



**Victorian
Skills Authority**

Victorian Skills Plan Implementation Update for 2024

November 2024



Jobs, Skills,
Industry
and Regions



Level 3, 289 Wellington Parade South,
East Melbourne Victoria 3002
skills.plan@djsir.vic.gov.au
November 2024

© The State of Victoria Department
of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions
Victorian Skills Authority 2024

ISBN 978-1-76090-662-7 (Print)
ISBN 978-1-76090-663-4 (Online)

Unless indicated otherwise, this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence. You are free to re-use the work under that licence, on the condition that you credit the State of Victoria as author. The licence does not apply to any images, photographs or branding, including the Victorian Coat of Arms, the Victorian Government logo, the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR) logo or the Victorian Skills Authority (VSA) logo.

To view a copy of this licence, visit creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

Disclaimer

This publication may be of assistance to you, but the State of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication. While every effort has been made to ensure the currency, accuracy or completeness of the content, we endeavour to keep the content relevant and up-to-date and reserve the right to make changes as required. The Victorian Government, authors and presenters do not accept any liability to any person for the information (or the use of the information) which is provided or referred to in this publication.

Images

All images in this document have been supplied with permission for use by the VSA, Victorian Training Awards 2024 winners and finalists, and Learn Local Awards 2023 winners and finalists.

Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge and pay respects to Elders and all First Peoples in Victoria. We honour and respect Traditional Custodians past and present and the strength of First Peoples in practicing the world's oldest living culture, which enriches our society more broadly.

We recognise the leadership of First Peoples in advocating tirelessly for future generations' rights to education in the face of injustice, and our responsibility to partner with First Peoples through Treaty and Truth-telling to support self-determination in post-secondary education and training.

Non-English speakers

If you would like to speak to us in your language, you can access free phone translation services by calling the National Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450.

Accessibility

Alternative formats are available, please contact the Victorian Skills Authority at skills.plan@djsir.vic.gov.au.

This document is also available in accessible Word and PDF format at skillsauthority.vic.gov.au.

Cover image

Luka, Sam and Mick from Box Hill Institute, who are currently undertaking their automotive studies at the Elgar Road campus, including working on electric vehicles.

Contents

The Skills Plan drives Victoria's response to its skills and workforce priorities 4

Promote post-secondary education skills and career pathways 8

- Start the VET journey at school 8
- Enable learners and workers to make informed skilling and career choices 8
- Expand opportunities and approaches for students to put theory into practice during their course 10
- Meet the motivations and aspirations of learners through an inclusive VET system 11
- Pursue VET qualification redesign 12
- Align qualifications to new needs 12

Lift participation in education and training 14

- Build foundation skills to enhance workforce participation 14
- Bridge the gender gap 16
- Empower self-determination for First Nations peoples 17
- Improve opportunities for Victorians with disability 19

Deliver the right skills for the jobs of today and tomorrow 20

- Build skills to support Victoria's clean economy intentions 20
- Create innovative solutions to support future skills development 22
- Drive for higher skills and progression through education and training 24
- Prepare VET for the jobs of tomorrow 24
- Build the VET workforce 27
- Expand re-skilling and up-skilling opportunities through skill sets 27
- Deliver the skills Victoria needs through an integrated post-secondary school system 28
- Embed applied research in the vocational education model 29

References 30

The Skills Plan drives Victoria's response to its skills and workforce priorities

The Victorian Skills Plan steers the efforts of government, education and training providers, learners, employers and unions to build the workforce Victoria needs.

The Victorian Skills Authority (VSA) produces an annual Victorian Skills Plan (Skills Plan) that identifies priority areas for improvement in the skills system to support Victoria's economic growth and prosperity. These include implementing the *Housing Statement*, advancing *Big Build*, continuing Victoria's clean economy transition and building the digital capabilities of Victoria's workforce. These efforts aim to strengthen Victoria's productivity, increase employment and improve standards of living.

Each Skills Plan makes a series of recommendations to:

1. **promote post-secondary education skills and career pathways**
2. **lift participation in education and training**
3. **deliver the right skills for the jobs of today and tomorrow.**

The Victorian Government has already implemented many recommendations from the first two Skills Plans and is actively progressing others.

The Skills Plans also represent Victoria's contribution to progressing national priorities under the *National Skills Agreement* and the *Australian Universities Accord*, including:

- building foundation skills
- supporting the clean economy transition
- developing the VET workforce
- improving the experiences of women in training and in the workforce
- empowering First Nations peoples
- supporting people with disability
- redesigning VET qualifications, and
- improving digital skills.

The **2024 Implementation Update** builds on the first update from October 2023. It covers selected actions from the 2022 Skills Plan that were not covered in the 2023 Implementation Update and reports on the progress of actions from the 2023 Skills Plan.

Reporting on Victoria's clean economy ambitions

The 2024 Implementation Update reports on the implementation of the **Clean Economy Workforce Development Strategy for 2023 –2033**, which is a planning and investment framework to prepare Victoria's workforce for a net zero future.

Angelika Fevaleaki

Victorian Training Awards 2024 Koorie Student of the Year finalist



Angelika has worked in community services since age 18, beginning as a youth worker and studying various courses that progressed her impactful career in First Nations family services. Her ongoing dedication to helping First Nations families saw Angelika undertake a Diploma of Community Services at Bendigo TAFE to strengthen what she had learnt in the field, and to help keep families safe and heard.

In her role as a family preservation and reunification response practitioner with Mallee District Aboriginal Service in partnership with MacKillop, she supports families to strengthen their bonds and keep their children safe at home. Angelika has a deep understanding of the issues they face, having grown up in a small town impacted by generational trauma.

The diploma furthered her skill in helping clients with an open mind and clear, structured approach including referrals to support services. Angelika finds it rewarding to support families who are navigating trauma to help build their parenting skills, so they provide greater care for their children.



The implementation of actions from the Skills Plans is well progressed



Promote post-secondary education skills and career pathways

✓ 1. Start the VET journey at school

- 1.1 Provide up-to-date information to students about occupations in demand
- 1.2 Work with industry to identify future job opportunities
- 1.3 Use the VSA's employment forecasts to inform VET in school offerings

✓ 2. Enable learners and workers to make informed skilling and career choices

- 2.1 Work with Skills and Jobs Centres staff to support local learners and employees
- 2.2 Provide advice through the Victorian Skills Gateway to highlight training pathways to local occupations in demand
- 2.3 Develop a tool to show core and transferable skills for future jobs

✓ 3. Expand opportunities and approaches for students to put theory into practice during their course

- 3.1 Facilitate industry roundtables to support work placements
- 3.2 Identify placement shortfalls in courses and occupations causing supply issues
- 3.3 Review work placements and provide alternatives where applicable

⋯ 8. Align qualifications to new needs

- 8.1 Through national skills bodies, progress VET qualification reform to support future skills
- 8.2 Use local accreditation to quickly produce accredited micro-credentials
- 8.3 Explore new curriculum models and modes of delivery with the OTCD in critical niche occupations

✓ 12. Meet the motivations and aspirations of learners through an inclusive VET system

- 12.1 Provide a stronger learner voice in education and training reforms
- 12.2 Enhance connections of school-aged learners with employers and industry
- 12.3 Collaborate with NCVET to better understand learners' vocational pathways

⋯ 13. Pursue VET qualifications redesign

- 13.1 Through Skills Ministers' work on VET qualification redesign, explore options to streamline the number of units of competency
- 13.2 Trial the design of new VET qualifications using local accreditation



Lift participation in education and training

⋯ 4. Build foundation skills to enhance workforce participation

- 4.1 Partner across government to provide courses to help people into employment
- 4.2 Implement a pre-accredited training framework of foundation skills for learners
- 4.3 Continue developing partnerships between Learn Local providers, communities and industry
- 4.4 Learn Local sector partner with industry to support training within industry settings

✓ 5. Bridge the gender gap

- 5.1 Conduct an annual Gender Impact Assessment of the Skills Plan
- 5.2 Monitor the education and employment outcomes of women who enrol in training
- 5.3 Identify barriers to participation in education and training for women from diverse backgrounds
- 5.4 Partner with agencies to address gender-based barriers to training and employment
- 5.5 Work with industry to reduce gender segregation across industries

⋯ 14. Empower self-determination for First Nations peoples

- 14.1 Reflect cultural inclusion and First Nations knowledge systems in VET
- 14.2 Work with training providers to foster a culturally safe learning environment for First Nations learners
- 14.3 Encourage training providers to increase the diversity of their workforce to enable a First Nations voice in decision-making

⋯ 15. Improve opportunities for Victorians with disability

- 15.1 DJISIR review the range of supports available for learners with disability in VET
- 15.2 The OTCD to work with the Victorian TAFE Network to set accessibility and outcome standards for learners with disability
- 15.3 Skills and Jobs Centres support Victorians with disability to access their services by developing targeted resources

✓ Completed and now embedded functions

⋯ Underway



Deliver the right skills for the jobs of today and tomorrow

✓ 6. Build skills to support Victoria's clean economy intentions

- 6.1 Develop Victoria-wide workforce planning tools for providers to inform skills delivery
- 6.2 Embed clean economy workforce priorities in the Skills Plans
- 6.3 Deliver programs for new clean economy skills with the OTCD

... 7. Create innovative solutions to support future skills development

- 7.1 Partner with the Victorian TAFE Network to identify new skills and delivery models
- 7.2 Lead work to identify digital skills needed across occupations
- 7.3 Develop innovative approaches to address Victoria's digital skills needs

... 9. Build the VET workforce

- 9.1 Develop a Victorian VET Workforce Strategy
- 9.2 Collaborate nationally to establish a differentiated approach to teacher qualifications to meet contemporary skills needs
- 9.3 Work with the VDC to develop a professional development framework for VET teachers

✓ 10. Expand re-skilling and up-skilling opportunities through skill sets

- 10.1 Support skilling in priority areas through the *Training Needs List* (formerly the *Funded Course List*)
- 10.2 Facilitate recognition of micro-credentials for new areas of learning
- 10.3 Use the Workforce Skill Set Fund to develop new skill sets with industry
- 10.4 Provide advice to learners on the link between skill sets, employment and full qualifications

Note: Actions one to 11 were developed in the 2022 Skills Plan and Actions 12 to 18 were developed in the 2023 Skills Plan. Please note the following abbreviations: DJSIR (Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions), OTCD (Office of TAFE Coordination and Delivery), NCVET (National Centre for Vocational Education Research) and VDC (VET Development Centre).

... 11. Drive for higher skills and progression through education and training

- 11.1 Pilot the revised Australian Qualifications Framework for contemporary skills solutions
- 11.2 Identify new and emerging skills through existing skills classifications tools

✓ 16. Prepare VET for the jobs of tomorrow

- 16.1 The VSA continues to work on future skills needs of Victoria

... 17. Deliver the skills Victoria needs through an integrated post-secondary school system

- 17.1 The OTCD considers developing a proposal for self-accreditation for the Victorian TAFE Network
- 17.2 DJSIR and OTCD advocate for a regulatory framework that lessens the burden for the Victorian TAFE Network
- 17.3 The OTCD and Victorian TAFE Network establish partnerships with universities and higher education institutions that recognise the unique value of VET
- 17.4 Advocate to the Commonwealth for learners to have access to higher education subsidies where TAFEs act as an access point for higher education

... 18. Embed applied research in the vocational education model

- 18.1 Through a Skills Lab, develop approaches and principles to embed applied research in VET
- 18.2 Consider using Workforce Training and Innovation Fund to prioritise applied research projects in VET

✓ Completed and now embedded functions

... Underway

Promote post-secondary education skills and career pathways



Start the VET journey at school



Enable learners and workers to make informed skilling and career choices

The Victorian Government is strengthening access to VET in senior secondary schools and is supporting learners to make informed career decisions about pathways into training and jobs.

The **VET Delivered to School Students (VDSS) program** continues to provide vocational education and training in Victorian government schools. In 2024, the VDSS program delivered training to around 31,900 students across Victoria, a 10 per cent increase from the previous year.

Head Start continues to support students in years 10 to 12 to undertake school-based apprenticeships and traineeships to help develop the skills and confidence students require to succeed in a workplace.

Since its introduction in 2019, more than 3,300 students have commenced training contracts via *Head Start*. Of these students, approximately 80 per cent were retained in their training contract 12 months post commencement, while approximately 80 per cent of *Head Start* employers have indicated their preference for using the *Head Start* model to recruit into the future.

Through its **refreshed Employment Projections Dashboard**, the VSA now provides 10-year projections of jobs in demand in addition to its standard three-year projections. This supports learners to better understand potential employment pathways upon completion of their qualifications and make more informed career decisions in school.

Skills and Jobs Centres (SJs) continue to provide free career, employment and training services for all Victorians.¹ In 2023, SJs provided one-on-one support to 27,000 people and provided job readiness workshops to over 45,000 people.

The **Victorian Skills Gateway** continues to provide comprehensive information on careers in VET and training pathways. There are now over 500 training pathways listed on the website, and around 300 occupation-specific pages. Since June 2023, there have been over 1 million visits to the Gateway.

A new addition to the Skills Gateway is a set of **industry and region-level profiles for learners** with information on training, skills and job opportunities in high-demand industries across Melbourne and regional Victoria.

- **15 industry profiles** help learners understand training and careers in growing industries in Victoria, including jobs in demand, insights into working in the industry, training and job opportunities and information on financial assistance.²

- **13 region-level profiles** provide information on the training, skills and job opportunities across four Melbourne³ and nine regional areas⁴ in Victoria.
- **24 training and career stories** provide real world examples of people across Victoria who used VET as a pathway to build their careers.⁵

Dean Xiberras

Victorian Training Awards 2024 School-based Apprentice or Trainee of the Year finalist

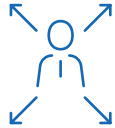


Growing up, Dean found fascination and enjoyment dismantling remote-controlled toys, and electronic components including motors and circuitry. So, it was no surprise that he chose a school-based apprenticeship with an electrical and data company and enrolled in a Certificate III in Electrotechnology Electrician.

For Dean, an electrical career was the most interesting, with plenty of potential for job growth. From day one of employment he was hooked — running data cables around the office building. Although he encountered challenges such as adapting to a constantly changing work environment, and learning many new electrical terms, he soon adapted and became an invaluable help to his team.

Dean's time training helped him improve his school performance, his self-confidence, allowed him to build positive relationships with peers, and inspired him to set higher standards. He plans to pursue further training and explore every avenue of the electrical industry.





Expand opportunities and approaches for students to put theory into practice during their course

Learners are supported to apply their skills in real-world scenarios through, for example, placements, traineeships, earn and learn pathways, and simulated learning.

The **Practical Placement Officers program** successfully improved access to placements for TAFE students. Placement Officers were stationed in all Victorian TAFEs between 2021 and 2024 and contributed to a 92 per cent reduction in the number of students who were yet to secure a placement.

In addition to practical placements, the Victorian TAFE Network makes simulated training available to learners. For example, South West TAFE's upgraded Warrnambool Campus provides access to **training simulators and specialist equipment** to support aspiring electricians with real-world training experiences.⁶

The Victorian Government partners with industry to develop, invest in and deliver employment-based pathways in occupations with significant workforce demands such as child protection workers and family violence practitioners. Such pathways remove the need for students to complete unpaid placements and provide meaningful work experience and employment.

The **Switch to Child Protection program**⁷ used an earn and learn model to trial an alternative career switcher pathway into child protection. Employment in mid-career level positions while completing a Graduate Certificate in Child Protection with La Trobe University allowed practitioners to apply theory directly into their practice.

The **Family Violence and Sexual Assault Traineeship Program** supported new and existing workers at various career stages to up-skill with a mix of accredited training, industry-delivered professional development and supports including access to **Traineeship Support Advisors** for participating organisations. The program had strong outcomes and supported 318 trainees.



Real-world plumbing TAFE facilities open in Wangaratta⁸



New training facilities at GOTAFE Wangaratta provide a real-life training environment for plumbers. This includes a Type A Gas Room to help plumbers up-skill in delivering sustainable alternatives to fossil gas — a critical part of Victoria's clean economy transition.

Several groups of students have already completed a 16-day short course in servicing Type A Gas Appliances.



Meet the motivations and aspirations of learners through an inclusive VET system

The Victorian Government recognises the importance of incorporating the views of learners when developing education and training policy. Mechanisms such as student advisory panels, surveys, youth roundtables, and research play a crucial role in embedding the learner's voice into government decision-making.

Launched in 2024, the **Senior Secondary Pathways Reform (SSPR) Student Advisory Panel** is an advisory body comprised of secondary students in Year 10 to Year 12. The SSPR panel includes students from government, Catholic, and independent schools who are undertaking the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), VCE-Vocational Major, VCE-VET, and school-based apprenticeships and traineeships. It provides senior secondary students with the opportunity to share their perspectives directly with government to inform reforms aimed at improving the senior secondary experience.

The VSA is embedding the voice of learners in its work to strengthen Victoria's skills system. It undertook a **Young Persons Roundtable on Skills and Training** in November 2023 that allowed a diverse group of young Victorians (aged 16 to 24) to share their lived experience in post-secondary education and identify areas for improvement in the training system. Young Victorians expressed the need for more collaboration in course design and delivery, as well as the challenges associated with navigating career and study decisions, particularly managing competing individual and community values.

The VSA is developing a **Learner Engagement and Collaboration Strategy** that formalises the role of learners in key decision-making in the skills system (along with those of industry and education and training providers).

In 2023, the VSA **partnered with the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) to better understand learner pathways in VET**, including through qualifications and accredited skill sets. The research found that the most common progression pathways were within the same training package with a few popular pathways between levels of education. For example, completers of a Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care were likely to progress to a Diploma of Early Childhood and Care.

Research led by the **Australasian Vocational Education and Training Research Association (AVETRA)** and funded by the VSA, identified strategies, tools and approaches to incorporate learner voice into vocational education design. The report identified key enablers, such as a nationally consistent framework for **learner voice**, and student-centric government digital gateways.

Other enablers include VET teachers co-designing learning materials with learners and providing opportunities for learners to address global and local challenges to prepare them for the future of work, including in sustainable industries.



The VSA's industry roundtables informed government's understanding of skills needs



In 2024, the VSA facilitated **three industry roundtables** on the digital economy, the care and health economy, and advanced manufacturing to better understand emerging skills needs in these industries.

Each industry roundtable discussed:

- 'mega trends' impacting industry or the economy more widely (such as climate change and AI)
- the emerging skills needs participants anticipate for their firms, sectors and the economy more broadly
- the skills that firms will demand in the future, including specific technical skills and those that are transferable across firms, industries and the broader economy
- how future skills are understood and categorised
- the education and training system and its preparedness to provide the skills required into the future.

The roundtables also included discussions on work placements and reducing the barriers to accessing placements, particularly in the care and health economy.



Pursue VET qualification redesign



Align qualifications to new needs

Through **national work on qualifications redesign**, Skills Ministers agreed to trial three new qualification models through Jobs and Skills Councils:

- occupation-specific qualifications
- industry-specific qualifications and
- vocational learning and cross-sectoral qualifications.

Victoria is contributing to this national work. For example, **the VSA has partnered with the Victorian Automotive Chamber of Commerce (VACC)** to identify the core skills and knowledge required within the industry to streamline 14 existing Certificate II automotive qualifications and provide better pathways into the automotive sector as well as meet industry workforce needs more effectively.

To strengthen the delivery of qualifications that meet industry needs, the Victorian TAFE Network is piloting shared training and assessment resources for TAFEs that leverage their expertise to improve efficiencies and quality of courseware and develop high-quality training materials for qualifications in demand. These resources are shared across the TAFE Network to deliver consistently high-quality training to learners and reduce duplicated effort for VET trainers.

Shared training materials are being developed for qualifications in allied health, maritime operations, apparel, fashion, travel, and tourism.



Aligning qualifications to new needs in the circular economy



As a circular economy social enterprise in Victoria, Green Collect has been enabling the reuse and recycling of office and home goods to minimise landfill since 2005.

Green Collect identified the need to deliver its internal practical training more broadly to workers and jobseekers, and decided to translate it into an accredited micro-credential.

The Victorian Government funded the development and accreditation of this training. Green Collect developed non-accredited training in-house and commissioned Chisholm Institute to provide Accreditation Advisor services to develop an accredited course. Industry experts led the course development, and the VSA supported the process through the project's Governance Group.

This collaborative effort has led to the accreditation of the **Course in Circular Economy Practices**.

The course is designed to provide skills for learners to pursue key occupations in the circular economy including repair technicians, warehouse operators and processors, recycling operators, or other roles in enterprises focused on reusing goods and materials.

Lift participation in education and training



Build foundation skills to enhance workforce participation

Victoria's skills system has a proud history of supporting learners to improve their foundation skills.

The **Literacy and Numeracy Support (LN Support)** short course was added to the *Free TAFE* list in 2023 to help VET learners improve their foundation skills and complete their qualification. Under *Free TAFE*, more than 3,500 learners received LN support.⁹

Learners are undertaking LN Support alongside programs aligned to areas of high workforce demand like the Certificate III in Electrotechnology Electrician.

The **Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE) Board** continues to fund the delivery of pre-accredited VET training (including foundation skills) to many Victorians, including early school leavers, unemployed people, and low-skilled and vulnerable workers.¹⁰ Module commencements in pre-accredited VET training increased by 22 per cent from 2022 to 2023.

Learn Local Industry Practice Networks continue to help Learn Local providers engage with local employers to deliver pre-accredited foundation skills programs tailored to industry workforce needs. The networks have co-developed **sector specific mentoring services** in aged care, health support services, and building and civil construction.



Carringbush

Victorian Training Awards 2024 Community Training Provider of the Year finalist



Committed to empowering vulnerable community members, Carringbush prioritises community development in program design and implementation. It has a distinguished history of serving refugees and migrants since 1984 and continues to empower culturally and linguistically diverse people, and those who are marginalised and under-represented. Targeted programs effectively address complex needs whether it be literacy support for offenders at the Neighbourhood Justice Centre, or bi-lingual playgroups for low-income mothers, where they can access additional supports.

Clients are often from backgrounds characterised by long-term unemployment, disrupted schooling, trauma, and intergenerational disadvantage which are barriers to education and employment. Carringbush's comprehensive programs integrate education, employment support, community activities, and post-settlement services.

Heather McTaggart

Victorian Learn Local Awards 2023 Leadership winner



Heather's leadership has seen her turn The Basin Community House into a viable, thriving educational facility that transforms the lives of vulnerable people, including people exiting the justice system.

Heather has implemented the Employment Skills Pathways to Employment program that delivers online group training to enhance participant's literacy, technology, and employability skills. The program provides a safe learning environment, encouraging learners to find purpose and develop their confidence. Job agencies also attend classes to promote employment opportunities, leading to many learners finding decent work.





Bridge the gender gap

The Victorian Government is committed to attracting more women into VET and increasing female participation in the workforce.

The VSA continues to adopt a gender lens in its work. The **Victorian Skills Plan for 2024 into 2025 (2024 Skills Plan)** makes suggestions to support placement students in the female-dominated care industry and support better gender diversity in the male-dominated IT industry.

The **Respect and Equality in TAFE (RET)** initiative helps prevent violence against women, build safe environments for learners and staff and address barriers to female participation in education, training, and employment.

RET was developed in partnership with the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH), Melbourne Polytechnic and Our Watch, a not-for-profit established to drive nation-wide change to prevent violence against women. In 2024, the **RET at TAFE Week** was launched with all 16 TAFEs and dual sector universities campaigning and contributing to the RET Network.

Through its participation in a cross-jurisdictional working group on strengthening university governance, the Victorian Government has made significant contributions to the development of an Action Plan addressing gender-based violence in higher education and a new **National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence**.



Empowering futures in Trade & Tech for women and gender diverse learners¹¹



The Victorian Government's annual **Trade & Tech Fit expo** helps female and gender diverse secondary school students better understand the career pathways available in the trade and technology industries and introduces employers to emerging female talent.

Students participated in interactive activities across a wide range of industries including building, construction and engineering; solar and wind clean energy; and gaming, cloud and robotics. Almost 3,400 students attended the 2024 expo.

After attending the expo in 2023, half the attendees expressed an interest in trades and tech careers and 95 per cent of teachers indicated they were more likely to recommend these pathways to their female and gender diverse students in the future.



Empower self-determination for First Nations peoples

Victoria is continuing the journey of embedding First Nations knowledge systems and using self-determination as a guiding principle to reflect cultural inclusion in the vocational education and training system.

Through a two-year statewide consultation and co-design process with 3,100 First Nations people, the **Strengthening Aboriginal Self-Determination in Education report** identified areas for reform to progress self-determination in the education system.¹²

The Department of Education and Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI) co-led more than 180 campfire conversations at 89 schools and 12 First Nations organisations. First Nations people raised factors that contributed to students' self-determination, learning and wellbeing.

The report identified six areas for reform:

1. reciprocal partnerships
2. truth-telling in the Victorian curriculum
3. Aboriginal voice in decision making
4. ongoing capacity building to support school and community engagement
5. meaningful accountability measures and
6. creating a culturally safe and responsive school system.

These campfire conversations led to a \$51 million investment to improve the learning and wellbeing outcomes of First Nations students in Victorian Government schools by offering better supports. The funding will also contribute to fairly compensating Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations for their expertise in supporting education outcomes and inclusion for Aboriginal students.¹³

Through the **Self-determination in Learn Locals Koorie Education Initiative**, the ACFE Board and VAEAI developed a set of protocols to support **Learn Local providers** to create culturally safe environments and include First Nations perspectives in the curriculum. This helps providers better meet the needs of First Nations learners and communities.

The **TAFE Network Statement of Priorities for 2024** specifies that TAFEs will work together to improve engagement, support and outcomes for learners who face barriers in education, including through recognition of cultural safety and self-determination for First Nations Victorian learners and staff.

Every TAFE has a dedicated Koorie Unit, with government funded Koorie Liaison Officers (KLOs) and Koorie Student Support Officers (KSSOs) playing an important role in supporting a culturally safe environment for Koorie students.

The Victorian TAFE Network is developing its **First Nations VET educators workforce**. In 2023, Federation TAFE saw its first cohort of First Nations learners from diverse and professional and personal backgrounds across Melbourne and regional Victoria commence the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. Federation TAFE collaborated with the Aboriginal Education Centre to co-design the delivery model and ensure appropriate supports were available.¹⁴ The program aims to increase the number of First Nations people employed as VET educators at Federation TAFE and other providers.¹⁵



More support for First Nations apprentices



The Victorian Government is committed to supporting First Nations apprentices through a network of support officers who provide the advice they need throughout their apprenticeship journey.

First Nations apprentices can access supports such as the Apprenticeship Support Officers (ASOs), who are a key point of contact for all apprentices. ASOs help apprentices get the most out of the apprenticeship system by providing advice on training and employment, safety and workplace concerns. ASOs also provide referrals to supports such as mental health and wellbeing services, and support apprentices experiencing housing and financial difficulties, as well as drug and alcohol issues.¹⁶

First Nations apprentices can also receive support from **Koorie Liaison Officers (KLOs)** or **Koorie Student Support Officers (KSSOs)**.

KLOs are employed by TAFEs and dual sector universities to support learners during their TAFE journey. **KSSOs** are trained to work directly with First Nations learners to support learner engagement, improve the learner experience, and facilitate access to the supports available in the skills system and the broader government system.¹⁷

Taylor Hampton

Victorian Training Awards 2024 Koorie Student of the Year winner



Growing up, Taylor had minimal knowledge of his First Nations heritage because his father was not allowed to speak his language or practice his culture. As a result, Taylor was determined to play a lead role in enhancing Indigenous cultural awareness in Victoria. He took a job at the Victorian Aboriginal Child and Community Agency (VACCA) to pursue his aspirations. Enthusiasm for leadership led him to enrol in a Certificate IV in Leadership and Management at Kangan Institute.

The course shaped his personal leadership ambitions and skills. As a direct result of his success, he was offered new roles at VACCA, including Acting Program Manager and Senior Facilitator for Koorie FACES, a family strengthening program that aims to increase confidence in First Nations families.

A transformation in Taylor's leadership style and advocacy skills gave him the confidence to address complex issues and become a supportive manager who encourages colleagues to take on new challenges and progress in their careers.



Improve opportunities for Victorians with disability

An inclusive and accessible VET system is essential to support more Victorians with disability to complete their training and secure decent work.

Skills and Jobs Centres (SJs) ensure career counsellors have the training and resources needed to provide tailored supports for Victorians with disability. For example, SJs use videos produced in Auslan in collaboration with DeafConnectEd, to raise awareness of the supports available for deaf and hard of hearing Victorians.

The **TAFE Network Statement of Priorities** for 2024 outlines that TAFEs, with support from OTCD, will deliver outcomes that respond to reforms including *Inclusive Victoria: State Disability Plan* and the *Disability Royal Commission*.

TAFE Disability Transition Support Officers provide targeted support for secondary school students with a disability who are transitioning into Victorian TAFEs. A Community of Practice provides a forum for the officers to develop and deliver high-quality and consistent support across the Victorian TAFE Network.

Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) in Victoria provide a range of **reasonable adjustments** to support learners with disability during training, strengthening their ability to fully participate in their chosen courses. Adjustments include physical adjustments to learning spaces, modified assessment conditions, adaptive technology, specialised equipment, and Auslan interpreters.

The **Gordon TAFE Centre of Excellence for Inclusion in Disability**¹⁸ will showcase leading education and inclusion practices and support employers to build their inclusion approaches for people with disability.

The Centre's strategic purpose and operating model will be co-created with input from people with disability and organisations who work with them. The design and engagement phase has commenced.



Gabriel Gervasoni

Victorian Training Awards 2023 Trainee of the Year finalist



Gabriel has had a profound vision impairment since birth, but this has not stopped him from following his passion of working in the Information Technology (IT) industry and advocating for the broader vision impaired community.

After finishing a Diploma of IT traineeship with IBM in Ballarat, including formal training through Federation TAFE, Gabriel landed a full-time role in IBM's app development department.

"Out of every industry, I think IT is the most accommodating to those who have different abilities because computers can be catered towards the individual," he says.

With his newfound skills, Gabriel is now developing apps and software to improve the lives of people like him who live with disabilities.

For those seeking to enter the expanding field, Gabriel highlights that TAFE courses and traineeships present an excellent pathway.

Deliver the right skills for the jobs of today and tomorrow



Build skills to support Victoria's clean economy intentions

Skills and training responses are vital to support the transition to the clean economy. By implementing the **Clean Economy Workforce Development Strategy 2023-2033**, the Victorian Government is creating opportunities to develop the skilled workforce required for clean economy-related jobs and industries.

The **Latrobe Valley and Gippsland Transition Plan** highlights the need for education and training pathways that lead to meaningful, local employment as the region transitions towards a net-zero economy. It also supports transitioning workers from the traditional energy and forestry sectors into new sectors like renewable energy.¹⁹

In January 2024, TAFE Gippsland, in collaboration with Federation University, Energy Australia Yallourn, and Star of the South, co-designed the **Clean Economy Workforce Transition Framework for Gippsland**. This framework outlines skills and training pathways and opportunities for the current traditional energy production workforce to transition into sectors like renewable energy.²⁰

The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action is developing the **Victorian Energy Jobs Plan (VEJP)**. The VEJP will support Victoria to develop the workforce required to deliver its nation-leading 95 per cent renewable electricity generation target by 2035 and to drive investment confidence to enable the energy transition. The VEJP is informed by the VSA's data and insights and outlines actions needed to develop Victoria's energy workforce.

Victorian TAFEs lead the training of a skilled workforce to drive the clean economy transition. The **Victorian TAFE Network Prospectus 2024** sets out the clean economy-related training solutions that the Victorian TAFE Network offers to industry, business, government, and the public. The Prospectus aligns with the priorities identified in the Clean Economy Workforce Development Strategy.²¹

A range of clean economy-related qualifications and short courses receive Victorian government funding, including the following skill sets:

- Working Safely on Rooftop Renewable Energy Systems

- Battery Electric Vehicle Inspection and Servicing
- Hybrid Electric Vehicle Inspection and Servicing
- Battery Electric Vehicle Diagnose and Repair
- Grid-connected Photovoltaic Systems Designer-Installer Skill Set.

The Victorian Government has invested \$9 million to boost skills in environmental sustainability across TAFEs, universities, training providers and industry. The investment will support the Victorian TAFE Network to establish three **Clean Economy Skills Labs**, hosted at TAFE Gippsland and Melbourne Polytechnic, to develop training in offshore wind, circular design, manufacturing and meeting net-zero emissions targets. Development of **Skill Sets** is also underway, with RMIT currently piloting three new short courses in sustainable building practices.

The Victorian Government has established a \$50 million **TAFE Clean Energy Fund** which has invested \$16 million in new state-of-the-art facilities at TAFE Gippsland, South West TAFE and Federation TAFE. These training centres

will include specialised equipment to help learners develop the skills they need for careers in renewable energy and new construction technologies. The remaining \$34 million in the *TAFE Clean Energy Fund* will provide further investments in specialist TAFE infrastructure to train the clean economy workforce.

Carly Brown

Victorian Training Awards 2024 Vocational Student of the Year winner



A childhood fascination with trains sparked Carly's journey into a comprehensive vocational education and training pathway as part of her VCE. It began with a Certificate II in Engineering where she learned the fundamentals of drawing and reading engineering diagrams. Fascinated by all things mechanical, Carly went on to expand her knowledge and completed a Certificate II in Electrotechnology in 2023 hoping one day to work on infrastructure projects.

While Carly's current focus is on certificates in plumbing and automotive, her ultimate goal is to secure an electrical apprenticeship and become an A Grade electrician.

Carly also aims to challenge gender stereotypes and promote diversity in trades. She is tireless in her role as ambassador for the Young Women in Trades & Technology group. With unwavering determination and a commitment to inclusivity, Carly seizes every opportunity to gain experience that prepares her for the workforce.





Create innovative solutions to support future skills development

Digitisation and automation are creating new opportunities for Victoria's economy and its workforce. Digital skills and digital literacy are now relevant for every industry and almost all occupations, and the skills system is supporting learners to develop the digital skills they need.

The Victorian TAFE Network is co-leading innovative approaches to better meet the State's demand for a digitally skilled workforce, including new IT qualifications such as:

- a Diploma of IT traineeship and bolt-on micro-credentials to develop specialised, industry-relevant skills such as cyber security and cloud computing
- a data analytics course to up-skill workers from all industries.

The **2024 Skills Plan** identifies the digital skills that Victoria needs and makes recommendations to develop a digitally skilled workforce. The Plan provides data on the number of workers who require baseline digital skills (such as computer literacy and the need to use basic software), and specific digital skills (such as data analysis and cloud computing).

In April 2024, the VSA held a **roundtable with several employers from the digital sector**, who provided insights into emerging skill needs such as cloud computing and the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation on the Victorian workforce.

In addition to its work in the digital space, the VSA continues to engage with industry to identify future skills needs and the implications for designing and delivering post-secondary education and training, including through joint projects such as the VicWater Workforce readiness project.



NECA Education and Careers

Victorian Training Awards 2024 Employer Award for Apprenticeship Development winner



For over 30 years, the National Electrical Communications Association (NECA) Education and Careers has been igniting bright sparks in the electrical industry and allied trades. NECA is the only combined registered training organisation and group training organisation focused purely on the electrical industry, providing training for pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, and post-apprenticeship studies, and employing around 300 electrical apprentices-making them the largest employer of electrical apprentices in the industry.

Aspiring and experienced electricians alike engage in programs specifically developed by, and for the industry - delivered in classrooms, blended learning spaces and simulation areas. Bridging the gap between theory and practice is their 'Meta-Electric' platform, harnessing animation and work-place simulations for deeper learning experiences. Within their pre-apprenticeship program, a project-based approach involves students completing a start-to-finish installation in a simulated environment.

NECA's apprentice-centric approach to training is strengthened by providing regular guidance and advice. High retention rates demonstrate their success.

VicWater Workforce Readiness project



The VicWater Workforce Readiness project was created to address the critical need for qualified operators in the water sector.

As the peak industry association for water corporations in Victoria, VicWater first raised the issue through a VSA Industry Advisory Group, where it was agreed a collaborative effort to address workforce needs was required. This led to the establishment of a project working group with representatives from 11 Victorian water corporations. Together, they designed and implemented a state-wide survey, gathering valuable data on workforce needs and future training requirements. The 18 water corporations expressed interest to explore a state-wide coordinated solution offering industry-leading technical training for the Victorian water industry.

The VSA is currently working with VicWater and the working group to explore what a state-wide solution could look like.



Local Skills Partnership Program



The VSA is implementing recommendations identified in all Skills Plans, *Regional Skills Demand Profiles*, and the Industry Advisory Groups through the **Local Skills Partnership Program**. The program is developed 'in place' and delivers innovative capacity building opportunities within the regions.

Projects approved under the program include:

Creating Inclusive Work Environments – Federation University will co-design leadership and management learning materials to create inclusive work environments in the construction and manufacturing sectors, focusing on enhancing apprenticeship outcomes for small and medium businesses in the Central Highlands and Wimmera Southern Mallee regions.

Maryborough Learning Hub – Central Goldfields Shire will develop a plan for a community-owned skills hub serving Central Goldfields and the broader region, in partnership with local businesses, service providers, and training organisations. The skills hub will include a model for TAFEs to deliver learning programs remotely, direct to the Hub, enabling local people to access skills-based learning while remaining in their own community.

DJAKTIJ Pathways to Aquaculture Project – Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (DJAARA), in partnership with industry, will pilot a First Nations-led program to highlight opportunities in the Victorian aquaculture industry. Additionally, a foundation skills program will be co-designed in partnership with industry and established training institutions.

Developing a Seasonal Skills Passport – Wodonga TAFE will develop and implement a Seasonal Skills Passport in the Goulburn and Ovens-Murray regions of North-East Victoria, enabling seasonal workers employed in the region to showcase industry-based skills and competencies aligned to relevant qualifications while in employment throughout the region.

Mining Skills Navigator – Sunraysia TAFE will lead a partnership of regional TAFEs and industry to produce a Mining Skills Workforce Planning Report to analyse skills supply and demand in Victoria's mining sector, aiming to bridge skill gaps and support workforce readiness for planned developments in North, Central and Western Victoria.





Drive for higher skills and progression through education and training



Prepare VET for the jobs of tomorrow

The nature of skills required for jobs in Victoria is changing. The VSA continues to lead work on the state's future skills needs through its research, data analysis and engagement activities.

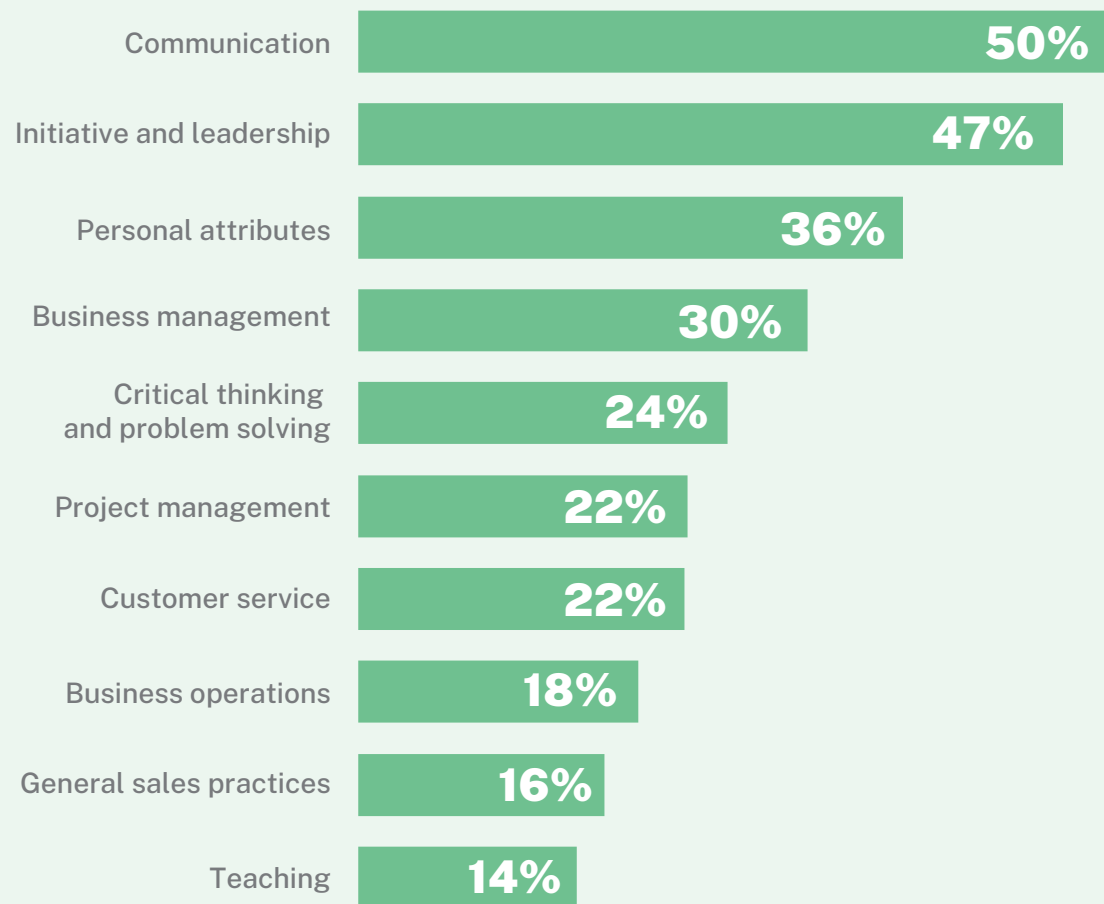
The VSA's **joint project on future skills** with Jobs and Skills Australia uses existing skills classification tools to identify new and emerging skills and strengthen existing qualifications. By assessing the alignment of skills acquired in VET qualifications to demand for skills in industry, this research helps to:

- identify potential missing skills or units in qualifications
- identify a 'common core' of shared skills to support industry-specific or cross-sectoral qualifications
- identify up-skilling or re-skilling pathways.

The VSA's **State of the Victorian Labour Market Report** which accompanies this year's Skills Plan, provides an updated view of skills in demand in the Victorian labour market. For example, online job advertisement data indicate that communication and leadership skills are needed in nearly half of all jobs posted, while personal attributes such as enthusiasm and a willingness to learn are sought after in over 30 per cent of the postings. Demand for skills related to clean energy, emissions and conservation is also increasing.



Human-centred skills are most commonly requested in the labour market



Per cent of job advertisements

Employers at the VSA's **industry roundtable on advanced manufacturing** highlighted the need for workers who have the skills to work with AI. Requirements include technical and theoretical knowledge, balanced with generic capabilities such as critical thinking, creativity, sound judgement and teamwork.

Similarly, the **industry roundtable on the digital economy** highlighted the need for workers who can apply human judgement in workplaces that will be increasingly technologically enhanced.



Build the VET workforce

A highly-skilled Victorian VET workforce is essential to help learners achieve their career goals, provide industry with the skilled workers they need, and support the delivery of key government priorities.

The VSA is progressing the **Victorian VET Workforce Strategy**, which will deliver evidence-based recommendations to strengthen the VET workforce. The strategy will build capability and promote excellence, and is expected to be complete by 2025.

This strategy will position Victoria to align with national VET workforce reforms underway and leverage opportunities arising from the *National Skills Agreement*. The VSA is also supporting the Commonwealth Government to develop a national *VET Workforce Blueprint*.²²

To support the strategy, the VSA launched a **VET Workforce Lab** in November 2023. Through its ongoing work (including interviews and workshops), the VSA is hearing directly from key stakeholders about the range of interconnected issues including attraction and retention, compliance, professional development and the challenges associated with meeting the needs of a diverse learner cohort.



Expand re-skilling and up-skilling opportunities through skill sets

The Victorian Government supports up-skilling in priority areas through the **Training Needs List (TNL)** (formerly the Funded Course List). The TNL shows the courses and skills sets funded under *Skills First* and their expected training needs. It includes programs that are aligned to industry needs and workforce demands, have strong job outcomes, meet social needs and support government priorities. The TNL also supports training providers to align their course delivery to training needs.



Deliver the skills Victoria needs through an integrated post-secondary school system

Victoria continues to work towards a better connected post-secondary system.

The **Victorian Government's submission** to the *Australian Universities Accord* process²³ advocated to the Commonwealth Government to implement three Skills Plan recommendations to build a better connected post-secondary system. The final Universities Accord report echoed these recommendations.²⁴

The Commonwealth Government has responded to two of the recommendations through the *2024-25 Commonwealth Budget*. This includes funding to pilot self-accreditation for selected TAFEs and for measures to reduce the regulatory burden for dual sector providers including TAFEs.²⁵

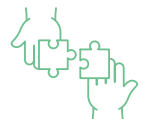
The Victorian Government and the Victorian TAFE Network continue to explore opportunities for **post-secondary educational pathways** which cut across current boundaries to provide responsive and better quality outcomes for learners and industry. Victorian TAFEs also deliver applied Bachelor degrees, which focus on practical and experiential learning to diverse students. TAFEs are also designing innovative vocational skill sets which can be added on to university or higher education programs, often linked to use of technology and equipment in real work settings.

The Victorian TAFE Network is promoting more seamless pathways between VET and higher education in priority areas



The Victorian TAFE Network provides pathways to higher education in priority areas. Some examples of these pathways include:

- GOTAFE has established higher education pathways with Charles Sturt University and La Trobe University.²⁶ For example, a Diploma of Nursing from GOTAFE provides a pathway to a Bachelor of Paramedicine degree at Charles Sturt University or a Bachelor of Nursing degree at La Trobe University.
- South West TAFE graduates from selected courses are given the opportunity to apply for Recognition of Prior Learning (credits) for selected Deakin University courses. Pathways into Deakin University are available for Diploma or Advanced Diploma graduates in fields such as agriculture, nursing, arts, accounting, children's services and community services.²⁷



Embed applied research in the vocational education model

Victoria continues to invest in applied research in the VET system to drive innovation and empower workers with new skills.

Through the **Clean Economy Skills Lab**, the Victorian TAFE Network is partnering with industry to co-design a new educational offering in the building and construction sector to support the delivery of Victoria's *Housing Statement* and the clean economy transition. This will provide existing and new workers in the construction sector with the knowledge and skills to access new and emerging jobs in the clean economy.

The Victorian TAFE Network is also partnering with industry through further Skills Labs, including:

- the **Offshore Wind Skills Lab** to define the skills relevant to Victoria's offshore wind energy sector and develop training to support it.
- the **Circular Design in Manufacturing Skills Lab** to address the skills needed for circular design in manufacturing. Circular design aims to reduce waste by creating products that can be remade and are durable, reusable, repairable and recyclable.

The VSA's **International VET Practitioner Fellowships** help successful candidates conduct applied research into innovative practices that can enhance training, support the VET workforce to better meet industry needs, and support participation and inclusion.

For example, the 2024 VET Practitioner Fellows have identified best practice approaches to:

- integrate sustainable building practices into the construction training package, starting with the Certificate II in Building and construction pre-apprenticeship, to help up-skill more workers to build energy-efficient homes²⁸
- teach digital literacy skills to vulnerable learners through four key strategies including clear and detailed instructions, a strengths-based approach, celebrating success and a flexible mindset, and learner-centred instruction.²⁹



Dr Adam Bignold

Teacher or Trainer
of the Year winner

Victorian Training Awards 2024

References

- 1 Victorian Government (2024), Skills and Jobs Centres, 14 June.
- 2 Victorian Government (2024), Training and careers in growing industries, 14 June.
- 3 Victorian Government (2024), Training and careers in Melbourne, 14 June.
- 4 Victorian Government (2024), Training and careers in regional Victoria, 14 June.
- 5 Victorian Government (2024), Training and career stories, 14 June.
- 6 Premier of Victoria (2024), Sparking a Bright Future for South West Victoria, 20 January.
- 7 Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Switch to Child Protection, accessed 18 June 2024.
- 8 Premier of Victoria (2024), Real-World Plumbing TAFE Facilities Open In Wangaratta, 22 May.
- 9 Skills and Employment (2024), Victorian Training System – First Quarter (Q1) 2024 Overview.
- 10 Victorian Government (2023), Non-financial performance reporting.
- 11 Victorian Government (2024), Trade & Tech Fit career expo, 9 May.
- 12 Department of Education (2024), Strengthening Aboriginal Self-Determination in Education: Campfire Conversations – reflections and directions, 30 May.
- 13 Premier of Victoria (2024), Boosting Aboriginal self-determination in education, 30 May.
- 14 Federation University (2023), Course to grow Indigenous teacher workforce, 19 September.
- 15 Federation University (2023), Course to grow Indigenous teacher workforce, 19 September.
- 16 Premier of Victoria (2022), Supporting Apprentices From Classroom To Workplace, 24 May.
- 17 Premier of Victoria (2021), More Support For Aboriginal Learners At All TAFEs, 4 February.
- 18 Department of Treasury and Finance (2023), Budget Paper 3: Service Delivery, p. 81, 23 May.
- 19 Latrobe Valley Authority (2023), Latrobe Valley and Gippsland Transition Plan.
- 20 TAFE Gippsland (2024), Framework ensures Gippsland set up to power Victoria for another 100 years, 1 January.
- 21 Victorian Government (2024), Training for the Clean Economy – The Victorian TAFE Network Prospectus 2024, 14 March.
- 22 Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) (2024), Consultation paper Developing a blueprint for the VET workforce, 22 April.
- 23 Department of Education (2024), Victorian Government Submission to the Australian Universities Accord Interim report, p. 2.
- 24 Department of Education (2024), Australian Universities Accord – Final Report, p. 293.
- 25 Department of Education (2024), Australian Universities Accord: 2024-25 Budget Summary, p. 11
- 26 GOTAFE, University Pathways guide 2024, accessed 20 May 2024.
- 27 South West TAFE, University Pathways, accessed 20 May.
- 28 Mathew, M (2024), Sustainable building using Passive Houses Principles Training program, Victorian Skills Authority 2024 Fellowship, The International Specialised Skills Institute.
- 29 Tucker, E (2024), Building Digital Resilience Through Effective Instructional Strategies, The International Specialised Skills Institute.



**Victorian
Skills Authority**