



**TAFE  
DIRECTORS  
AUSTRALIA**

## **SUBMISSION**

Parliament of Australia

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# **INQUIRY INTO THE JOBS AND SKILLS AUSTRALIA AMENDMENT BILL 2023**

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April 2023

### **About TAFE Directors Australia (TDA)**

TDA is the peak national body that represents Australia's national network of State and Territory publicly owned TAFE institutes and university TAFE divisions. All TAFE institutes and TAFE divisions of universities across Australia are [members of TDA](#).

The primary business of TDA members is vocational education and training focusing on nationally accredited qualifications and skill sets, non-accredited training for bespoke employer purposes, and foundation skills development for all learners. TAFEs dominate the market in the delivery of apprenticeships, partner extensively with secondary schools for delivery of vocational education and training and prioritise support for vulnerable and less advantaged Australians. Of the 29 TDA members, ten TAFEs are higher education providers and a further six are TAFE divisions of dual sector public universities.

TDA members are the main providers of training for critical Australian industries including Electricians, Plumbers, and Enrolled Nurses. TDA members are heavily invested in supplying skills development in emerging industries such as clean energy and cyber security and have significant roles in skill shortage areas such as aged care and community services. Importantly, TAFEs' breadth of scope is reflected in TAFE-industry-employer-local community engagement in cities and suburbs, and in regional, rural and remote Australia.

**TAFE Directors Australia**  
37 Constitution Avenue  
REID ACT 2612  
ceo@tda.edu.au  
**www.tda.edu.au**

## Jobs and Skills Australia Amendment Bill 2023

TAFE Directors Australia (TDA) is supportive of the permanent governance arrangements and functions of Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) as outlined in the amendment bill including the appointment of a Jobs and Skills Commissioner and Deputy Commissioners.

However, TDA's main feedback relates to the establishment of the Ministerial Advisory Board and the need to ensure that the broad membership is representative of the complex system that it has been set up to serve.

TDA encourages JSA to continue to engage fully with the TAFE sector by ensuring that TDA is part of the formal advisory arrangements. TDA is keen to ensure that the experience of those delivering skills and training in complex public institutions like TAFEs in collaboration with industry stakeholders and to large numbers and diverse learner cohorts, will inform and enhance JSA's work. The TDA perspective will provide an important balance with employer groups and unions. The voice of the leaders of complex organisations that are TAFEs, through TDA, must be heard alongside unions and employer groups.

TDA is also concerned that the appointment of experts to the advisory board can be risky as they may not be representative of the broader sector. An expert can sometimes have little experience of working within a registered training organisation and therefore is not able to provide the deep perspective that would be required for this Ministerial Advisory Board. TDA has witnessed examples where that has occurred.

TDA encourages JSA, through the Ministerial Advisory board, to tackle the factors within Australia's tertiary education system that are preventing higher education and vocational education pathways. This includes funding, regulatory and policy restraints that prevent effective workforce solutions that draw from both sectors. Appropriate representation on the advisory board will enable these discussions.

Drawing on lessons from the past, TDA would like to see the membership of the advisory board and sub-committees change on a regular basis. This would ensure that JSA remains a dynamic organisation through a continual pipeline of new thinking, new ideas and new ways of working. The selection of members to provide input to advisory bodies and sub-committees should also reflect national agenda, policy and sustainable development goals.

TDA looks forward to ongoing engagement with JSA as we navigate together some of the big opportunities and challenges for the Australian workforce and economy.