



**THE HON ANDREW GILES MP  
MINISTER FOR SKILLS AND TRAINING**

MC25-002781

Councillor Matt Burnett  
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Dear Mayor Burnett

*Matt,*

Thank you for your correspondence of 18 August 2025 concerning key issues related to skills and training that were raised at the 2025 National General Assembly of Local Government. I acknowledge the continuing and valuable contribution that the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) plays in advocating for the skills and workforce needs of local government.

The Australian Government is committed to building a more collaborative skills system with tripartite engagement between employers, unions and governments, that brings all parties to the table to find solutions to skill and workforce challenges. The skills sector has a critical role to play in creating a more productive economy, helping Australians get well-paid and secure jobs, boosting living standards and creating more opportunities for Australians to prosper.

I appreciate the opportunity to respond to matters raised that fall within my portfolio responsibilities as Minister for Skills and Training.

Australian Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships play a critical role in delivering a skilled workforce for the Australian economy and provide an attractive pathway for many individuals to obtain the skills they need for secure, well-paid work.

The motions raised by Knox City Council (Motion 114), Strathfield Council (Motion 19) and City of Greater Dandenong (Motion 105.6) seek targeted investments in workforce development and training programs within the local government sector.

The government is committed to providing targeted, holistic support to increase the uptake and completion of apprenticeships in critical sectors. This includes offering a range of financial and non-financial support services across a number of industries.

The Australian Apprenticeship Priority List determines priority occupations eligible for financial supports and currently lists 143 occupations. The full list of priority occupations is available at [www.dewr.gov.au/skills-support-individuals/resources/australian-apprenticeships-priority-list-1-january-2025](http://www.dewr.gov.au/skills-support-individuals/resources/australian-apprenticeships-priority-list-1-january-2025).

Under the Australian Apprenticeship Incentive System (Incentive System) the government is providing financial support to apprentices and employers in priority apprenticeship pathways to deliver the workforce skills we need now and into the future. Under the Incentive System:

- Apprentices undertaking training in priority occupations are eligible for a \$5,000 Australian Apprentice Training Support Payment to assist with cost of living and to incentivise them to finish their training.
- Employers taking on apprentices in priority occupations are eligible for a \$5,000 Priority Hiring Incentive to help subsidise costs associated with employing an apprentice.

### Jobs and Skills Councils

The government has established 10 Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs) to provide industry with a stronger voice to ensure Australia's vocational education and training (VET) delivers better outcomes for learners and employers. JSCs provide leadership to address skills and workforce challenges for their industries.

Through workforce planning and evidence-based, forward-thinking initiatives – such as developing new qualifications, supporting industry-current delivery of training, and crafting clear learning pathways to employment – JSCs unlock opportunities within their sectors and drive systemic change.

The work undertaken by JSCs to ensure training products align with industry needs is essential to delivering job-ready qualifications and supporting workforce upskilling for priority cohorts, as highlighted by Camden Council (Motion 104).

The Public Safety and Government JSC, Public Skills Australia (PSA), developed a 2024 Government Workforce Plan which identified key challenges within the local government sector, including difficulties attracting and developing talent in regional and remote areas. In response, PSA is currently undertaking an audit of skills requirements for local governments including examination of regional and remote skills needs.

I note ALGA is a Member of PSA, and several local government associations are represented on PSA's Government Subcommittee. I encourage ALGA and Local Government Associations to continue to engage with PSA and other relevant JSCs to inform their work. Information on the JSCs and the industry sectors they support can be found at [www.dewr.gov.au/skills-reform/jobs-and-skills-councils](http://www.dewr.gov.au/skills-reform/jobs-and-skills-councils).

### Gender equality and access in VET

Camden Council has called for job-ready skills and retraining opportunities for women as raised in Motion 104. VET has a critical role in enabling priority cohorts, including women, to participate in the workforce. The government is strengthening gender equality and access in VET through the National Skills Agreement and National Skills Plan. This includes supporting inclusive training pathways and partnering with industry to improve workplace culture and safety.

Industry-led solutions are also being driven through Building Women's Careers which aims to drive structural and cultural change to improve women's access to flexible, safe and inclusive training and work opportunities and the Advancing Gender Equality in Gender Segregated Industries program.

To support women in trades and construction, targeted initiatives being delivered include the Australian Skills Guarantee, which ensures equitable access to training and jobs on major government projects, while tailored support is also available through programs such as specialist Apprentice Connect Providers.

#### TAFE Centres of Excellence

The government is partnering with states and territories under the National Skills Agreement to establish nationally networked TAFE Centres of Excellence. An integral feature of TAFE Centres of Excellence is the partnerships they will foster with industry, universities, unions, JSCs, and other TAFEs across Australia. TAFE Centres of Excellence support greater collaboration as identified as an action sought by the City of Greater Dandenong at Motion 105.6.

TAFE Centres of Excellence will provide high-quality and responsive skills training for critical and emerging industries, including those that support manufacturing and sovereign capability and the construction industry to deliver housing supply. TAFE Centres of Excellence have now been established in every state and territory across the country, with 3 across New South Wales delivering targeted training in the area of manufacturing to support sovereign capability, and one in Victoria delivering training targeted to innovative and sustainable housing construction techniques to support housing supply.

For more information on how to engage with individual TAFE Centres of Excellence, please contact the relevant state or territory skills and training department.

#### Occupational Shortage List

Western Downs Regional Council (Motion 108) has sought the inclusion of Building Certifiers on the Occupation Shortage List. Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) develop its annual Occupation Shortage List based on Australia's official occupational classification framework, which is maintained by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

In December 2024, the ABS updated this framework from the former Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations to a new Occupation Standard Classification for Australia.

As part of the update, a new occupation of Building Surveyor (which has an alternative title of Building Certifier) was introduced. This new occupational title of Building Surveyor will therefore be assessed for the first time as part of the 2025 Occupation Shortage List analysis, which JSA anticipates will be finalised and published in October 2025.

#### Future Made in Australia

The *Future Made in Australia Act 2024* establishes Community Benefit Principles (CBPs) to ensure public investment and the private investment it attracts flow to communities in ways that benefit local workers and businesses. The CBPs are intended to ensure projects benefiting from government support deliver community benefits, including:

- promoting safe and secure jobs that are well-paid and have good conditions
- developing more skilled and inclusive workforces, including by investing in training and skills development and broadening opportunities for workforce participation.

This aligns with the focus of requested actions by City of Greater Dandenong (Motion 105.2) and Warrnambool City Council (Motion 112). Senator the Hon Tim Ayres, Minister for Industry and Innovation and Minister for Science is leading the implementation of the CBPs.

Motions 103, 105, 109, 110, 113, 128

The matters raised in these motions relate to issues outside the Skills and Training portfolio. These will be addressed by the relevant portfolio ministers.

Thank you again for forwarding these resolutions. I appreciate the engagement of local governments in shaping national skills and training policy and look forward to ongoing collaboration.

Yours sincerely



ANDREW GILES

13 / 10 / 2025