mail reports in its 2 December 2022 edition that “Skills Minister Brendan O’Connor has commissioned the Reps’ Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training to inquire into, “the perceptions and status of vocational education and training.”

The article states, “Which is interesting, what with the inquiry being into helping VET, not the just government’s TAFE fave.

The ToRs are four:

- info for students and how that funded by the Commonwealth may be improved
- perceptions and status of VET, including international best practice
- partnerships between VET providers and employers
- Commonwealth programmes and “intersections” with states/territories, industry “and philanthropic efforts”

[READ MORE HERE](#)

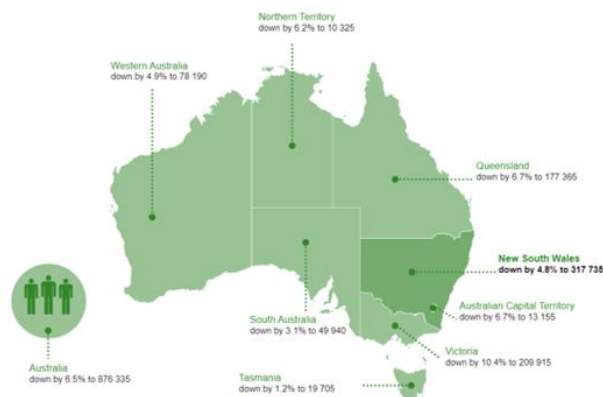
For more information about the Committee - [Inquiry into the Perceptions and Status of Vocational Education and Training](#)

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training will inquire into and report on the perceptions and status of vocational education and training (VET), and Commonwealth supported information on VET available to students, and how they impact:

- education and training choices of students, particularly those who lack the necessary foundation skills, or experience other disadvantages; and
- employer views and practices in relation to engagement with VET.

Submission to the inquiry addressing the terms of reference **close Wednesday 1 March 2023.**

3. LATEST DATA SHOWS A DECREASE IN THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN GOVERNMENT-FUNDED VET



NCVER’s latest statistical report shows that in the first six months to 30 June 2022, there were 876,335 students enrolled in government-funded VET, a decrease of 6.5% from January - June 2021.

Compared with the same period in 2021, changes were observed in the number of students enrolled in:

- training package qualifications (down 31,870 or 4.2%)
- locally developed skill sets (down 13,745 or 22.5%) and
- stand-alone non-nationally recognised subjects (down 7,505 or 50.9%).

FOR NSW

In the first six months to 30 June 2022, 317 735 students were enrolled in government-funded vocational education and training (VET) in New South Wales. They included:

- 309 845 students enrolled in nationally recognised training
- 19 830 students enrolled in non-nationally recognised training.

There were 369 345 government-funded program enrolments in New South Wales comprised of:

- 82.8% in nationally recognised programs
- 12.0% in locally developed programs
- 5.2% in non-nationally recognised programs.

76.9% of government-funded program enrolments in New South Wales were in nationally recognised qualifications, comprised of:

- 70.1% in training package qualifications
- 6.8% in accredited qualifications.

In the first six months to 30 June 2022, there were 284 105 government-funded nationally recognised qualification enrolments in New South Wales. The most popular level of education was Certificate III (148 640 or 52.3%), followed by Certificate IV (69 725 or 24.5%).

[READ MORE HERE](#)

4. NSW TRAINING AWARDS – APPLICATIONS OPEN 9 DEC 2022



The countdown is on! Applications open on 9 December 2022

Applications to the 2022 NSW Training Awards are about to open. The Awards honour and reward the achievements of students, teachers, training organisations and employers.

The NSW Training Awards are conducted annually by Training Services NSW within the Department of Education. The Awards recognises outstanding achievement in the vocational education and training (VET) sector.

The achievements of students, trainers/teachers, training organisations, and large and small employers are celebrated and rewarded through the annual NSW Training Awards.

A key aim of the Awards program is uncovering VET Ambassadors; individuals who are exceptional representatives for the VET sector, their industry, and their communities.

Key dates and events for 2023 will be announced shortly. The Awards categories are:

- **Individual Award**
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year
 - Apprentice of the Year
 - School-based Apprentice/Trainee of the Year

- Trainee of the Year
- VET Trainer/Teacher of the Year
- Vocational Student of the Year
- VET in Schools Student of the Year
- **Organisation Awards**
 - Large Training Provider of the Year
 - Small Training Provider of the Year
 - Industry Collaboration Award
 - Large Employer of the Year
 - Small Employer of the Year

[LEARN MORE HOW TO APPLY HERE](#)

5. SMART AND SKILLED UPDATE – NO. 188 – 191, NOVEMBER 2022



Smart and Skilled Update No. 188-191 ([DOWNLOAD](#)) – December 2022, has been published by Training Services NSW.

Smart and Skilled is an NSW Government program that helps people get qualifications in in-demand skills and industries. It's a key part of the NSW [vocational education and training](#) system.

This Smart and Skilled Update covers the following:

1. Changes to the Smart and Skilled Entitlement Foundation Skills program
 - a. What is changing?
 - b. When will this change occur?
 - c. Who can apply to deliver foundation skills training? How do we apply?
 - d. How will allocations be determined?
 - e. Will training remain fee-free for eligible Smart and Skilled students?
2. NSW Skills List updated – Version 13.3
 - a. Updates to the NSW Skills List – incorporating Training Package revisions
 - b. VTO changes affecting the NSW Skills List
 - c. Changes to Entitlement Foundation Skills Program
 - d. Qualifications with conditions to improve student outcomes
 - e. Skilling for Recovery
3. Apply now for the Smart and Skilled 2023-24 program
4. Correction: Equivalent superseding qualifications on the NSW Skills List
5. Consultations on Draft Standards for RTOs
6. Smart and Skilled Provider Webinar held Friday, 4 November 2022 – Recording available

For more information visit: [FUNDING AND SUPPORT – SMART AND SKILLED](#)

Or, for technical support in relation to this update, contact Training Market Customer Support at Training.Market@det.nsw.edu.au

For the Smart and Skilled – NSW Skills List visit: [NSW SKILLS LIST – SMART AND SKILLED](#)

6. REASON PREVAILS IN MECH SERVICES LICENCE SAGA



The 1 December 2022 edition of HVAC&R, an Australian Institute of Refrigeration, Air conditioning and Heating (AIRAH) publication includes an article by Mark Vender, reporting that judiciousness has prevailed in the ongoing mechanical services and Refrigeration and Air Conditioning (RAC) scope of work saga in NSW.

The article states, “After signs that air conditioning and refrigeration technicians in New South Wales could be excluded from key work when the new mechanical services licence goes live in March 2023, the government has confirmed that the scope of work for air conditioning and refrigeration technicians will not change with the introduction of the new licence.

It has been a difficult wait for air conditioning and refrigeration stakeholders in NSW, since industry [first became aware of the new mechanical services licence](#). Despite positive meetings between NSW Fair Trading and industry bodies including AIRAH, AMCA Australia, the ARC and RACCA, it appeared that the installation, maintenance and repair of all pipework on hydronic HVAC&R systems would be made the exclusive domain of mechanical services licence holders. This would have excluded air conditioning and refrigeration licence holders from doing such work, as a Certificate III in Plumbing (Mechanical Services) is required to obtain a mechanical services licence.

AIRAH CEO Tony Gleeson, M.AIRAH, says that through consultation with members, it was clear that HVAC&R contractors would be severely affected.

“When we communicated the situation to our members, a number stepped forward to tell us what the changes would mean for their businesses,” he says. “Across those companies, job losses could have been in the hundreds. It would have also driven up costs for customers.”

Now, the NSW government has moved away from defining detailed scopes of work for each licence class and has confirmed that section 15A of the *Home Building Act* allows a person who holds an air conditioning and refrigeration licence to do work that falls within the definition of mechanical services and medical gas work where that work is authorised within the scope of their existing licence.

Gleeson says that although the clarification from NSW Fair Trading comes as welcome news, the underlying issue has not been rectified.”

[READ MORE HERE](#)

RACA President, Kevin O’Shea released a circular to members confirming that the NSW licence will not change, and Refrigeration and Air Conditioning (RAC) contractor-technicians will be able to continue performing the same scope of work as in the past.

The confirmation was evinced by an email from the Department, which stated, “*The Department has determined that the scope of works that can be undertaken by a licence holder are sufficiently detailed in the Home Building Act 1989 and Home Building Regulation 2014, with*

Schedule 4 Extended descriptions of work authorised by contractor licences or certificates providing what a licence holder can do. Noting that the regulator has not previously provided a comprehensive scope of works document for other licence types, despite other licence classes having crossover with other licence classes, it is not proposed that any document will now be published for RAC or mechanical services work.

Instead, the Department will update the content on its website to make clear that section 15A of the HBA allows a person who holds a RAC licence to do work that falls within the definition of mechanical services and medical gas work where that work is authorised within the scope of their RAC licence. I would encourage you to talk to your members about reviewing the updated content on our website if they have any questions. Our inspectors will make an assessment based on the work being carried out and the ambit of the relevant licence class."

7. POSITIVE OUTLOOK TO 2027 FOR HVAC



Editor, Sandra Rossi reports in Climate Control News (CCN), 30 November 2022 edition that there are positive signs for the world HVAC market.

The article states, "The global heating, ventilation & air conditioning (HVAC) market was valued at \$US156.44 billion in 2021, and is expected to be worth \$US231.11 billion in 2027, growing at a CAGR of 6.72 per cent during 2022-2027.

Research and Markets presented a positive outlook for the HVAC industry with the focus shifting toward energy efficiency.

This has been evident in the shift to eco-friendly HVAC units and products that use less power and run on renewable energy sources.

"Technology and energy efficiency are two buzzwords that OEMs are aiming to target in the short term in order to remain relevant and profitable," the market research firm said.

The residential sector is the fastest growing segment, growing at CAGR of around nine per cent during the forecasted period, and Research and Markets said developing markets will drive this growth.

Asia Pacific dominated the HVAC market, accounting for more than 50 per cent of revenue in 2021.

"Rapid urbanisation, population growth and rising consumer disposable income have all contributed to the region's phenomenal growth over the years. Recently, the commercial sector has expanded, creating opportunities for future regional growth," according to the firm.

Growth drivers

One of the key drivers of the market's expansion is the increasing adoption of sustainable building designs. Rising awareness amongst the population about the energy efficiency of HVAC equipment and aftermarket services are pushing the economies towards the adoption of sustainable building designs.

The growth in green-labelled products due to increased environmental awareness has given rise to thermally driven air-conditioners. These air-conditioners utilise both natural gas, as well as solar energy, thus ensuring energy efficiency."

[READ MORE HERE](#)

8. GEELONG MAN SUFFERS ELECTRIC SHOCK AS CRANE PULLS DOWN POWERLINES



Editor, Sean Carroll reports in the 1 December 2022 edition of Electrical Connection of yet another shocking powerline incident where a crane pulled down powerlines and nearby worker received an electric shock.

The article states, “Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) is warning workers to be aware of nearby powerlines when operating heavy machinery after a Geelong man was hospitalised when a crane rolled and fell onto powerlines that landed near him.

ESV, paramedics and police attended the incident in North Valley Road in Highton just before 4pm on 25 November 2022 when a 10-tonne bubble crane brought high and low voltage powerlines to the ground.

The crane operator reportedly moved the crane down the driveway at the worksite while the boom was extended, leading to the crane rolling and falling onto powerlines on the opposite side of the road.

Unfortunately, a 37-year-old man mowing his lawn nearby received an electric shock as the broken powerlines landed within 10m of him. He was taken to hospital but was well enough to return home later that evening.

Other members of the community avoided injury thanks to a licensed electrician working nearby who rushed over, warning onlookers to stay away and for the machinery operator to remain in the crane cabin until the power was turned off.

More than 600 properties were without power overnight with service not restored until 6.15am the following morning.

ESV is currently investigating the incident, which also serves as a reminder to the community to stay at least 10m away from fallen powerlines, as a person can still be shocked.”

[READ MORE HERE](#)

9. NEW QLD ELECTRICIAN SKILLS MAINTENANCE TEST ID REQUIREMENT



eSafe Electrical Bulletin, a publication of the Queensland Electrical Safety Office reports in its 29 November 2022 edition that changes to the online skills maintenance test for electrical workers renewing their licence took effect, Tuesday 29 November.

Electricians in Queensland when they renew their licence, they will need to prove that they have kept their skills and knowledge up-to-date, in three areas:

- electrical safety legislation
- risk management
- testing.

Only skills maintained in the last two years will be recognised as evidence of continued competence in the relevant trade area. They must also keep their rescue and resuscitation skills current.

The Bulletin states, “As well as an easier to navigate layout, the test now includes a requirement for licence holders to verify their identity through [myGovID](#) before taking the assessment.

Download the [myGovID](#) app to your mobile device and complete the standard identity strength requirements, which include linking at least two Australian identity documents (e.g. your drivers licence and Medicare card).

The email address used to register for myGovID will need to be the same email associated with your electrical licence record to access the skill maintenance test. If you need to confirm these details, contact us on 1300 632 993.

Once you have your myGovID set up:

- log into the new [skills maintenance](#) platform
- identify yourself
- complete the assessment.

Your results will still automatically link to your licence details so you can apply for your licence renewal.

Find out more about [skills maintenance courses](#).”

10. TOP 10 TIPS FOR ELECTRICIANS TO STAY ALIVE



Chris Halliday, Editor in the Oct/Nov 2022 issue of PL News at Power Logic provides 10 tips electricians can implement to stay alive.

Chris states in the article, “In my last article/blog, I spoke of the things that line workers and electricians should do to stay out of court and jail.

In this article I look at the things that electricians should do if they want to go home at the end of the day to their loved ones:

1. **ALWAYS** work de-energised
2. **ALWAYS** Lock Out/Tag Out
3. **TEST** before touching
4. **DON'T** test live
5. **DON'T** defeat isolator handle interlocks
6. **DON'T** remove Perspex covers with the supply on
7. **DON'T** remove sub-board escutcheon panels with the supply on
8. **ISOLATE** the electricity supply before entering roof spaces
9. **CARRY OUT** de-energised testing first when fault finding
10. **NEVER CLOSE** miniature or moulded case circuit breakers after a short circuit at rated short circuit current without knowledge of the C/B's condition.”

Chris expands in more detail in the article for each of the tips.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

11. ARC FAULT CAUSES EXPLOSION RESULTING IN WORKERS SUFFERING EAR INJURIES



The NSW Resources Regulator in its 2 December 2022, [Weekly Incident Summary](#) newsletter reports of a dangerous incident (IncNot0043531) that occurred in an underground coal mine, that was classified under the category of ‘Fire or explosion’.

A summary of the incident states, “An underground coal mine was restoring power following a disturbance on the incoming supply. The supply was restored to an underground distribution board and all 4 outlets had been powered for

several minutes.

A hissing sound lasted for 5-10 seconds. An arc fault then occurred. The arc front propagated from the enclosure to the PLC cabinet and then external to the enclosure. The surface substation tripped.

Four nearby workers suffered discomfort and ringing in the ears, several reported a blocked ear sensation.

The Regulator has recommended the following action to industry, “High voltage electrical plant has a high risk of causing fires and explosions and must maintained fit-for-purpose throughout its life cycle.

Mine operators should identify areas within high voltage enclosure that are susceptible to Quora and high voltage stress. Maintenance schedules and stress relief measures should be documented and implemented.

Explosion vents on high voltage enclosures should be checked that they are suitably located and will direct any internal explosion away from workers and are appropriately sized to prevent defatation of the switch board in the event of an internal electrical explosion.”

[READ MORE HERE](#)

12. AUSTRALIAN WORKERS’ COMPENSATION STATISTICS (AWCS) 2020-21 REPORT PUBLISHED



Number of serious claims in 2020-21p

130,195

Safe Work Australia has published its annual the [Australian workers’ compensation statistics 2020-21 report](#).

The Report provides the latest national statistics on accepted serious workers’ compensation claims.

Key findings in the 2020-21 report include:

- There were 130,195 serious workers’ compensation claims.
- 13% of serious claims were for illness and diseases. Of these, mental health conditions were the most common.

The 3 occupations with the highest frequency rates of serious claims were:

1. labourers
2. community and personal service workers
3. machinery operators and drivers.

The 3 industries with the highest frequency rates of serious claims were:

1. agriculture, forestry and fishing
2. health care and social assistance, and
3. manufacturing.

87% of serious claims were for injuries. The 3 most common injury types were:

1. traumatic joint/ligament and muscle/tendon injuries (40% of all serious claims)
2. musculoskeletal and connective tissue diseases (16%)
3. wounds, lacerations, amputations and internal organ damage (15%).

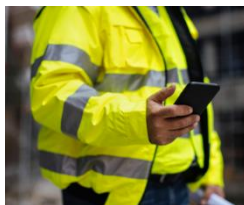
Key findings from the trend analysis to 2019–20 include:

- The number of serious claims fell 7% from 133,041 claims in 2000–01 to 122,801 claims in 2019–20.
- The median time lost for a serious claim was 7 working weeks. The median compensation paid was \$15,100.
- While a relatively low proportion of claims relate to occupational violence, such injuries are on the rise. Serious claims for Being assaulted by a person or persons have more than doubled since 2000–01 (up by 177%).

This report complements and provides additional detail to the [Key Work Health and Safety Statistics](#) published on 7 November.

[DOWNLOAD THE REPORT HERE](#)

13. DIGITAL SERVICES TO PREVENT WORKPLACE HARM



The latest NSCA Foundation Ltd Safety-T-Bulletin of 1 December 2022 includes an article regarding how the use of app-based interventions can help prevent workplace burnout.

The article states, “The [Centre for Work Health and Safety](#) has partnered with digital innovators [Talk 5](#) and [Pioneera](#) as part of a new program to explore how app-based interventions can reduce harm in workplaces. The research projects aim to help people overcome language barriers while accessing safety information and preventing employee burnout. Head of SafeWork NSW Natasha Mann said that while there are many variables on worksites across NSW, most workers will have access to some form of technology, whether on a phone, a notebook computer or other device.

“This public–private partnership combines science, technology and evidence in a bid to deliver better outcomes for employees and businesses. The centre is working with these two New South Wales-based businesses to leverage their groundbreaking safety ideas with a focus on practical solutions,” Mann said.

The Talk 5 app allows workers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to access important safety information in their preferred language. Talk 5's Managing Director, George Bancs, said the business understands that the NSW workforce is culturally diverse. "Talk 5 recognises bringing working people together from all walks of life requires an unparalleled level of communication. We understand workplace safety depends on people and businesses having quality communication methods that are easy to understand. Talk 5's service delivers digital multilingual checklists, safety guidance and more via visual, voice and audio technologies," Bancs said.

... Danielle Owen Whitford, founder and CEO of Pioneera, said the use of smart technologies like natural language processing and sentiment analyses can help employers detect and prevent burnout in teams."

[READ MORE HERE](#)

14. NAVIGATING AUSTRALIA'S ENERGY TRANSFORMATION



EnergyInsider, a joint publication of the Energy Networks Australia (ENA) and Australian Energy Council (AEC) in its 1 December 2022 edition explores in some detail how recent state-based energy plans and announcements of the acceleration of some coal plant closures has again raised questions of how best to manage the energy transition for communities and workers.

The article states, "This week [reported analysis](#) has pointed to potential impacts if careful planning and support for affected regions in New South Wales is not undertaken.

There is also an increasing number of case studies, both internationally and locally, that can help illustrate the options towards achieving a just transition. To take advantage of that work the Australian Energy Council commissioned consulting and advisory firm, Strategen, to undertake a wide-ranging review of overseas and Australian experience and distil relevant insights for Australia. Today we are releasing the resulting report, which will provide an invaluable resource.

The report [Just Transition – Navigating Australia's Energy Transformation](#) – considers Australia's current approach and possible future Just Transition outcomes. In doing so it considers the following questions:

- Where we are now? Australia's transition experience and emerging challenges.
- Where are we going? Targeting enhanced future outcomes for Australian workers and regions.
- How do we get there? Just Transition design, resourcing and implementation.

Strategen's work establishes some statements of aspiration, which includes that regional empowerment and national alignment on Just Transition could be achieved through layered, inclusive and collaborative governance, vision setting and resourcing models. Meanwhile, it notes the negative impact of plant closures can be mitigated and positive opportunities and benefits for regions, workers and industry can be realised through multi-year planning and preparation.

Case studies from around the world and here in Australia illustrate the difference in outcomes when there is a strong government focus on supporting those affected. The report finds government engagement and resourcing is an essential part in advancing Just Transition, particularly when it also empowers local communities and workers impacted and permits maximum autonomy for them to choose their own future.”

[READ MORE HERE](#)

15. CEFC TO ACCELERATE EV UPTAKE IN AUSTRALIA



Manufacturers’ Monthly reports in the 1 December edition newsletter that the [Clean Energy Finance Corporation](#) has committed up to \$20.5 million to make green car loans cheaper for Australians through Taurus Motor Finance.

The article states, “CEFC’s initiative will support an estimated \$100 million of green finance for Australian consumers to purchase electric vehicles (EVs).

Eligible borrowers will receive discounted interest rates on green car loans, compared to the rate for internal combustion engine-powered (ICE) vehicles.

The discounted green car loan offered by Taurus extends to all battery electric vehicles and high-performance plug-in hybrid vehicle models under \$90,000, including BYD plug-in electric vehicles through EV Direct.

The investment has the potential to accelerate the uptake of EVs and drive decarbonisation of the emissions-intensive transport sector by tapping into the growing demand in Australia for EVs. CEFC said it will further influence the Australian finance sector by demonstrating the value of green car loans.

CEFC head of debt markets Richard Lovell said, “Australia faces a significant challenge to decarbonise its economy. The transport sector is the third largest source of national greenhouse gas emissions and our efforts to get to net zero emissions by 2050 must include a focus the way we travel.

“As more Australians consider buying an EV to cut their carbon footprint, more affordable finance will provide a powerful incentive to convince them to commit.”

He said that increasing the number of EVs on Australian roads will also foster the development and roll out of the smart charging infrastructure needed to support them.

Australia is well behind many other countries on the roll out of EVs and according to the Electric Vehicle Council, EVs account for just 3.39 per cent of new car sales in Australia.

The Arcadis Global Electric Vehicle Catalyst Index 2021 ranked Australia last or near-last out of 12 countries in all criteria. Australia was the only market assessed as being poor in each category, including availability of EVs and charging infrastructure. The Index estimated that in 2030 Australia will have just 20 EVs per 1000 people in Australia, compared with 100 per 1,000 people in Italy and 120 in California.”

[READ MORE HERE](#)

16. SWITZERLAND PLANS TO BAN ELECTRIC CARS FROM THE ROADS



Reporter Chris Pleasance in the 2 December 2022 edition of the Daily Mail reports that, Switzerland plans to ban electric cars from the roads and order games consoles turned off during power shortages in a bid to reduce energy consumption.

The article states, “Switzerland will ban the use of electric cars for 'non-essential' journeys if the country runs out of energy this winter, the government has announced.

Emergency plans drawn up in the event the Swiss are hit by blackouts also call for shop opening hours to be reduced by up to two hours per day, heating systems in nightclubs to be turned off, and other buildings to be heated to no more than 20C.

Crisis measures could see streaming services and games consoles banned, Christmas lights turned off, and all sports stadiums and leisure facilities closed.

The country gets around 60 per cent of its energy from hydroelectric power stations, such as dams across rivers or generators placed between lakes.

Around a third of its [power comes from nuclear](#), which the government has committed to phasing out, and the remaining comes from a mixture of traditional fossil fuel plants and solar or wind generation.

Overall, Switzerland produces enough electricity each year to keep the lights on - but that statistic masks huge discrepancies month-to-month.

Because hydropower relies on rainfall and snow melt to top up rivers and reservoirs, it naturally increases during spring and summer but falls off in autumn and winter.

That means the Swiss export large amounts of power to neighbouring nations during the warmer, wetter months and import through the colder months.

In turn, that means energy shortages in Europe caused by Putin's war in Ukraine will impact the country even though it burns almost no Russian gas.

Germany is Switzerland's largest energy exporter and was hugely reliant on Russian supplies. France is second, and is currently suffering issues with its nuclear reactors.

Switzerland is also generating less energy than usual from its hydro plants because the exceptionally dry summer in Europe caused lakes and rivers to run low.”

[READ MORE HERE](#)

17. WE NEED MORE THAN JUST ELECTRIC VEHICLES

And, for some great summer reading this article in the IEEE Spectrum is a worthy of a read.

IEEE Spectrum, the flagship publication of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) published a very interesting and timely article on 20 August 2022 on Electric Vehicles (EVs). Written by Heather L. MacLean, Alexandre Milovanoff and I Daniel Posen, the article appraises, in some detail, the future of road transport decarbonisation, postulating that we need to complement Electric Vehicles (EVs) with bikes, rail, city planning, and alternative energy.



The article states, “EVs have finally come of age. The total cost of purchasing and driving one—the cost of ownership—has fallen nearly to parity with a typical gasoline-fueled car. Scientists and engineers have extended the range of EVs by cramming ever more energy into their batteries, and vehicle-charging networks have expanded in many countries. In the United States, for example, there are more than 49,000 public charging stations, and it is now possible to drive an EV from New York to California using public charging networks.

With all this, consumers and policymakers alike are hopeful that society will soon greatly reduce its carbon emissions by replacing today’s cars with electric vehicles. Indeed, adopting electric vehicles will go a long way in helping to improve environmental outcomes. But EVs come with important weaknesses, and so people shouldn’t count on them alone to do the job, even for the transportation sector.

Why not? EVs lack tailpipe emissions, sure, but producing, operating, and disposing of these vehicles creates greenhouse-gas emissions and other environmental burdens. Driving an EV pushes these problems upstream, to the factory where the vehicle is made and beyond, as well as to the power plant where the electricity is generated. The entire life cycle of the vehicle must be considered, from cradle to grave. When you do that, the promise of electric vehicles doesn’t shine quite as brightly. Here we’ll show you in greater detail why that is.

The life cycle to which we refer has two parts: The vehicle cycle begins with mining the raw materials, refining them, turning them into components, and assembling them. It ends years later with salvaging what can be saved and disposing of what remains. Then there is the fuel cycle—the activities associated with producing and using the fuel or electricity to power the vehicle through its working life.

6 million
Number of EVs on the road in China in 2021

For EVs, much of the environmental burden centers on the production of batteries, the most energy- and resource-intensive component of the vehicle. Each stage in production matters—mining, refining, and producing the raw materials, manufacturing the components, and finally assembling them into cells and battery packs.

Where all this happens matters, too, because a battery factory uses a lot of electricity, and the source for that electricity varies from one region to the next. Manufacturing an EV battery using coal-based electricity results in more than three times the greenhouse-gas emissions of manufacturing a battery with electricity from renewable sources. And about 70 percent of lithium-ion batteries are produced in China, which derived 64 percent of its electricity from coal in 2020.

Most automotive manufacturers say they plan to use renewable energy in the future, but for now, most battery production relies on electric grids largely powered by fossil fuels. Our 2020 study, published in *Nature Climate Change*, found that manufacturing a typical EV sold in the United States in 2018 emitted about 7 to 12 tonnes of carbon dioxide, compared with about 5 to 6 tonnes for a gasoline-fueled vehicle.

An EV operated in Shandong or West Virginia emits about 6 percent more greenhouse gas over its lifetime than does a conventional gasoline vehicle of the same size. An EV operated in Yunnan emits about 60 percent less.

You also must consider the electricity that charges the vehicle. In 2019, 63 percent of global electricity was produced from fossil-fuel sources, the exact nature of which varies substantially among regions. China, using largely coal-based electricity, had 6 million EVs in 2021, constituting the largest total stock of EVs in the world.

But coal use varies, even within China. The southwest province of Yunnan derives about 70 percent of its electricity from hydropower, slightly more than the percentage in Washington state, while Shandong, a coastal province in the east, derives about 90 percent of its electricity from coal, similar to West Virginia.”

[READ MORE HERE](#)

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