
Communique for the COAG Industry and Skills Council Meeting of

Skills Ministers

24 November 2017

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Industry and Skills Council—skills stream—gathered in Canberra on 24 November 2017. The meeting was chaired by the Hon Karen Andrews MP, Australian Government Assistant Minister for Vocational Education and Skills.

In attendance were:

- state ministers with portfolio responsibility for skills—the Hon John Barilaro MP, Deputy Premier, New South Wales Minister for Skills and the Hon Susan Close MP, South Australia Minister for Higher Education and Skills
- parliamentary representatives for Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory—the Hon Samantha Rowe, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education and Training and Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA, Minister for Disability, Children and Youth, respectively
- senior officials representing ministers from Victoria, Tasmania and the Northern Territory, as well as observing for the Queensland government, according to caretaker conventions.

The Council received updates on work towards a number of Council priorities, including the Performance Information for VET roadmap, RTO Regulation, Assessment Reform, Apprenticeships Reform and the National Training Complaints Hotline.

Assistant Minister Andrews updated the Council on the significant work underway in international education engagement.

The Council discussed progress of Skilling Australians Fund (SAF) negotiations since the Council's 2 June 2017 meeting, which was dedicated to this priority matter. Matters discussed by Council included access to funding in 2017-18, availability of funding beyond 2017-18 and projects that will flexibly address state and territory specific skills needs through relevant, high quality training.

The Assistant Minister confirmed that state and territory feedback on the draft national partnership agreement is being considered by the Commonwealth.

Assistant Minister Andrews invited states and territories to continue to work with the Commonwealth to progress their projects under the SAF through bilateral negotiations in parallel to work finalising the national partnership agreement. The Assistant Minister offered that Commonwealth officials were ready to hold discussions.

The Council welcomed reports on the significant work undertaken by both the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) and the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) over the preceding twelve months. The Council noted the progress report presented by Mr John Pollaers, AISC Chair and endorsed the five training packages approved by the AISC:

- CPP Property Services (Certificate II in Cleaning)
- CUA Creative Arts and Culture
- SIR Retail Services
- DEF Defence
- RGR Racing.

Chief Commissioner of ASQA, Mr Mark Paterson's report to ministers covered the annual regulatory performance of the national vocational education and training regulator, as well as updating meeting attendees on other key work of the Authority, including a *Strategic review of issues relating to unduly short training*.

Training package reform and unduly short courses

The Training Product Reform Joint Working Party's paper, *Training Product Reform: what is the case for change?* was presented to Council. The paper outlined proposed enhancements to the design of training products, underpinned by the principles of 'industry-led, learner-centred, easy to navigate, adaptable and high quality'.

The Council noted the process for progressing the findings of ASQA's *Strategic review of issues relating to unduly short training* paper.

The Council endorsed release of the Training Product Reform paper and the *Addressing issues relating to unduly short courses* discussion paper for consultation, with outcomes to be brought back to Council in 2018.

Alignment between Standards for VET Accredited Courses and Standards for Training Packages

The Council endorsed the recommendations made by the review into the alignment between Standards for VET Accredited Courses 2012 and Standards for Training Packages. The review was conducted to ensure the design and quality of accredited courses aligns with and is of the same standard as training packages.

VET Data Policy Review

The Council also agreed a new National VET Data Policy, which will set the framework for other data reforms to help students make better decisions and simplify regulation for RTOs. Following a sector-wide public consultation process, the new Policy brings together requirements for collecting nationally consistent data and processes for using data in administrated collections and national surveys. Changes agreed include: expanding the Policy to cover all national VET collections, closing information gaps by reducing some reporting exemptions, and more transparent access to data. The new Policy takes effect from 1 January 2018, with a six-month transition period until 1 July 2018. Council noted the importance of reviewing the balance of public benefit and reporting burden, especially for not-for-profit organisations.

National Disability Insurance Scheme workforce planning

The Council welcomed Mr Andrew Whitecross from the Department of Social Services to present on the challenges and opportunities in National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) workforce planning. States and territories outlined key initiatives they have underway to ensure there is a sustainable and effective workforce which can deliver quality services in an operative NDIS market. Council agreed that it should continue to monitor progress in attracting and skilling care workers as the NDIS roll-out continues towards full scheme in 2020 and progress further work with regards to workforce planning.

Sub-bachelor reforms

The Commonwealth provided a report to ministers on directions with sub-bachelor qualifications.

Out of session decisions

A number of out of session decisions were made by Council during 2017, with all but the National VET Funding Collection being reported through the various papers presented at the meeting.

Council endorsed the recommendations to develop a National VET Funding Collection from 2018.

The next meeting of skills ministers is expected to be held in the first half of 2018.