



Australian Government



Jobs and Skills Australia

Jobs and Skills Report

Optimising pathways and system architecture

Attaining post-secondary qualifications contributes to higher participation rates and lower unemployment rates. Ensuring access to lifelong learning (including people with higher education qualifications who later undertake VET as part of their current profession or retraining) can not only benefit the labour market, but have beneficial returns for individuals and society economically, and in terms of social cohesion, health and well-being.

Tertiary harmonisation

A more harmonised tertiary education system with greater collaboration between the sectors could enhance the ability of students to navigate the education and training system and obtain the knowledge, skills and capabilities they need to successfully participate in the labour market, especially for groups who have historically experienced labour market disadvantage.

It could also lead to greater system effectiveness through the provision of well-designed collaborative education and training, and help address national challenges, increase productivity and enhance labour market outcomes.

There are a range of examples of changes already happening in the education and training system which are breaking down the barriers between the two systems.

Combining work and learning

Any employment while studying is associated with higher rates of employment after study.

- For young people (age 25) all categories of work experience (regardless of skill level) result in a higher rate of employment than for those who did not have any work experience while studying.
- When skill level is considered, those who had work experience while studying at a high skill level were then 14-24% more likely to be working in a high-skill job by age 25 than those with no work experience during study (Dawkins, Lilly, & Pascoe, 2023).

Apprenticeships are a form of work-based learning that allow individuals to obtain a qualification through a combination of learning at a training organisation and on the job, and also to 'earn while they learn'.

- JSA found that students who complete a VET qualification via an apprenticeship pathway (formal apprenticeships supported through the Australian Apprenticeships Incentive System) tend to experience better employment outcomes compared to those who complete a qualification via a non-apprenticeship pathway.
- This included a higher income uplift and increased likelihood of working in occupations relevant to their qualification.

VET workforce study

The JSA VET Workforce study profiled the workforce and identified recommendations on how to support, sustain and build the VET teachers and trainers of the future.

- Demographically, the most distinguishing characteristics of the VET workforce is that it is older and more feminised, and this is more pronounced for the Teach, Train, and Assess workforce. The VET workforce is also not as diverse as the student cohort they teach.
- The VET workforce has a 16% gender pay gap. The workforce is slightly higher paid than the Australian workforce, but not when compared to their teaching counterparts in other education sectors or industry vocations prominent in VET.
- Although VET is less award dependent, it is more casualised than the Australian workforce.

First Nations VET workforce

The First Nations working age population participate in VET at a rate double that of the non-First Nations population, in very remote and on-community delivery contexts. Delivery of VET by First Nations staff correlates with more positive learner outcomes (Windley, 2017).

JSA is undertaking research to identify opportunities for improvements for the recruitment, retention, and cultural safety of the First Nations VET workforce. This includes analysing institutional and systematic barriers and enablers for First Nations people joining, staying and progressing in the VET workforce, and identifying promising practices that address barriers and support enablers.

Skilled migration


The Migration Strategy establishes a formal role of JSA in defining skills needs using evidence, including advice from tripartite mechanisms. JSA will also have a role in helping to ensure local workers' skills and job opportunities are prioritised, and that the migration system complements the domestic skills and training system and is guided to areas of best use.

The Migration Strategy notes that JSA's role in the new Skills in Demand visa for employer sponsored temporary migration will include:

- providing labour market analysis relevant to the Specialist Skills Pathway
- providing advice for a new Core Skills Occupation List for the Core Skills Pathway
- providing advice on appropriate sectors and occupations in the Essential Skills Pathway.

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