

Ministerial Statement – Update on Skills Reforms

20 November 2020

Further to our statement of 9 October 2020, skills and training ministers have continued to work collaboratively to strengthen our skills system to support Australia's future growth and prosperity.

Ministers have re-confirmed their commitment to the vision for VET along with the priority areas of relevance, quality and accessibility, which will underpin the development of a new National Skills Agreement. Originally agreed in 2019, these priority areas are highly relevant in responding to current challenges and opportunities.

Australia's skills and training system will play a key role in kick-starting the national economy and ensuring our future prosperity, by helping workers reskill and upskill to take on new roles. The Australian Government and all states and territories have signed up to the JobTrainer Fund. With a collective \$1 billion injection into the VET system in 2020-21, jurisdictions are forecasting around 320,000 additional funded training places in areas of demand - 200,000 additional training places are already live in the market and available to support immediate recovery efforts. This reflects our joint commitment to skill-led economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

JobTrainer funded courses are helping people gain the skills and qualifications needed for jobs in demand in industries such as health, aged and disability care, IT and trades. More than 10,000 Australians have already enrolled in JobTrainer funded training, taking advantage of more than 500 short courses and full qualifications on offer, with the number and types of courses increasing over time. These training opportunities will help turbocharge our economy and get the nation back on track and ready for future growth.

We are commissioning a scoping study into foundation skills, to be completed by February 2021. The results of this study will provide the evidence base to inform our decisions on the best ways to support access to training to improve language, literacy, numeracy and digital literacy skills for those who need it most.

Collectively we are working to agree a clear way forward for micro-credentials by developing definition and framework for their further implementation in the national training system which balances speed-to-market and flexibility at the local level, with industry recognition and value to students.

Over the coming months, skills officials will be actively engaging with stakeholders on the immediate reforms outlined in the Heads of Agreement for Skills Reform (industry engagement, qualifications and quality reforms).

To enable us to engage with as many interested parties as possible, the Commonwealth, in consultation with all jurisdictions, is establishing an online engagement hub. This hub will provide stakeholders with a central source to keep updated on the reforms and help shape our future directions and new National Skills Agreement.

We remain committed to ensuring that public investment delivers an excellent standard of education and training, supporting employment, upskilling and growth for individuals and businesses and will continue to work together to develop a solid foundation for our funding and governance discussions.