



**TAFE
DIRECTORS
AUSTRALIA**

SUBMISSION

2025 – 2026 Workplan

JOBS AND SKILLS AUSTRALIA

20 February, 2025

About TAFE Directors Australia

[TAFE Directors Australia \(TDA\)](#) is the national peak body that represents Australia's network of state and territory publicly owned Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institutes and university TAFE divisions. All TAFE institutes and TAFE divisions of dual sector universities across Australia are [members of TDA](#). TDA members range from the largest registered training provider in Australia, TAFE NSW to regional TAFEs with significant geographical coverage such as North Regional TAFE (WA). 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. Over half of TDA members also deliver higher education.

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TAFE Directors Australia (TDA) thanks Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) for the opportunity to provide input into their 2025-26 work plan and to comment on the current (2024 – 25) work plan. We value the work of Jobs and Skills Australia and its contribution to informing tertiary education priorities and pathways. JSA data and insights have the potential to develop a more nuanced understanding of vocational education and training (VET) and higher education, and their importance for future economic growth and sovereign capability. In this submission, we provide comments on priorities for existing and ongoing work and suggestions for future work.

1. Priorities for existing and ongoing work

TDA is supportive of the major projects listed in the JSA 2024-25 workplan, noting that the 2025-26 plan is expected to build upon and expand this body of work. We wish to comment particularly on the 2024-25 workplan projects which are expected to yield high value outputs for TAFE.

Foundation Skills (Major project, Key Outcome 1)

TAFE plays a critical role in supporting Foundation Skills development, necessary for full participation in work, education and society. TDA places high importance on JSA's current project to better understand literacy, numeracy and digital skills of Australian adults. This understanding is needed to inform strategies to support Foundation Skills development and to identify the resources required to achieve this.

Driving a Connected Skills System (Major Project, Key Outcome 4).

The project to develop Australia's tertiary education sector as a connected skills system (i.e. harmonisation) is an important body of work with far-reaching implications. The existing structure – a binary division between higher education and VET – is overly complex and difficult for students and industry to traverse. The binary structure has also contributed to entrenched funding disparity, along with issues of esteem and reputation for VET, and represents a barrier to Australian TAFE reaching its full potential as an important educational institution. The National Skills Taxonomy can only be effective if scaffolded by logical pathways and choice within a 'joined up', harmonised sector.

Also important to TDA, is JSA's work to establish a consistent and meaningful model to report on progress against National Skills Agreement (NSA) outcomes. This project will be critical to embed and evaluate the effectiveness of the NSA's shared stewardship model, with responsibility and accountability for VET ascribed to both the Commonwealth and relevant States and Territories.

Understanding student outcomes (Major Project, Key Outcome 4)

TDA looks forward to JSA's planned work to produce a more nuanced understanding of student outcomes, particularly if this work provides greater insight into completions and factors that influence non-completions.

Associated with this work, is the need to develop a greater understanding of the varying RTO typology, and the unique profile, sovereign responsibilities, and societal contributions associated with TAFEs as important anchor educational institutions.

To better understand data on student completions and outcomes, it is necessary to understand an RTO's purpose and value proposition, along with the impact of these factors on student demographics, completions and post-study outcomes. This work will help to provide a more comprehensive and accurate perspective on the performance of TAFE, and provide more valuable, targeted insights into measures to improve student completions and outcomes.

Suggestions for future work

TDA values the contribution and insights provided by JSA's studies on Early Childhood Education and Care and the VET workforce. We recommended further studies focused on gender-based industries with workforce shortages.

Aged Care Workforce Study

The Aged Care workforce is experiencing extreme workforce shortages as well as a need for a more skilled workforce as it responds to the recommendations of the *2021 Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety*. A complex raft of factors impacts upon the recruitment and retention challenges faced by the Aged Care industry. Work is happening across many parts of government to support the aged care workforce; however, this work feels uncoordinated. Therefore, JSA could play a role in diving deeply into the data to provide a report focused on aged care which is relevant across industry and government.

Given the findings of the Australian Government's recently released *Strategic Review of the Australian Apprenticeship Incentive System* and JSA's own reports, which identify highly gendered occupations as those most likely to experience extreme workforce shortages, more data on the Aged Care industry would be of benefit. This would be a next step to the work already being undertaken by JSA in the Gender Economic Equality Study.

TDA also recommends that JSA analyse the potential impact of implementing an apprenticeship model for Aged Care, especially considering recent ASQA actions against some training providers to this industry. Such an analysis would provide insights applicable to Aged Care and other gendered workforces facing shortages.

Conclusion

TDA looks forward to working with JSA in its execution of the 2024-25 workplan and development of outcomes and priorities for 2025-26. Please contact me at ceo@tda.edu.au for further information as required.