

MEDIA RELEASE

17 October 2023

TAFEs welcome landmark National Skills Agreement

TAFE students, teachers and institutes stand to reap significant benefits from a new landmark National Skills Agreement, signed by the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments.

TAFE Directors Australia (TDA) welcomed this pivotal national agreement which will see a total of 12.6 billion invested by the Commonwealth in the VET sector, with more than \$30 billion potentially available after State and Territory funding contributions.

"This marks the return of a truly national agreement across all jurisdictions with TAFE at the heart of a revitalised skills and training system," the Chief Executive Officer of TDA, Jenny Dodd, said.

"Baseline funding for TAFE means certainty, and the ability to plan with confidence to meet a host of new opportunities across emerging industries and priority occupations."

The agreement directs funding to critically important areas, including \$214 million for Closing the Gap initiatives, \$250 million to improve VET completions including for women, and \$142 million to improve foundation skills training.

In recognition of the emerging and strategic skills needed for a new era of economic growth, there is an additional \$2.4 billion that will be targeted to the clean energy and net zero transformation, sovereign manufacturing, the care and support sector, and digital capability.

The agreement will see the establishment of nationally networked TAFE Centres of Excellence, in partnership with universities, Jobs and Skills Councils and industry. There is also \$155 million to establish a National TAFE leadership Network to promote cutting edge curriculum.

The federal government's Fee-Free TAFE initiative, in partnership with the States and Territories, will see tens of thousands of additional students able to undertake the training and upskilling needed to meet a host of workforce challenges and acute skills shortages in key industries.

"The National Skills Agreement sets an overarching framework for Australia to meet these very important skills goals," Ms Dodd said.

"With the establishment of Jobs and Skills Australia and ten new Jobs and Skills Councils, the national agreement puts in place the architecture that will help guide all the parties in the VET system to meeting an unprecedented range of training opportunities.

"TAFEs across Australia stand ready to work with all stakeholders to ensure that the significant investment in the VET system delivers people with up-to-date and adaptable skills that equip them for lifelong careers," Ms Dodd said.

"TAFE's established partnerships with industry, linkages with the new Jobs and Skills Councils and other peak industry bodies, and connections to local employers and industry are vital to this success."

TDA extends its appreciation to Commonwealth, State and Territory ministers and officials who have spent many months developing the plans that culminated in last night's historic National Cabinet agreement.

Media contact: Bob Bowden, 0412 753 298 bbowden@bowmac.com.au

TAFE Directors Australia is the peak national body representing 28 TAFE institutes, including six dual sector universities with TAFE divisions and nine TAFEs that are also non-university higher education providers.