

BUILDING A SKILLED WORKFORCE

# A GUIDE TO VET FOR HUMAN SERVICES EMPLOYERS



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>3</b>	<b>Building a Skilled Workforce: A guide to VET for human services employers</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>Influencing the VET system</b>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Influencing workforce and VET policy</li> <li>Influencing training products</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<b>About this guide</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>Case studies</b>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building partnerships in aged care</li> <li>Creating pathways in youth and community services</li> <li>Finding RTOs for the disability sector</li> <li>Successful relationships in early childhood education and care</li> <li>School-based traineeships in human services</li> <li>Collaborative workforce development in aged care</li> </ul>
<b>5</b>	<b>A brief guide to Vocational Education and Training (VET)</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training and workforce development</li> <li>Who's who in Vocational Education and Training</li> <li>How Vocational Education and Training (VET) can help you</li> </ul>		
<b>17</b>	<b>Finding the right training providers</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Step 1 – Write a brief</li> <li>Step 2 – Do some research</li> <li>Step 3 – Create a shortlist and interview</li> <li>Step 4 – Conduct other checks</li> <li>Step 5 – Understand what to expect from training providers</li> </ul>		
<b>21</b>	<b>Building effective relationships with training providers</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishing the relationship</li> <li>Formalising an agreement</li> <li>Reviewing progress and success</li> <li>Getting involved</li> <li>When things go wrong</li> <li>When a training provider closes down</li> </ul>		
		<b>44</b>	<b>Useful contacts and resources</b>
		<b>48</b>	<b>Glossary of terms</b>
		<b>53</b>	<b>Tools and Templates</b>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An example of financial support available in NSW</li> <li>Considering your workforce development needs: A background brief</li> <li>Finding the right training provider: Questions to ask</li> <li>Conducting checks on Registered Training Organisations using <a href="http://www.training.gov.au">www.training.gov.au</a></li> <li>A checklist for establishing a relationship with a training provider</li> <li>Training Partnership Agreement</li> </ul>

# BUILDING A SKILLED WORKFORCE: A GUIDE TO VET FOR HUMAN SERVICES EMPLOYERS

The challenge of building a skilled workforce is a pressing one for the human services. Vocational Education and Training (VET) can help human services employers and managers to meet immediate needs for skilled staff and build a job ready workforce for the future.

This guide contains practical, easy to understand information about the VET system and advice on how to build relationships with training providers.

It will help equip and empower you to address your workforce development challenges and get the most out of Vocational Education and Training.



## **A brief guide to VET**

Find simple information about vocational education and training and how it can help you. >

## **Influencing the VET system**

Discover how you can play a role in workforce development solutions and influence training products. >

## **Finding the right training providers**

Access step-by-step instructions for finding training providers that can deliver what you need, in the way you need it. >

## **Case studies**

Learn how other organisations are using Vocational Education and Training to grow and skill their workforce. >

## **Building effective relationships with training providers**

Explore practical ways to build and maintain strong relationships with training providers. >

## **Useful resources and contacts**

>

## BUILDING A SKILLED WORKFORCE: A GUIDE TO VET FOR HUMAN SERVICES EMPLOYERS

### ABOUT THIS GUIDE

If you're an employer or manager in human services, you'll be familiar with workforce issues like mandatory skill requirements, the need to upskill staff, attracting workers to the sector and limited availability of resources for training.

Employers across the human services say they need to engage with the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system to meet workforce demands - but they don't always know where to start or who can help.

***“From an organisation perspective, there's an acknowledgement - particularly within our sector, of the growth that's happening and how rapidly it's happening - organisations can no longer do it alone. There's a definite need for those strong partnerships to be built and utilised from a pipeline perspective.”***

***(Aged care and disability service provider)***

The Human Services Skills Organisation (HSSO) is a national employer-led body addressing the growing and evolving workforce needs in aged care, disability support, allied health, veterans' services, youth services, and early childhood education and care.

The HSSO has designed this guide to help employers and managers in these industry sectors to address workforce development needs and challenges using VET.

The guide provides simple information about what VET can do for you and how to navigate the system. There's also guidance on how to build effective relationships with training providers and how you can play an active role in shaping training products and policies.

You can find links to the organisations and resources mentioned in the guide in the Useful Contacts & Resources section.



# A BRIEF GUIDE TO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET)

This section provides a brief overview of VET, including how it can help and what it requires of you as an employer or manager.

If you are not already familiar with VET, this is a useful place to start.

**An introduction to training  
and workforce development** >

**Who's who in Vocational  
Education and Training** >

**How Vocational Education  
and Training can help** >



## TRAINING AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

### What is workforce development?

Workforce development builds the skills people need to participate in the labour market, and the skills organisations need in their workforce to operate effectively. It can involve training, as well as strategies for attracting, recruiting and retaining workers and consideration of factors such as language and literacy skills, support for learning, and funding for training.

### What types of training are available?

#### Accredited training (also called Nationally Recognised Training)

This is training that leads to vocational qualifications and credentials that are recognised across the country. It's based on nationally agreed industry standards, which are documented in what is referred to as Training Packages. They take the form of:

- **units of competency** - these describe the skills and knowledge needed to perform a particular task effectively in the workplace.
- **training package qualifications** - these are groups of units of competency that cover the skills required for a particular occupation (e.g. personal care assistant). Qualifications include compulsory units, as well as units that can be chosen as electives.
- **skill sets** - these are smaller credentials made up of one or more units of competency designed to meet a particular industry or workplace need.

There are also **accredited courses**, which are groups of units of competency developed for areas not covered by national training package qualifications.

The premise of accredited/Nationally Recognised Training is that learners are trained and assessed against the agreed industry standards to the agreed level. Everyone who gains the particular qualification or credential should end up with the same skills and knowledge to at least the specified standard.

Accredited/Nationally Recognised Training can only be delivered by Registered Training Organisations (RTOs).

#### Non-accredited training

This includes any other type of structured training that does not lead to a formal (nationally recognised) qualification or credential.

This can include:

- short courses on particular topics (e.g. training on employee well-being)
- training in specific products (e.g. training for new Customer Relationship Management software)
- industry-specific training (e.g. training for employees on the NDIS Code-of-Conduct)
- organisation-specific training (e.g. induction training for new employees).

Non-accredited training can be delivered by anyone with the relevant expertise, including organisations' own staff, RTOs, other external training providers and product manufacturers.

#### Informal or non-formal learning

This training or learning takes place 'on-the-job' through more casual interactions, including:

- 'buddying' of colleagues
- mentoring or coaching by supervisors
- employees accessing online information or participating in forums and networks
- job rotations and special assignments.



## What are the benefits of training?

Employers identify many benefits from training such as:

- higher productivity and efficiency
- improved service delivery
- increased client satisfaction
- increased health and safety
- reduced need for rework/fixing mistakes
- increased employee engagement and motivation
- reduced staff turnover and recruitment costs
- improved organisational culture
- increased levels of foundation skills (such as literacy, numeracy and digital literacy).

They also note the costs of not having properly skilled and experienced employees, such as:

- increased workload for other staff
- increased operating costs
- difficulty in meeting quality standards
- difficulties in meeting customer service objectives
- reduced productivity
- loss of business to competitors
- difficulty in introducing new work practices (including technological changes)
- the need to outsource work.

## What are the costs?

Many human services employers emphasise that training is an investment in their workforce and therefore their business, and the long-term benefits outweigh the costs.

You'll need to consider both direct and indirect costs of training.

**Direct costs** may include:

- tuition/course fees
- course development costs (for the design of a customised course)
- student service fees for textbooks, materials, administration etc.

These costs vary across training providers. Financial support may be available to offset both tuition/course fees and students service fees for accredited training.

**Indirect costs** may include:

- time spent in overseeing training (e.g. liaising with the training provider, monitoring employee progress, filling in paperwork)
- paying employees while in training (e.g. if training is delivered 'on-the-job', or time off is given for study)
- paying supervisors to oversee and support trainees or students on placement.

Some employers pay all the costs of training, while some share the cost with employees. Others may ask employees to pay for their own training and to complete it in their own time.



## What financial support is available?

State and Territory governments and the Australian government all offer differing types of financial support for training and workforce development. Financial support is provided through different channels and eligibility depends on where you are, the type of training undertaken and who's undertaking it. Some funding is only offered for a limited period (such as during the COVID pandemic).

The following are some of the common types of financial support.

### Subsidised training

Government subsidies are available for training for high priority jobs or skills. Human services jobs fall increasingly into this category.

Subsidised training is also made available for groups of individuals, such as job seekers and those who don't have a qualification at Certificate III level or above. Some individuals may be exempt from student services fees as well as eligible for subsidised training.

Subsidies are mostly provided for accredited training, but some non-accredited training (such as training for literacy, numeracy and digital literacy skills) may also be subsidised.

### Financial support for employing trainees and apprentices

The Australian Government provides incentives to employers who employ trainees and apprentices, to help offset the cost of supervisors' time. These are provided through the Australian Apprenticeship Support Network.

Additional subsidies may also be available to employers of trainees and apprentices at particular points in time (e.g. wage subsidies provided during the COVID pandemic).

### Wage subsidies

The Australian Government provides incentives for employing job seekers who meet certain criteria, such as young people, mature age people or people with disability. These are administered through employment service providers.

### Support for individuals

The Australian Government offers financial support to individuals to help with the cost of training, through student loans and scholarships for young people.

### Advice on financial support

The following organisations can provide advice on what financial support your organisation and employees may be eligible for:

- State or Territory Education and Training Departments can provide information about training subsidies and other types of financial support. See p.54 for an example of [financial support available in one jurisdiction](#).
- Registered Training Organisations can often provide information about subsidies that may be available for the training they deliver.
- Skills Checkpoint providers can help you access co-contribution incentives to upskill employees aged 45-70.
- Australian Apprenticeship Support Network can provide information and advice about support for employing trainees and apprentices.
- Employment service providers can provide information about wage subsidies for employing certain groups of job seekers.



## WHO'S WHO IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The vocational education and training system involves many players. Below are the main stakeholders and their roles.



### Who pays for training?

- Australian Government
- State and Territory Governments
- Employers
- Individuals
- Employment service providers



### Who provides training?

- Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)
- Other training providers



### Who regulates training?

- Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)
- Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA)
- Training Accreditation Council Western Australia (TAC)



### Who decides on the content of accredited training?

- Industry Reference Committees (supported by Skills Service Organisations)
- Other industry stakeholders



### Who provides support and/or information?

- Skills Organisations
- Australian Apprenticeship Support Network
- National Skills Commission
- National Careers Institute

## Who pays for training?

The **Australian Government** provides financial support through incentives for employers of trainees and apprentices, student loans and programs for particular groups of people, such as the Skills Checkpoint Program for workers aged 45 – 70.

**State and Territory Governments** provide subsidies for the delivery of accredited training in areas of identified industry need. They also subsidise student service fees for certain groups of learners.

**Employers** may pay RTOs for the training of their employees. This is referred to as fee-for-service training.

**Individuals** may cover the cost of their own training. They may be able to access student loans to help pay for accredited training.

**Employment service providers** can access funding to help job-seekers develop necessary skills for employment. This can include funding for training in employability skills and VET qualifications.

## Who delivers training?

### Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)

These are training providers that meet government standards for delivery of nationally recognised training. They include public RTOs and private RTOs.

Public RTOs can include:

- technical and further education (TAFE) institutes
- some secondary schools and colleges
- some higher education providers
- adult and community education providers
- agricultural and technical colleges.

Private RTOs can include:

- private training and business colleges
- some higher education providers
- enterprises training their own employees
- industry training providers.

## Other training providers

These can include an organisation's own trainers, external training providers that are not RTOs, industry bodies and product manufacturers.

## Who regulates training?

Registered Training Organisations have to meet nationally agreed quality standards in order to deliver and assess accredited training.

These standards are administered by:

**Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)** - which oversees registration of training providers in most states and territories. They also conduct regular audits of RTOs to make sure they are meeting the quality standards.

**Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA)** - which performs these functions for Victorian-based RTOs.

**Training Accreditation Council Western Australia (TAC)** - which performs these functions for Western Australian-based RTOs.

## Who decides on the content of accredited training?

The development of content for training packages and accredited courses is a complex process involving many players.

### Training Packages

**Industry Reference Committees (IRCs)** are groups of industry representatives that make recommendations about what is included in training packages. They are supported by **Skills Service Organisations (SSOs)**.

IRCs are informed by consultation with industry and feedback from RTOs. The accredited content of training packages must be endorsed by both the Australian Government and state and territory governments before it can be delivered by RTOs.



## A BRIEF GUIDE TO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET)

RTOs can't change the essential content of accredited training. They have to follow the rules about what to cover in the training and make sure that learners demonstrate they have met all of the required standards. They do however:

- contextualise training content to make it relevant to particular groups of learners (e.g. by training learners in particular types of equipment or technology used in their industry or workplace)
- offer the choice of elective units to include in the training (where the rules allow this)
- provide training in additional content areas (usually for an additional fee).

### Accredited courses

In situations where there aren't suitable training options available through national training packages, organisations can develop an accredited course. These must meet the rules for accredited courses and be approved by a VET regulator. For more information see <https://www.asqa.gov.au/course-accreditation/overview>

### Who provides support and information?

Other national organisations that provide support and information include:

**Skills Organisations** – (including the HSSO) which are national employer-led bodies established by the Australian Government to deliver improvements to the national training system.

**Australian Apprenticeship Support Network** – which is the central point of contact for apprenticeships and traineeships and provides support to employers of apprentices and trainees.

**National Skills Commission** – which provides advice and leadership for Australia's labour market, including current, emerging and future workforce skills needs, as well as on strengthening Australia's VET system.

**National Careers Institute** – which provides independent careers information for Australians of all ages and stages of their career. They also administer the My Skills, [training.gov.au](http://training.gov.au) and Your Career websites.



## HOW VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET) CAN HELP YOU

VET can help with workforce development in a variety of ways.

What do you need help with?	How VET can help
Skilling new, inexperienced employees	Through entry-level training.  Your employees or potential employees can complete: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- training in an accredited qualification or skill set</li> <li>- a traineeship or apprenticeship</li> <li>- non-accredited training (e.g. induction training).</li> </ul>
Helping experienced employees to develop new, higher level or more specialised skills	Through upskilling.  Your employees can complete: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- training in higher level accredited qualifications, skill sets or units of competency</li> <li>- non-accredited training</li> <li>- informal learning</li> <li>- a higher-level apprenticeship.</li> </ul>
Skilling new employees who have previous relevant experience in a different industry sector	Through reskilling.  Your employees can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- apply for Recognition of Prior Learning or Credit Transfer and/or</li> <li>- complete training in skill sets or units of competency to address skill or knowledge gaps.</li> </ul>
Helping experienced employees to gain recognition for their existing skills or experience	Through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).  Your employees can apply for this with a Registered Training Organisation.
Helping employees to gain recognition for previous VET study	Through Credit Transfer.  Your employees can gain credit towards a qualification for units of competency they have already completed.



What do you need help with?	How VET can help
Developing employees' language, literacy, numeracy or digital literacy skills	Through foundation skills training.  Find out about subsidised training for foundation skills for your employees, through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the national Reading Writing Hotline</li> <li>- a Foundation Skills for your Future Service Provider</li> <li>- your local Registered Training Organisation</li> </ul>
Identifying workforce skills gaps	Through a 'training needs analysis'.  A Registered Training Organisation can help you with this.
Helping with recruitment strategies	Through exposure to potential employees by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- taking students for vocational placements.</li> <li>- building relationships with training providers and/or employment services providers who will work with you to identify suitable candidates.</li> </ul>
Supporting career pathways	Through accredited training that provides a pathway for employees to undertake study at a higher level, including at university.

***“We've been doing a program with an RTO who's also a jobactive provider working with job seekers. So we've been engaging with potential employees right from the beginning.***

***The jobactive provider uses our recruitment material to screen job seekers and make sure their consultants understand what ‘support work’ involves. Interested people came to an information session. I do speed interviews with the job seekers before they start the program to ensure the ones we take on for student placement are potential employees. Student programs are a major part of our recruitment strategy.***

***The RTO starts the students off. They do seven modules of their Certificate III, and then come to us for buddy shifts. If that is successful, we interview them, and they finish off their course as paid employees.***

***We've only had one person drop out. She decided after her first day that it wasn't for her. So it's been really successful so far.”***

***(Disability service provider)***

## Vocational placements

### What are vocational placements?

Vocational placements (also called work placements) are more than work experience. They involve structured learning in the workplace, which links to students' coursework. They help link theory with practice.

Vocational placements are a mandatory part of many vocational qualifications in human services. For example, entry-level qualifications in aged care, disability and early childhood education and care sectors, require individuals to do a minimum amount of structured work placement.

### How can vocational placements help?

Vocational placements give individuals valuable work experience in their chosen field, and help them to gain their qualification and employment.

For employers, they offer the opportunity to see students operating in a workplace setting. Many human services employers take on work placement students as part of their recruitment strategy and offer them employment on graduation.



***“Work placements are a great thing... because you get a taste of them [the student], and they get a taste of you. Neither party’s made any commitment, and you get to see them in action, and get to see their values and behaviours. Many people get a qualification, but their attitude is what makes or breaks their employment.***

***So if you form a relationship with your local TAFE, or uni or whatever, and do work placements with them, it really makes life a lot easier.”***

***(Disability service provider)***

### **What do vocational placements require of employers?**

To take a student on a placement you must supervise them and contribute to their learning. You will liaise with the training provider about what the student needs to do during their time with you and be asked to verify that the student has developed the required skills.

***“My experience is that placements have to be a two-way partnership. Each person understands the expectations of them, and how they perform that. It's actually a simple process - you've got the reinforcement of theory, in terms of what the learner is learning, and the practicality of its application.***

***So it needs to be a partnership between us and the RTO to bring those two things together and wrap them around the learner to get a positive outcome from the placement.”***

***(Disability service provider)***

Ideally you, the student and the training provider will sign an agreement that sets out the requirements of each party.

Providing students with a positive and meaningful vocational placement experience helps build a pool of skilled and motivated workers. Students can lose interest in a field because of poor placement experiences.

You can find further information about work placements in the HSSO’s Work Placement Guide (see Useful Contacts & Resources for details).

***“We do try our best to create an authentic experience for our students. We want them to feel like they have responsibilities, and they're able to actually behave like an educator rather than just a student.”***

***(Early childhood education and care provider)***

## **Training**

### **What is training and how can it help?**

Training is an integral part of workforce development. It helps people develop the skills they need to do their job well and safely. Skilled staff help human services organisations deliver high quality service to clients and stay in operation. Investing in training also helps retain your employees. Training can give them pathways for career progression and keep them engaged and motivated.

***“I think the employees feel more valued if you are supporting them to get training. They’re happier in their role, they can see advancement, even a bit of financial benefit.... I have people here who have been carers and become enrolled nurses’ and then RNs; people in the kitchen who have become carers. They come to us when we do our annual review, and they tell me what they want, and then we try to facilitate that for them.”***

***(Aged Care Provider)***



## A BRIEF GUIDE TO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET)

### What does training require of employers?

The most effective training involves a commitment from employers.

This could be in the form of:

- a workplace culture that encourages and supports learning
- giving employees time off for training
- paying for employees' training
- checking on employees' training progress, and looking for ways to apply their learning in the workplace
- mentoring or coaching employees
- engaging internal or external trainers to deliver training in the workplace
- working with a training provider to develop customised training.

***“You’ve got to have the commitment to the admin and the completion of training. There’s an effort attached and it needs commitment from the organisation from top down. You have to make sure the person is available, or able to be pulled off the floor for learning. You need competent line managers who can cover the gaps in training and you need to educate management about what’s expected and how to do it.”***

***(Disability service provider)***

### Apprenticeships and Traineeships

#### What are apprenticeships and traineeships?

Apprentices and trainees are trained by both their employer and an RTO while they work under a formal contract of training.

Traineeships are usually shorter (1 or 2 years) than apprenticeships (up to 4 years) and both can be done at any age. For example, school-based traineeships allow young people to gain exposure to an industry and an initial qualification while still at school.

Mature age traineeships enable those aged over 24 years to complete a qualification while working, and to be paid a higher trainee wage than young trainees.

‘Australian Apprenticeships’ is the formal term used for both traineeships and apprenticeships.

Trainees are paid prescribed ‘trainee wages’ in recognition of their lower skill levels. However, some employers choose to pay above award wages to attract good trainees.

Training may be partly or fully government subsidised. Employers of trainees may be eligible for government incentives that offset the time required to supervise and deliver ‘on-the-job’ training.

#### How can apprenticeships and traineeships help?

Employers cite benefits of traineeships, such as:

- trainees becoming “really great workers”, with the initial effort paying off in the long-term.
- trainees developing skills that the organisation needs.
- helping to attract and retain workers, and build commitment as part of a stable workforce.
- an affordable way of employing new staff to work alongside experienced workers.

#### What do apprenticeships and traineeships require of employers?

You will need to enter into a formal contract with the apprentice or trainee, which sets out the obligations of each party.

Trainees require a nominated staff member to supervise their learning in the workplace.

***“We’ve recently taken on some trainees. We’ve gone through the process, and as an employer, I think you need to be aware of the responsibility and the extra work it will take - working with the RTO, interviews, the planning, the gearing up to have the training in place, completing the online applications for the funding and incentives.”***

***(Youth and Community services provider)***

### Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer

#### What are they and how can they help?

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a way of certifying that someone already has some or all of the skills and knowledge needed for an accredited qualification. These may have come from other formal or informal training, from experience working in the same sector/occupation, or from other work experience.

Credit transfer is the granting of credit by a Registered Training Organisation or higher education institution for units of competency already completed.

Registered Training Organisations must offer RPL and credit transfer to individuals before they start accredited training. This can reduce the amount of training needed and the time and cost involved. Individuals only need to train in areas where there are gaps in their skills and knowledge.

#### What does Recognition of Prior Learning require of employers?

Demonstrating that they have the required skills and knowledge can be time consuming for employees who apply for RPL.

You might be asked to complete paperwork to verify that employees have the required skills. So it's a good idea to keep records of any formal and informal training undertaken by your employees, as well as other documents that demonstrate their experience (such as position descriptions and performance management plans), in case they want to apply for RPL at some point.



# FINDING THE RIGHT TRAINING PROVIDERS

If you need help finding high quality training providers who can provide the training or workforce development support you want, this is the place to start.

Also, if you've been approached by a training provider and want to figure out whether what they're offering is right for your organisation, Steps 1, 4 and 5 can help.



## FINDING THE RIGHT TRAINING PROVIDERS

### STEP 1 – WRITE A BRIEF

Write your own brief on what your organisation needs in terms of skills, training and workforce development. Think of it as background information you'll provide to prospective training providers.

Even if you're offered free or subsidised training, a brief will help you assess whether what's on offer will meet your needs and be of value to the organisation.

Be strategic and consider which workforce development challenges and goals you need help to address.

The template on p.55 - [Considering your workforce development needs: A background brief](#) will help you to get started.

Read more about the [potential benefits of training](#) and [how Vocational Education and Training can help](#) with workforce development in the previous section of this guide.

***“Be really clear. What do you want out of the training? It's not just getting the qualification. It has to deliver a business result. How will you measure success?”***

***You have to be able to justify training and articulate ‘this is the benefit’.”***

*(Disability service provider)*

### STEP 2 – DO SOME RESEARCH

To find out what support training providers are offering, try some of the following.

#### Search online

- MySkills (<https://www.myskills.gov.au/>)  
This is an Australian Government directory where you can search and compare VET courses and training providers, find contact details, course costs and lengths.
- State and Territory education and training departments each have a list of training providers that can access government training subsidies for particular courses in their jurisdiction.

#### Ask around. You could talk to:

- other employers in your industry
- people in your industry association
- members of your industry networks
- employees of yours that have done training
- trainers or training provider staff who you already work with.

#### Visit career expos or industry events.



## STEP 3 – CREATE A SHORTLIST AND INTERVIEW

### Shortlisting

A training provider’s website can provide useful information, but you might also want to speak to someone about your organisation’s particular needs.

Many training providers have business development people who can answer your questions or find the person who can.

Questions at this point could include:

- What training options are available to meet our needs? (the brief you wrote in Step 2 will help here)
- What costs are involved?
- Can training be delivered online, at our workplace, at a campus, outside of business hours?
- What support will be provided to help our employees (or students) succeed?

***“Flexibility’s really important for us. The nature of work in human services is very different from others. We have staff who start at 6.30 in the morning and don’t finish until 7pm or start at 4pm and finish in the morning. We need training providers who can be flexible with the times they deliver, and that’s been a barrier for us.***

***We had one provider who asked students to attend a zoom class from 10 – 12. That didn’t suit many of them. They [the RTO] did eventually realise and changed the times to outside hours so people could actually attend”***

***(Disability Service Provider)***

Training providers have different strengths and service offerings. Many employers work with several providers to meet their different workforce development requirements. For example, they might work with one to deliver traineeships for new employees and another for training existing employees for more specialised skills.

***“You've got to interview the RTO to get a feel for them; making sure they understand what our values are and what we're looking for in our employees. I think it's just building that connection, really. So we've used several RTOs over the years, but at the moment, we're engaging with probably two or three major ones.”***

***(Disability service provider)***

### Interviewing

Once you’ve narrowed down potential training providers, approach them as if interviewing for a job. You may want to visit their facilities and meet training staff.

If you’re planning a significant or long-term investment, why not ask shortlisted training providers to submit and/or present a proposal?

The template on p.56 - [Finding the Right Training Provider: Questions to Ask](#) contains questions you can ask at the shortlisting and interviewing stages.

***“I set up a meeting and said, ‘We're thinking of this training pilot...What can you do?’***

***Can you deliver any of the training on site? How flexible are they? How far is their reach? I'm in Brisbane, but that doesn't mean the rest of the organisation is. How many students have they had? I wanted their stats. What qualifications does the trainer have?”***

***(Aged care provider)***



## STEP 4 – CONDUCT OTHER CHECKS

As well as your own organisation’s due diligence checks, you may want to check some regulatory basics before engaging a training provider.

A search of the national training register ([www.training.gov.au](http://www.training.gov.au)) can help you confirm:

- Are they a Registered Training Organisation? And if so for how long?
- What qualifications can they offer?
- Who are they owned and run by?
- Are there any regulatory restrictions imposed on them?

You can find instructions on [how to use the register](#) on p.58 of this guide.

## STEP 5 – UNDERSTAND WHAT TO EXPECT FROM TRAINING PROVIDERS

You’ll want to work with training providers that are client focused and as responsive as possible to the needs of you and your employees. A training provider should be willing to work with you to get the best outcome, explaining what they can and can’t do.

After discussing your desired outcomes together, training providers may offer a range of options, such as:

- accredited or non-accredited training
- whole or part qualifications, perhaps with combinations called skill sets
- potential electives
- Recognition of Prior Learning and credit transfer options.

Expect to work through the benefits and challenges of options before coming to possible solutions together.

Discuss how training will be contextualised so that intended outcomes have meaning and relevance to your workplace. Training that is customised involves a degree of change, a more ‘bespoke’ approach tailored specifically for your organisation. The greater the customisation, the more time and effort involved, the more you’ll need to invest.

To retain the benefits of being a nationally recognised qualification, some things may not be able to be removed. It’s possible to add more if needed.

Feel confident to ask for explanations and alternatives. There could be different ways to balance your imperatives. Look for training providers that help you explore options.

***“Employers should understand that RTOs have a suite of units of competency they can deliver training for, and they can put those together in a full qualification or a skill set. They can group those units of competency in a meaningful way and deliver training for them.”***

***(Youth and Community services provider)***

Just like the human services sector, the regulatory environment for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) is designed to protect consumers. For example, RTOs are required to provide all learners with written information when they enrol, describing:

- the training, assessment and support services they will provide, including when, where and how the course will be delivered
- rights and obligations, including payment terms and cancellation as well as refund conditions.

VET regulators oversee the many technical aspects of high-quality training and assessment with which RTOs must comply.



# BUILDING EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH TRAINING PROVIDERS

Creating relationships with training providers can help you with:

- Navigating VET and government funding opportunities
- Aligning training with your organisation's broader workforce strategy
- Accessing training that's adapted to your needs
- Having a say in the quality of training delivery and outcomes.

Building and sustaining a relationship over the long-term requires mutual commitment, trust and ongoing investment.

Good relationships with training providers can take different forms, as can be seen in the case studies in this guide.

All types of relationships can be valuable if you and the training provider agree on what 'success' looks like.

**Establishing the relationship >**

**Reviewing progress and success >**

**The benefits of quality two-way relationships >**

**When things go wrong >**



## ESTABLISHING THE RELATIONSHIP

When you find a training provider you want to work with, take time to agree on your expectations and training outcomes.

The [Checklist for establishing a relationship with a training provider](#) on p.60 can help you to work through the points below.

### Outcomes and details of training

Talk about what the training will achieve and how it will be delivered. Questions to ask include:

- What skills and knowledge will participants gain?
- Can we have a detailed timeline for training delivery and reporting?
- What costs and charges will we have to pay and when?

### Roles and responsibilities

Discuss the commitment you'll each make to the training, including your respective roles and responsibilities.

Clarify the commitment of the training provider and trainers, such as:

- How often will trainers visit employees or students in the workplace?
- What does the training provider/trainer expect of the employees or students and how will they communicate this to them?
- How often will the provider communicate with your employees? What method will they use?
- What support does the training provider/trainer give to employees or students who are struggling?

Identify your roles and responsibilities as the employer/manager, such as:

- How much time off will you give employees for training and study?
- What kinds of work experiences will you provide to support their training?
- How will you supervise and mentor employees in the workplace?
- Who will be the workplace supervisor, and do they need training to do this?
- How will you ensure employees understand what's expected of them for the training?
- What support will you give to help employees if needed?



### Communication and conflict resolution

You'll get the best training outcomes if you communicate regularly and effectively with the training provider.

***“Before training begins, we have discussions with RTOs about how we'll communicate and how often. I like to be able to discuss progress and any issues we're having. For example, we've had students on placement who we've identified will need more time for their training and we've discussed and negotiated that with the RTO. I've learnt that we need to invest in that relationship and that we can't rely on students to let us know when they're having issues.”***

***(Aged Care Service Provider)***

You could agree on some communication ground rules. For example:

- Establish how and how often you'll communicate. You might like to set up regular meeting times or agree that the training provider will send regular email updates on employee progress.
- Clarify what kinds of issues you'd like to be told about, and how.
- Set up clear communication channels and appoint a single point of contact for your organisation and the training provider.

***“Our main communication is the feedback on our students, and we have really good communication. We will get an email if they haven't turned up [for training] and haven't notified the RTO, or if they're lagging behind in any of their assessments, so that we can then support them as well. So it's a two way street.”***

***(Early childhood education and care provider)***

***“If employers are thinking that something's not working, or we're not doing something right, or they're not happy with something, or they are really impressed with something...whatever it is, keep those communication lines open.”***

***(Registered Training Organisation)***

Talk about how you'll resolve conflicts:

- Discuss potential risks and how they'll be managed.
- Explore factors that have hindered training in the past and how these can be avoided.
- Develop a clear process for resolving problems (e.g. parties will meet face to face, put issues in writing and focus on solutions).

***“There are always issues and challenges but we can usually work through them with open communication. One time an employer called us to say that an employee wasn't performing an aspect of their role safely. We visited on site to evaluate the situation and work out whether the student needed more training or whether there was a barrier to their learning. We brought the student back in to repeat training and they ended up excelling.”***

***(Registered Training Organisation)***

Remember that training providers need to comply with the Privacy Act 1988. Talk about their privacy policy and which information they've collected about your employees that they can and can't share with you.

### Formalising an agreement

You will find it helpful to have a formal agreement with the training provider, such as a memorandum of understanding. This gives a touchstone to come back to if things go wrong. It can also be helpful when there's a turnover of staff. Make sure you both sign the agreement and keep a copy on file.

You'll find a [Training Partnership Agreement](#) template on p.62.



## REVIEWING PROGRESS AND SUCCESS

It's important to regularly review your relationships with training providers and assess whether they are meeting your needs and producing the intended outcomes for your organisation.

Aspects of training you might like to review include:

- skills and industry currency of the trainer
- quality of feedback given to learners
- quality and currency of resources
- efficient use of learning technologies (e.g. for online communication, simulated learning activities, or access to learning resources)
- the appropriateness of the qualification/skill set to the job role
- the amount of training given
- the level and adequacy of communication from the training provider
- the extent to which the training is meeting your organisation's business strategy and workforce development objectives.

Discuss with the training provider any changes in your business that may impact training.

Ask the training provider to keep you up to date with relevant changes to vocational education and training and funding opportunities.

***“It's really important to have evidence-based decisions around your engagement [with a training provider] beyond an informal opinion of someone. Relationships drive decisions sometimes, which might not be in the best interest of where the organisation needs to head.***

***I think there needs to be something more robust in place that helps you to make the decision around whether or not you'll engage with them. And I guess, just being really clear around what your strategy is as an organisation. And that should really be what's driving your decisions, in terms of engagement.”***

***(Aged care and disability service provider)***

## GETTING INVOLVED

Investing in your relationship with a training provider will give you opportunities to influence the training your current or future employees receive. The more you engage, the more influence you can have over training outcomes.

***“As the employer, you have the opportunity to work with the RTO to make sure the learning is best for your workplace. You have to care about the delivery of training and what it looks like. You have to get involved.”***

***(Disability service provider)***

Good training providers will be keen to hear your feedback on the training and assessment they provide. Your views on the coverage, effectiveness and relevance of training will help them to continually improve the quality of their training and assessment. They can then pass that feedback on to the bodies responsible for developing accredited training products and ensure that they are meeting the needs of industry.

You can also help to raise the profile of your industry sector and your organisation by taking up opportunities to speak to groups of students. Some employers have also found this a useful way to attract new staff.

***“We're in the process of trying to establish partnerships with some really reputable VET providers, so we can work on achieving those job ready employees, but also so that we can understand and have some input on that industry collaboration.***

***So for us, it's developing trust that the students get what our industry needs, and what our sector and essentially our clients are wanting, and helping to steer the sector a little bit.”***

***(Disability service provider)***



## WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

In any business relationship, there's a risk that things won't go as planned and there'll be some issues or disputes. If you have a healthy and professional working relationship and good communication practices, most issues can be quickly resolved.

*“...we're also very respectful and professional. So if there's an issue, we don't point fingers, we just look to resolve issues...we openly talk about it and then we talk collectively from both sides as to how we can resolve some things. We've had plenty of issues, but we've always, just through our professional relationship, been able to resolve them”*

*(Aged Care Service Provider)*

If you're facing a complex, serious or not easily resolved issue, the following steps may help you to work through it.

### Understand the issue and identify solutions

First make sure you clearly understand the problem. Talk to your employees and clarify any misunderstandings.

Refer to the agreement you made with the training provider about what each party would do and how disputes will be resolved.

The information given to your employees before they started training should also outline the training provider's complaints process.

When you're clear about the issue, follow the appropriate process.

Clearly articulate your understanding of the issue and any proposed solution/s. Give the training provider an opportunity to respond and listen to their perspective. Be prepared to negotiate, compromise and work through mutually beneficial solutions together.

Keep a written record of any discussions for future reference.

### Take further action if needed

If you can't resolve a dispute on your own, you might consider getting help from a training ombudsman or consumer protection agency and/or making a complaint to the Australian Skills Quality Authority.

Each state and territory has a **training ombudsman**. They review and resolve enquiries and complaints from anyone in the VET system, including students, RTOs, apprentices, trainees, employers, and other stakeholders. Their service is free, confidential, and independent. It includes:

- providing free and impartial advice about your rights and responsibilities
- reviewing issues and offering recommendations
- referring complaints to other relevant agencies if required
- mediating between parties to reach a mutually beneficial solution.

The **Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)** is the national regulator for vocational education and training and oversees the quality of training provided by RTOs. You can find further information about concerns relating to an RTO, or submit a complaint through the online portal called [asqaconnect](https://www.asqa.gov.au/asqaconnect).

Note though that ASQA doesn't investigate and substantiate individual complaints received. Rather it will look at the provider's pattern of behaviour identified through complaints and use this information to inform decisions about if and when further regulatory scrutiny of a provider is required.

## WHEN A TRAINING PROVIDER CLOSES DOWN

A training provider may close down or cease to deliver a course for a variety of reasons.

There are established processes for supporting students of Registered Training Organisations in this situation. See

<https://www.asqa.gov.au/students/provider-closures> for further information.



# INFLUENCING THE VET SYSTEM

Through your relationships with individual RTOs, you can make a contribution to the quality of training.

There are also several ways in which you, as an employer, can influence the broader Vocational Education and Training system.

[Influencing workforce and VET policy >](#)

[Influencing training products >](#)



# INFLUENCING WORKFORCE AND VET POLICY

Getting involved in projects, committees and industry bodies in your sector provides an opportunity to contribute to policy or system-wide improvements for VET and workforce development.

This might include for example, being part of consultations or research, contributing to submissions to inquiries or proposals to government, or meeting with decision makers.

## WHO TO CONTACT

These organisations can let you know about opportunities for employers to get involved in improving training and workforce development for the human services.

**Human Services Skills Organisation** – focused on supporting workforce development in the aged care, disability support, allied health, veterans' services, youth services, and early childhood education and care sectors.

**Boosting the Local Care Workforce Program** – focused on developing the capacity of disability and aged care service providers to operate effectively and expand their workforce.

**Australian Government Skills Reform** – focused on improving industry and employer engagement in the VET system, improving qualification and training design and supporting the delivery of high-quality training.



## INFLUENCING TRAINING PRODUCTS

To make sure that training products are relevant to what's happening in human services workplaces, it's important that employers are involved in influencing the development of qualifications, courses and units of competency. You can get involved in:

- **Identifying skill and labour market needs** – Industry Reference Committees (IRCs) consult with employers to inform the development and updating of nationally recognised training packages.
- **Developing training package products** – IRCs might form a technical advisory committee (TAC) if developing new qualifications or units of competency.
- **Validating training package products** – employers can give feedback on draft products.
- **Developing accredited courses** - if no training package covers skills needed by employers, they can work with RTOs, state government training departments and/or industry bodies to develop an accredited course.

## WHO TO CONTACT

These organisations can let you know about opportunities for employers to contribute to the development of training products for the human services.

- The **Industry Reference Committee** (IRC) that relates to your industry sector.
- The **Skills Service Organisation** (SSO) that supports the IRC. They publish opportunities for feedback and involvement via their websites.
- **State and territory governments** also gather feedback from employers as part of training product development.
- **Industry bodies** sometimes develop submissions to inform training product development.

# CASE STUDIES



# BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS IN AGED CARE

## CASE STUDY HIGHLIGHTS

-  Finding the right RTOs to work with
-  The value of open communication and collaborative problem solving
-  The benefits of long-term relationships with training providers

Warrigal is a community-owned aged care service provider in the Illawarra and Southern Highlands of NSW and in central and southern Canberra. As well as successfully developing its own workforce, it's committed to helping address aged care and disability workforce challenges across their region. Mark Sewell is CEO of Warrigal, a national director of Aged and Community Services Australia (ACSA) and a member of a regional Industry Workforce Action Group.

Organisational Development Manager, Lish Lawrence, oversees Warrigal's centralised training and development functions. She manages recruitment and training pathways, and the upskilling of existing staff.

## THE IMPERATIVE TO ENGAGE

Warrigal is committed to developing strong partnerships with RTOs to train, upskill and recruit new workers and address the workforce challenges faced by the sector.



“

***There are service providers that have reduced their service offering. There are beds that can't be filled. There are beds that have not been built because [employers] are frightened about the workforce challenge. They know they can't meet the need. They know they can't get enough applicants. They know they can't get enough people trained. So we know we're reliant on RTOs to have a pathway of training and development for us. If we can go and find new people, then they need to be trained. And we know from the Royal Commission report that it's likely Cert III will be a mandatory qual very soon, and we'll need to partner with with training providers to meet our compliance requirements.”***

***(Mark Sewell)***

## WORKING WITH RTOS

When Lish first started in her role she was inundated with offers from training providers. But her preference was to build relationships with just a few reputable RTOs. Warrigal looks for RTOs who really understand the aged care sector and its constraints, and aims to develop reciprocal, respectful relationships.

***“Both the vocational education sector and aged care are complex....You need people who can quickly work it out through trusted partnerships over some regular phone calls, rather than long explanatory sessions between people who don’t know each other.”***

***(Mark Sewell)***

Warrigal likes to work with RTOs whose values align with theirs. As a trusted, local not-for-profit provider, they typically partner with not-for-profit RTOs.

***“....our partnerships are mostly with trusted charities and public service agencies who are committed to communities. It’s like an ethos of partnerships as well as an ethos of our own services....when you’ve got this 10-year partnership to train your workforce or find applicants who are on a training pathway, that’s a daily partnership that needs to be a pretty good cultural fit.”***

***(Mark Sewell)***

To establish the relationship, Warrigal invests time getting to know RTO staff and sharing what’s happening in the organisation, what the work needs are and how things are changing.

During this phase, they have regular face to face meetings.

***“I probably spent the first year building relationships, and having those RTOs really understand Warrigal’s needs at that time, but also, years down the track, and talking about those future needs is really important.... In the early days I used to meet with RTOs almost on a fortnightly basis, face-to-face....we shared our challenges, they shared theirs, and then we worked through issues to come to a resolution.”***  
***(Lish Lawrence)***

RTOs often come onsite to deliver training and assessment, such as manual handling. This allows students to learn on the personal care aids equipment that Warrigal uses, to have an interactive learning experience and to see what working in aged care is like.

***“.....there’s nothing quite like being inside an aged care home, having your classes in our rec rooms and seeing an older person’s room, ....to see what an aged care staff team is like...how multicultural it is, how female it is, how many part-timers there are, the kind of record-keeping that’s required on electronic devices, and so on.”***

***(Mark Sewell)***



## BENEFITS OF LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS

Warrigal recognises there are many benefits to long-term engagement with RTOs:

- The RTOs they work with are willing to go out of their way for Warrigal, delivering beyond what's normally expected. And Warrigal reciprocates by, for example, giving first preference for student placements, helping with media and good news stories, attending classrooms to talk to students, giving advice from an employer perspective. Their relationships are mutually beneficial.

***“...it is our effective relationships that we’ve established with some key RTOs that enable us to deliver some really good outcomes for our staff.... the partnership is more than just business-to-business. It’s really an embedded, collaborative partnership.”***

**(Mark Sewell)**

- Warrigal stays abreast of changes in the VET sector and how these impact RTOs. RTOs often seek feedback from Warrigal on things like changes to qualifications.
- RTOs often let Warrigal know of relevant funding opportunities, enabling them to apply for help to resource initiatives such as mentoring for marginalised students.
- RTOs develop programs that are tailored to industry needs. If training programs are developed without engaging with aged care providers, the model often doesn't fit what employers require.

## FOCUSING ON THE BIG PICTURE

Lish believes that openness and transparency are important to resolving the inevitable issues and challenges that come up.

***“...we’re very respectful and professional. If there’s an issue, we don’t point fingers, we just look to resolve issues...we openly talk about it and then we talk collectively from both sides as to how we can resolve some things. We’ve had plenty of issues, but we’ve always, just through our professional relationship, been able to resolve them. Even now we have a meeting every month with the RTO staff just about student placements, because that’s a continuing challenge, so we are working with them to collectively try and resolve some of those challenges that are presenting.”***

**(Lish Lawrence)**

Warrigal’s approach to workforce development is garnering results. While it’s not without its challenges, they’re focused on the big picture and the benefit to the aged care and disability workforce across the whole region.

This mindset helps them to stay focused on solutions and outcomes, also in their relationships with RTOs.

***‘It’s always about thinking about the outcomes that we’re trying to achieve and how we can work together to achieve those outcomes, essentially.’***

**(Lish Lawrence)**



# CREATING PATHWAYS IN YOUTH & COMMUNITY SERVICES

## CASE STUDY HIGHLIGHTS



A staged approach to developing skilled staff



Collaborative training design and strong training partnerships



Returns from investment in training and workforce development

Allambi Care provides support for the most vulnerable in society, serving individuals, families, communities, and government agencies. Allambi's more than 800 staff work across residential out-of-home care, disability care, foster care, early intervention and restoration programs in NSW.

In 2015 Allambi began revolutionising training for new and existing staff, setting a goal that all direct care staff would achieve at least a Diploma in Community Services.

They worked closely with Bradford Institute of Advanced Education to design the Diploma training and with the Australian Catholic University (ACU) to develop a pathway into their Bachelor of Human Services.

## ABOUT THE TRAINING

All new employees do a comprehensive induction program, introducing them to Allambi's values and expectations, policies, procedures and approach to therapeutic crisis intervention. A six-month probation includes ongoing learning modules to further understanding, skills and knowledge, as well as supervision, support and feedback to help employees understand what's expected in their role.



Following completion of the induction and probation, employees are offered the opportunity to enter the Diploma program to complete the remaining units over the following 8 months.

“

***From the very first day a new employee comes to our organisation, they're actually working towards their Diploma. The probation period gives us feedback about their suitability for the role. Over the years, we've found it difficult to get robust feedback... this gives us a solid understanding of someone's involvement and understanding of their role.”***

***(Simon Walsh)***

Allambi’s approach to training is driven by the needs of children and families they serve, who need people with skills, but also stability and longevity.

***“They don’t need our staff coming into their lives, poking through their information and then leaving. This process allows us to put staff on permanently...which gives stability to the kids and holds staff for at least the 12 months of their training.”***

Allambi sees this as being proactive, rather than relying on recruiting qualified staff.

***“We’re actually developing our own people, which is our preference anyway.”***

## HOW TRAINING WAS DEVELOPED

Allambi engaged Bradford Institute of Advanced Education to design training that was relevant, holistic and provided a career pathway. David Bradford (CEO) says it’s always been a partnership with a shared goal and vision.

***“The goal was to deliver a new path to your degree other than showing up at the sandstone University every week. These people are working, paying mortgages, feeding children. Unless we find an industry-led way of leading people through their qualifications, we’ll keep seeing real labour supply problems.”***  
***(David Bradford)***

It was a collaborative process that began with trainers understanding Allambi’s needs and processes. For example, a senior trainer sat through Allambi’s entire induction process to learn about the organisation.

As Allambi Care CEO, Simon Walsh, explains:

***“Dave helped us refine our diploma delivery model. It’s like you’ve got a shell that’s been contextualised to Allambi - our culture and framework - but still meeting the qualification. We’re doing more than required. But our focus isn’t just on the qualification, it’s on developing a really robust person, who knows how to fulfil the role they’re taking on.”***

## BENEFITS FOR ALLAMBI

Allambi has invested considerably in learning and the benefits are significant.

- High completion rates - about 80% of staff complete the Diploma.

***“If you said to some youth workers ‘Hey we’re going to get you a bachelor’s degree’, they’d resign that day. But if you start with the first piece, then the next, do it incrementally, and integrate the workplace into assessment, so they’re applying the theory to real live situations...then you get a motivated person who’s looking for workplace solutions and sees the utility of the learning.”***  
***(David Bradford)***



- Staff retention - a shift from ‘this is a job’ to ‘this is my career’.

**“People’s mentality shifts. By the time they finish the diploma, they’ve stayed long enough to apply their skills, to have done closed-loop learning, so they feel confident and competent. ‘I have a future here. This is a career. I can get a degree here. I’m not going to get this opportunity anywhere else.’”**

**(Simon Walsh)**

- Positive workplace culture.

**“...there’s a great culture at Allambi, and it’s a bit of a family and this program has just strengthened that. I think it’s strengthened people’s sense of capacity and belonging.”**

**(David Bradford)**

- Better outcomes for clients.

**“We have young people saying ‘at my old placement, workers changed every three months. I’ve had the same worker now for two years’. That’s settling, it reduces anxiety, incidents and the high escalation stuff. It actually gives kids a connection.”**

**(Simon Walsh)**

- Opportunities for staff - who wouldn’t otherwise study.

**“We create a safe environment for those who may have had negative educational experiences in the past. Some are the first in their family to achieve a diploma or degree and they feel really proud.”**

**(Simon Walsh)**

- Staff cohesion - training workshops allow staff to reflect on their practice in a non-judgmental way, and to bond with each other.

**“If (staff) are facing challenges and difficult scenarios...training provides a safe zone to reflect on their work and critique themselves. This really builds the strengths in their connections. In our work, you need that. You need to be able to call on your colleagues and others to help you through.”**

**(Simon Walsh)**

- Contribution to the sector - even if staff move on to other employers, the sector benefits from a highly skilled practitioner who is collaborative in their practice.

## KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP

According to David Bradford, this successful partnership relies on:

- Executive sponsorship - with direct engagement between CEOs of each organisation.  
**“...because it’s been CEO to CEO, that’s kept momentum and stopped things getting sort of bogged down or losing the imperative.”**
- Clear goals - both partners being committed to skilling people for their own benefit, the benefit of clients and the whole sector.
- Regular meetings and communication.
- An alignment of values.
- High levels of trust.  
**“There’s a very strong thread of trust there. There’s no taking advantage of each other.”**
- Investing time in the relationship.  
**“We’ve spent the time together to get to know each other. And that’s been really important in terms of that trust in those relationships and the strength of that bond.”**



# FINDING RTOS FOR THE DISABILITY SECTOR

## CASE STUDY HIGHLIGHTS



Finding the right RTOs to work with



Effective ways of working with RTOs



Engaging different RTOs for different purposes

Cara is one of South Australia’s largest disability service providers, with over 1,000 staff. Like many other providers, it’s facing significant workforce shortages and challenges in meeting some training requirements, such as supervision of vocational placements. It relies on partnerships with RTOs to train workers and build recruitment pathways. Kelli Witt (Manager, Talent Attraction and Sourcing) and Danielle Micarone (Accredited Training Coordinator) manage these partnerships and the recruitment and training of staff.

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Cara works with a select group of RTOs that each offer different qualifications and approaches.



“

***Historically we had an arrangement with just one RTO. We had our own internally qualified trainers and the RTO would do the assessments and issue qualifications. But that model wasn’t working for us. We’ve moved to a more traditional model where we use a couple of providers. It’s easier to deal with a smaller group of RTOs. They all do things a bit differently and offer different qualifications.”***

***(Danielle Micarone)***

Cara looks to work with RTOs who:

- offer flexible delivery options to suit shift workers
- are good, proactive communicators
- have well-established reporting processes
- have clear processes for supervising and following up with students
- know about funding opportunities
- understand the fluidity of the disability workforce.

***“We like to work with RTOs who we know will report regularly, flag any issues and who have proactive processes. It’s good if they have online and blended options. A lot of our workers are maxed out and they find it hard to attend face to face training after a shift. Others are wary of online training. Having options is really good for us.”***

***(Danielle Micarone)***

Before engaging with RTOs, Cara does some background research and talks to other providers who’ve worked with them. They like to find out about the trainers, as they find the quality and approach of trainers can vary significantly.

## WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH RTOS

In working with different RTOs over many years, Cara’s learned some valuable lessons:

- make sure there’s a schedule or timeline for the training
- establish how students’ progress will be tracked and reported, and how they’ll be supported when needed

***“If a student is struggling, it’s really good to have an open feedback loop because we can step in and help. We can get them in touch with someone who can guide or coach them.”***

***(Kelli Witt)***

- clarify who’s responsible for what (e.g. who’ll complete supervisor logbooks)
- have ground rules to respect the privacy of clients (e.g. that trainers must give notice before turning up to a client’s house)
- communicate regularly and openly with the RTO and with students.

***“The successes we’ve had are where there’s constant communication.”***

***(Kelli Witt)***



# SUCCESSFUL RELATIONSHIPS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

## CASE STUDY HIGHLIGHTS



Why communication is so important



Mutual commitment to training



The benefit of strong relationships between RTOs and employers

Brent Stokes is General Manager of Scholars Consulting, part of The Scholars Group, a consultancy group that supports early learning (childcare) Approved Providers (owners) to operate high quality early learning services. Being part of early childhood education and care for over fifteen years, including owning and managing four centres employing about 80 staff, he's experienced firsthand the challenge of finding a high-quality training provider. He's seen the standard of training in the sector improve significantly over time. After working with many training providers, his organisation's preferred RTO is currently the College for Australian Early Childhood Educators (CAECE).

CAECE is owned by the Australian Child Care Alliance (Qld), the member association for Approved Providers (owners) of early learning (childcare) centres in Queensland, and delivers training to over 200 services state-wide. CAECE was established just over six years ago in response to a recognised need for quality providers in the sector. Essentially, employers built the RTO, which makes it a uniquely employer-driven provider. CAECE markets itself to employers as 'Your RTO', working hard to make the catch phrase a reality.



As Mandy Walker, CAECE's Training Operations Manager says,

“

***While we naturally have strong relationships with employers because we're owned by the Australian Child Care Alliance Qld, we still need to work at developing and maintaining relationships with individual employers.”***

## STRONG RELATIONSHIPS BOOST OUTCOMES

In CAECE's experience, strong relationships with employers are vital to students' success.

***“We work together to support students and help them complete their training. One of the benefits of a close collaborative relationship between employers and RTOs is better student outcomes and higher completion rates.”***  
*(Mandy Walker)*

## EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IS ESSENTIAL

According to Mandy, one key to successful collaboration is effective communication. When they first start working with an employer they establish clear lines of communication for all aspects of training, from sending invoices to discussions about student progress. This is tailored according to the size and needs of the service. They use a learning management system that, with the permission of employees, allows employers to login at any time to see the students' progress, notes, and assessment due dates.

They're very transparent with employers and involve them at each step of the learning journey, from enrolment to completion. Every communication about a student's progress goes to the employer as well as the student, whether it's a success or a challenge. For example, when students complete a unit, a congratulatory email is sent to the employer and when a student falls behind in their progression, the employer is contacted.

## MUTUAL COMMITMENT

Another key success factor is mutual commitment to the requirements of training. When looking for an RTO, Brent says he wants to know how much high-quality service they provide the student early childhood educators, how many students a trainer is looking after at any one time, how often they interact with and visit students face-to-face, how accessible they are and how much support they give students.

Equally, CAECE wants to know that employers are committed to the training process and willing to give students the time-off and support they need to succeed. CAECE has a robust initial engagement which sets out the obligations of each party. For example, trainers need to be able to engage meaningfully with students when they visit the workplace, which requires that employers give them time away from their duties caring for children. CAECE conducts an initial enrolment interview with employers to discuss these and other roles and responsibilities.

Brent recognises the importance of employer commitment and tries to play his part in making students and trainers feel valued and supported.

***“When a student graduates, we try to have as many of our team members in management there on the day. We celebrate with a certificate plus flowers. I believe that commitment to the educator, and the commitment to the sector really supports the educator's passion...”***

## ENGAGEMENT PROVIDES OUTCOMES

When both an RTO and employer are committed to high quality training and student success, and invest the required time and effort, their collaboration yields quality outcomes and mutual benefits. CAECE has a strong culture and ethos of providing quality training and meeting employers' needs. They find that employers respond positively and are typically very committed, engaged and willing to give back to the RTO. It becomes a mutually beneficial engagement that leads to better outcomes for all those involved.



# SCHOOL-BASED TRAINEESHIPS IN HUMAN SERVICES

## CASE STUDY HIGHLIGHTS

-  Attracting young people to the human services
-  Industry-informed training program design
-  Use of school-based traineeships as a recruitment strategy



School-based traineeships are one way of attracting young people to human services and helping employers to build their future workforce. Mabel Park State High School, itself an RTO, based in Logan, Queensland, has established a successful school-based traineeship model that prepares students for work in the health, aged care and disability sectors.

## ‘HEALTH HUB’ MODEL

Mabel Park’s ‘Health Hub’ trains students in health support service qualifications while still at school. Its purpose is to address shortages in the health workforce, as well as high rates of youth unemployment. Students are offered career talks, Health Inspiration Days, hands-on industry work experience, school-based vocational training, and school-based traineeships. A broad range of stakeholders are involved, including health service providers, RTOs, secondary schools, regional development groups, local councils and the Queensland Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT), which helps to coordinate the program.

Mabel Park partners with other RTOs to deliver training to Year 10, 11 and 12 students in a simulated training facility on the school campus.

Students complete a Certificate II in Health Support Services, attending training one day per week for nine months, with the option to complete 5 to 10 days of structured, relevant work experience with health employers. This gives them the foundation skills required for the health sector, which they can then build on by completing a Certificate III in Individual Support.

The program is open to other students in the area, and students from 14 local schools have accessed the Certificate II in Health Support Services program.

Mabel Park’s Head of Department for Training and Employment at the time of establishing the program, Judith Fewtrell, noted some of the benefits of school-based traineeships.

“

***It’s good to start the traineeship at school because they have support...they don’t give up if they have a problem. They come to us and we help them work out a solution.”***

***“Students love the diversity of the work. It pays better than a job at Maccas, and it’s more fun. They enjoy it, as they are following their dreams.”***

## ATTRACTING YOUNG PEOPLE TO THE INDUSTRY

During the Health Inspiration Days, students visit hospital wards, aged care facilities or disability services to expose them to different industries and give them insight into school-based traineeships. Students also attend “A day in the life” talks by speakers from a cross section of health sectors who talk about employment possibilities within their industry.

Janine Lillico was Assistant Manager at My Horizon, a disability support provider, at the time of establishment of the program. Janine reported that My Horizon employed 12 school-based trainees from the first round of the program and found it a valuable recruitment strategy.

***“Young people may not have the life experience, but they bring different things – they are a similar age to participants, they have similar interests and relate on the same level. In the first six months, you’ve got to carry them a bit and it does take a bit to roster and coordinate but it’s an investment. At the end you’ve got these great workers. You can’t get a better worker than someone who loves their job. They pay for themselves in so many ways.”***

She also spoke about the diversity that young people bring to the disability sector.

***“We are more flexible than other industries because it’s all about the match with participants. One student did a vocational placement in aged care but they didn’t want him back because he had a mohawk and piercings and just didn’t fit in. But we’ve employed him as a trainee. We don’t care what he looks like. He’s got great skills and the participants love him.”***

## STRONG COLLABORATION WITH INDUSTRY

The Health Hub aligns its program with industry and workplace needs so that trainees develop skills that are relevant and attractive to employers. The school has an Industry Liaison Officer whose role is to build strong relationships with local employers, to promote the program and find work experience opportunities for students. Employers are invited to be part of career days and the school’s annual review process.

In 2017 Mabel Park State High School’s Health Hub was awarded Education Queensland’s Showcase Award for Excellence in Industry Partnerships for the South East Region. The Health Hub was also one of three state finalists for the Queensland State Training Awards that year, in the Premier’s Industry Collaboration category.

(References - material for this case study was drawn from Jobs Queensland (2018) *Building the NDIS workforce through traineeships* and <https://www.gyoworkforce.com.au/engaging-school-students/> )



# COLLABORATIVE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN AGED CARE

## CASE STUDY HIGHLIGHTS

-  A collaborative approach to training and workforce development
-  Processes for ensuring high-quality training
-  Building strong relationships between employers and RTOs

## THE TASMANIAN WORKFORCE INNOVATION NETWORK

The Tasmanian Workforce Innovation Network brings together employers, training providers and job service providers to explore opportunities for building capacity and capability of the aged care workforce.

Meetings are held four times a year with members from across Tasmania attending. Topical issues are covered, such as new government funding opportunities.

Training organisations present programs they're delivering and developing. Employers discuss their training and workforce needs and work together with RTOs to develop solutions. The Network also provides resources to help with recruitment and training.

Aged & Community Services Australia (ACSA) is a national peak body supporting not-for-profit, church and charitable providers of retirement living, community, home and residential care. Fiona Huskinson is their Senior Workforce & Industry Development Officer, and manages the Network's programs and initiatives.

She says partnerships fostered through the Network have driven great outcomes for all involved. Employers understand the value of training and investing in it, and the quality of training continually improves. Fiona notes that allocating ACSA staff to manage the Network and its programs has been integral to its success.



## PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

Chris Hyde, Director of Care at Emmerton Park, an aged care facility in north-west Tasmania, has been a member of the Network since 2011. A friend working at another facility found it valuable and recommended she join.

When she first attended, employers and RTOs were discussing the minimum requirements for care staff and what sort of education they needed. Service providers had the opportunity to articulate their needs, and from those discussions, programs were developed to recruit and upskill aged care workers.

She values learning from guest speakers, working collaboratively with RTOs and networking with other employers, so much that she drives five hours to attend meetings!

## ESTABLISHING AND MONITORING PROGRAMS

The Network develops programs to address workforce and training challenges, such as its school-based traineeship program. It invites RTOs to express their interest in delivering programs; asking how and where they deliver, how far they're willing to travel and associated costs.

The Network follows a selection process to find the most suitable RTOs for different programs according to strengths, such as the calibre of the trainers delivering a particular qualification. It also monitors students' progress and outcomes and supplements programs with a buddy and coaching program to train the trainer.

Fiona Huskinson explains:

***"...it's time intensive to start with. We monitor that the training's happening, that they [the RTO] are going into the workplace, that they're communicating with the employer, and then we follow up with the students to make sure that they're getting the right training, it's meeting their needs. For a young person, it's their parents involved in that as well, and their schools and colleges....we make sure that if they're doing a school-based traineeship, it's not impacting on their timetable, that they're taking subjects that are actually going to supplement and complement their career pathway, which is really important."***

The Network plays a key role in mediating and facilitating relationships between stakeholders. They organise 'sign up days' for all parties, where they explicitly communicate stakeholders' roles and responsibilities.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

Fiona acknowledges that while the Network helps to get things up and running and brings parties together, it's still vital that RTOs establish a strong relationship with the employers.

From an employer perspective, Chris Hyde recognises the value of good communication to the relationship.

***"Before training begins, we often have discussions with RTOs about how we'll communicate and how often. I like to be able to discuss progress and any issues we're having. For example, we've had students on placement who we've identified will need more time for their training and we've discussed and negotiated that with the RTO. I've learnt that we need to invest in that relationship and that we can't rely on students to identify or let us know when they're having issues."***

She says it's important to form the relationship upfront, to get to know the RTO and make sure they know the organisation's needs and priorities. Before engaging they assess and clarify their own needs. For Emmerton Park, hands-on training is important so that students are adequately prepared for the workplace.

They formalise how they'll work together, specifying things like how and when they'll meet and how assessments will be done. Communication is ongoing so that students achieve the best possible outcomes.



# USEFUL CONTACTS & RESOURCES



# USEFUL CONTACTS & RESOURCES

## STATE AND TERRITORY GOVERNMENT TRAINING DEPARTMENTS

ACT - Skills Canberra - <https://www.skills.act.gov.au/>

NSW - Training Services NSW - <https://www.training.nsw.gov.au/employers/>

NT - Workforce NT - <https://vet.nt.gov.au/workplaces>

QLD - Queensland Department of Employment, Small Business and Training - <https://desbt.qld.gov.au/>

SA - Skills SA - <https://www.skills.sa.gov.au/business>

TAS - Skills Tasmania - <https://www.skills.tas.gov.au/home>

VIC - Department of Education and Training - <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/training/>

WA - Department of Training and Workforce Development - <https://www.dtwd.wa.gov.au/>

## FINDING TRAINING COURSES AND TRAINING PROVIDERS

MySkills - <https://www.myskills.gov.au/>

National Training Register - [www.training.gov.au](http://www.training.gov.au)

NSW - <https://education.nsw.gov.au/skills-nsw>

NT - <https://vet.nt.gov.au/workplaces>

QLD - <http://www.skillsgateway.training.qld.gov.au/>

SA - <https://www.skills.sa.gov.au/business>

TAS - [https://www.skills.tas.gov.au/employers\\_and\\_industry](https://www.skills.tas.gov.au/employers_and_industry)

VIC - <https://www.skills.vic.gov.au/>

WA - <https://www.jobsandskills.wa.gov.au/>

## TRAINING FOR LANGUAGE, LITERACY, NUMERACY AND DIGITAL LITERACY SKILLS

The national Reading Writing Hotline - <https://www.readingwritinghotline.edu.au/workplace-literacy/>

Foundation Skills for your Future program - <https://www.dese.gov.au/foundation-skills-your-future-program/foundation-skills-employers>

## MAKING COMPLAINTS AND RESOLVING CONFLICT

State and Territory consumer protection agencies and training ombudsman - <https://www.asqa.gov.au/complaints/more-support>

ASQA Connect Online Portal - <https://asqaconnect.asqa.gov.au/>

## TRAINEESHIPS AND APPRENTICESHIPS

Australian Apprenticeship Support Network - <https://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au/about-aasn>

Australian Apprenticeship Pathways - <https://www.aapathways.com.au/>

State and Territory Government Training Departments - see links above.



## SUPPORT FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Human Services Workforce Development Initiatives Portal - <https://hssso.org.au/resources/view/human-services-workforce-development-initiatives-portal/>

Boosting the Local Care Workforce Program - <https://blcw.dss.gov.au/About>

Skills Checkpoint - <https://skillscheck.com.au/skills-checkpoint-for-employers/services-for-employers/>

Victoria Skills and Jobs Centres - <https://www.skills.vic.gov.au/s/visit-a-skills-and-jobs-centre>

Western Australia Jobs and Skills Centres - <https://www.jobsandskills.wa.gov.au/resources-employers>

National Careers Institute - <https://www.dese.gov.au/nci/national-careers-institute-and-its-work>

## REGULATORS

Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) - <https://www.asqa.gov.au/>

Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) - <https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/>

Training Accreditation Council Western Australia (TAC) - <https://www.tac.wa.gov.au/>

## AN OVERVIEW OF GOVERNANCE AND REGULATION OF VET

<https://www.voced.edu.au/vet-knowledge-bank-governance>



### FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Australian Government financial support for individuals - <https://www.dese.gov.au/skills-and-training/help-cost-training>

State and Territory Government specific funding – see State and Territory Government Training Department links above.

Skills Checkpoint to upskill employees aged 45-70 - <https://skillscheck.com.au/skills-checkpoint-for-employers/services-for-employers/>

Australian Apprenticeship Support Network subsidies for employing trainees and apprentices - <https://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au/about-aasn>

Employment service provider wage subsidies for employing certain groups of job seekers - <https://jobsearch.gov.au/employer-info/wage-subsidies>

### WORK PLACEMENTS

Preparing Students for Work: Certificate III in Individual Support Work Placement Guide for Human Services employers and RTOs – **Coming Soon**

### TRAINING PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT AND REFORM

Industry Reference Committees - <https://www.aisc.net.au/industry-reference-committees/industry-reference-committees-0>

Skills Service Organisations - <https://www.aisc.net.au/industry-reference-committees/skills-service-organisations>

Australian Government Skills Reform - <https://www.skillsreform.gov.au/>

### OTHER NATIONAL VET SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS

Skills Organisations - <https://www.dese.gov.au/skills-organisations>

National Skills Commission – <https://www.nationalskillscommission.gov.au/>



# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Below are some of the key terms used in the Guide.  
They are drawn from:

- National Careers Institute - [MySkills Glossary](#)
- National Centre for Vocational Education and Research - [Glossary of VET](#)



### **Accredited Course**

A nationally recognised course accredited by vocational education and training (VET) regulators and developed to meet training needs not addressed by existing training packages. The course results in a statement of attainment outcome. The title of an accredited course commences with the words 'Course in'.

### **Accredited Training**

Training that leads to vocational qualifications and credentials that are recognised across Australia. Only registered training organisations (RTOs) that meet government quality standards such as TAFEs, private providers, enterprise registered training organisations, vocational divisions of universities, community RTOs and schools that are RTOs can provide nationally recognised training.

Nationally recognised training is listed on the National Training Register ([training.gov.au](http://training.gov.au)) and includes accredited courses, endorsed training package qualifications, training package skill sets and associated subjects.

### **Australian Apprenticeships**

Covers all Australian apprenticeships and traineeships. Australian apprenticeships:

- do not require entry qualifications
- can be full-time, part-time or school-based
- combine training and employment
- can lead to a nationally recognised qualification
- are available to anyone of working age including school-leavers, people re-entering the workforce or those wishing to change careers.

### **Certificate**

A qualification showing that a student has achieved learning outcomes as described in the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

There are four levels of certificates; they range from Certificate I (basic fundamental knowledge and understanding in a narrow area of work and learning) to Certificate IV (broad factual, technical and theoretical knowledge in a specialised field of work and learning).

### **Credit Transfer**

The granting of status or credit by an institution or training organisation to students for modules (subjects) or units of competency completed at the same, or another, institution or training organisation.

### **Entry-level training**

Training undertaken to gain entry into the workforce or further vocational education and training.

### **Fee-for-service training**

Most or all of the cost of this training is borne by the student or a person or organisation on behalf of the student.



### **Informal learning**

Learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organised or structured (in terms of objectives, time or learning support). Informal learning in most cases is unintentional from the learner's perspective. It typically does not lead to certification.

### **National Register**

The National Register for Vocational Education and Training (VET) is a record of all nationally recognised training and all training organisations formally approved to deliver VET services by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (or, in some cases, a state regulator).

### **Non-accredited training**

Training that does not lead to nationally recognised certification. It includes locally developed programs and skill sets, and non-accredited modules.

Non-nationally recognised training is not listed on the National Training Register ([training.gov.au](http://training.gov.au)) and can be delivered by all training providers not just Registered Training Organisations (RTOs).

### **Non-formal learning**

Learning that takes place through a program of instruction but does not usually lead to the attainment of a formal qualification or award (e.g. in-house professional development programs conducted in the workplace).

### **Qualification**

Formal certification awarded in recognition of the successful completion of an educational program. Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualifications are awarded when a person has satisfied all requirements of the units of competency or modules that comprise an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualification.

### **Recognition of Prior Learning**

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) identifies an individual's skills, knowledge and experiences no matter where, when or how they gained them. RPL offers the opportunity to have these attributes count towards a formal qualification. Skills and knowledge are matched to current industry qualifications so you can gain that formal recognition.

Recognition of Prior Learning is ideal for people with industry relevant work skills or knowledge acquired through paid or unpaid work experience, life experience or community work.

### **Reskilling/retraining**

Training to facilitate entry to a new occupation.

### **RTO**

Registered Training Organisations meet the registration requirements to deliver training and can issue nationally-recognised qualifications. RTOs can include TAFEs, private training providers, schools and some industry associations and companies.

RTOs are registered in accordance with vocational education and training (VET) legislation to deliver and/or assess nationally recognised training in accordance with the Australian Quality Training Framework, and are listed on the National Register, [www.training.gov.au](http://www.training.gov.au).



### Scope

The units of competency, qualifications and accredited courses that a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) is registered to deliver and/or assess. An RTO's scope on My Skills is the same as on the National Register, training.gov.au. The RTO may not be currently delivering every item on its scope. Please contact the relevant RTO to check if a particular qualification or unit of competency is currently being delivered.

### Skill Set

Single units or groupings of units of competency which are combined to provide a clearly defined statement of the skills and knowledge required by an individual to meet industry needs or a licensing or regulatory requirement. They may be either a nationally recognised skill set, which are endorsed in a national training package, or a locally developed skill set that has been developed to meet training needs that are not addressed in existing training packages.

### Skill Shortage

Where the demand for employees in specific occupations is greater than the supply of those who are qualified, available and willing to work under existing industry conditions.

### Traineeship

A system of vocational training combining off-the-job training with an approved training provider with on-the-job training and practical work experience. Traineeships generally take one to two years and are now a part of the Australian Apprenticeships system.

### Training Products

These include training packages, skill sets, accredited courses, industry certification and Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualifications.

### Training Provider

An organisation that delivers Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs. Training providers include private training providers, schools, community education providers, enterprise providers, TAFE institutes and universities.

### Training Package

A training package is a set of nationally endorsed standards and qualifications for recognising and assessing people's skills in a specific industry, industry sector or enterprise.

Despite the name, a training package does not describe how people should be trained, nor does it refer to a package of training or qualification that can be delivered or attained. Rather, training packages provide the nationally endorsed industry standards against which training can be developed and flexibly delivered to meet particular local, individual, industry and enterprise requirements.



### **Unit of competency**

Units of competency are the building blocks of a qualification. Each unit of competency identifies a distinct workplace requirement or skill needed to perform the task effectively in the workplace. This can include work knowledge and skills, language, literacy and numeracy, or occupational health and safety requirements.

Legislation makes it a requirement that each unit of competency be listed on the National Register, [training.gov.au](http://training.gov.au). Units of competency must be adhered to in training and assessment to ensure consistency of outcomes.

### **Upskilling**

Improving skills (e.g. by further training).

### **VET**

Vocational Education and Training (VET) is training in technical, job-related skills. It provides students with specific skills to help them in the workplace, and enables them to gain qualifications for all types of employment.

### **Vocational Placements**

A period of unpaid work with an employer undertaken by Vocational Education and Training (VET) students in order to satisfy the requirements of a course or module, with supervision provided by the employer, the training provider, or both.

# TOOLS AND TEMPLATES



# AN EXAMPLE OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT AVAILABLE IN NSW

NB. This support was available in November 2021 but may have changed since this time. Available support may be different in other states and territories, so check with your Education and Training Department or local training provider.

<b>Jobtrainer</b>	is a jointly funded initiative of the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments. If you are aged 17-24 or looking for work, you may be able to study a free or low-fee course through JobTrainer.
<b>Smart &amp; Skilled</b>	is a government reform of the NSW vocational education and training system. It provides eligible students with an entitlement to government subsidised training up to and including Certificate III level courses. * Smart & Skilled also may cover part qualifications in collaborations with your workplace.
<b>Adult Community Education (ACE)</b>	is granted to approved ACE Providers to deliver training and support that cannot be effectively addressed through Smart and Skilled programs. The ACE Program provides funding towards training up to and including Certificate III level. This funding will also offer support to small business owners and their staff by providing fully subsidised accredited and non-accredited training in targeted courses in information technology, business services or foundation skills. This category is referred to as Targeted Skills for Small Business (TSB).
<b>VET Student Loans (VSL)</b>	is a program which assists eligible students to pay tuition fees for approved higher-level (diploma and above) vocational education and training (VET) courses, when studying at VET Student Loans approved course providers. The program is designed to provide financial support to students undertaking higher level training in courses that address workplace and industry needs, creating better opportunities for employment. <a href="https://www.dese.gov.au/skills-and-training/help-cost-training">https://www.dese.gov.au/skills-and-training/help-cost-training</a>
<b>Skills and Training Incentive</b>	helps mature age Australians to build and obtain new skills and keep working longer. You can get up to \$2200 to fund your skills development. <a href="https://www.dese.gov.au/skills-and-training/help-cost-training">https://www.dese.gov.au/skills-and-training/help-cost-training</a>
<b>Commonwealth Scholarships Program for Young Australians</b>	provides scholarships of up to \$13,000 for young Australians from select regions to undertake an eligible VET qualification at the following levels: Certificate III, Certificate IV, Diploma, Advanced Diploma The scholarships target occupations identified in projected growth industries and in-demand occupations within each region. If eligible for a scholarship, you can receive up to \$5,000 per year for up to two years of study. You can also receive up to an additional \$3,000 for completing a 20-day paid internship. Host Employers can receive \$1,500 per intern hosted. <a href="https://www.dese.gov.au/skills-and-training/help-cost-training">https://www.dese.gov.au/skills-and-training/help-cost-training</a>
<b>Financial support</b>	is for apprentices. As an apprentice you may be eligible for financial assistance to help with the cost of undertaking an apprenticeship. Find out more about: Additional Identified Skills Shortage Payment, Trade Support Loans, Living Away from Home Allowance, Support for apprentices with disability. <a href="https://www.dese.gov.au/skills-and-training/help-cost-training">https://www.dese.gov.au/skills-and-training/help-cost-training</a>
<b>Scholarships</b>	for young Australians. You could receive up to \$5000 a year to get a vocational education and training (VET) qualification and \$3000 to complete an internship. <a href="https://www.dese.gov.au/skills-and-training/help-cost-training">https://www.dese.gov.au/skills-and-training/help-cost-training</a>



# CONSIDERING YOUR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT NEEDS: A BACKGROUND BRIEF

Training providers will be able to give you more comprehensive information and advice if you've already considered what you want. Before making contact, consider the following questions.

<p><b>1. What are your overall goals around skills, training and workforce development?</b></p>	
<p><b>2. What skill outcomes are you looking for? (e.g. Do you have role descriptions of the jobs you want staff trained for? What do 'job ready' employees look like to you?)</b></p>	
<p><b>3. Are there specific problems to solve or gaps to fill? In what timeframe?</b></p>	
<p><b>4. What outcomes do you need? (e.g. nationally recognised qualifications; discrete skills just for your organisation; to meet compliance requirements?)</b></p>	
<p><b>5. Who needs to be trained? (e.g. number of employees; roles; personal characteristics like age, educational backgrounds, existing skills and experience; working arrangements – full time/part time/casual, shift-work)</b></p>	
<p><b>6. How will you support your employees to manage working and learning?</b></p>	
<p><b>7. What investment will you make? (e.g. in time, dollars, staff replacement, supervision in the workplace)</b></p>	
<p><b>8. Will you need support from outside your organisation?</b></p>	



# FINDING THE RIGHT TRAINING PROVIDER: QUESTIONS TO ASK

## Questions for shortlisting training providers

Name of training provider:	
What training options are available to meet our needs? (the brief you wrote in Step 2 will help here)	
What costs are involved?	
Can training be delivered to suit us? (e.g. online, at our workplace, at a campus, outside of business hours)	
What support will be provided to help our employees (or students) succeed?	



### Questions for interviewing training providers

<b>Name of training provider:</b>	
<b>Organisational alignment</b>	
What will you do to understand our industry, organisation and needs? (Can they speak our language?)	
What are your organisation's values? (Do they align with ours?)	
What other aspects of workforce development can you help us with (besides delivering training)? For example can you help us to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- better understand our workforce needs?</li> <li>- analyse our training needs and skills profile?</li> <li>- find suitable employees?</li> <li>- understand the training system?</li> </ul>	
How do we agree and articulate what we'll do together and what roles and obligations we each have?	
<b>Costs and funding</b>	
What costs are involved? (Is this clear and transparent? What can be negotiated?)	
Can you help us identify what subsidies or funding sources are available to us?	
<b>Training delivery</b>	
How will training be delivered? How will employees be assessed?	
Who will we work with? Do they have current experience in our industry? What happens if your staff members change?	
Can training be customised to suit us and our employees? Can we take things out or add things in?	
Will the training be contextualised to our workplace?	
How long will the training take?	
What will you require of us?	
<b>Quality</b>	
What quality control processes do you have in place? Have you been audited by relevant regulator/s recently?	
Are testimonials available from other employers or students?	
Are you a member of any industry bodies, or quality schemes?	



# CONDUCTING CHECKS ON REGISTERED TRAINING ORGANISATIONS USING [WWW.TRAINING.GOV.AU](http://WWW.TRAINING.GOV.AU)

This website contains the National Register of VET, which is the official Australian Government register for nationally recognised training and Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). It can help you to find out important information about the RTO.

## Step 1

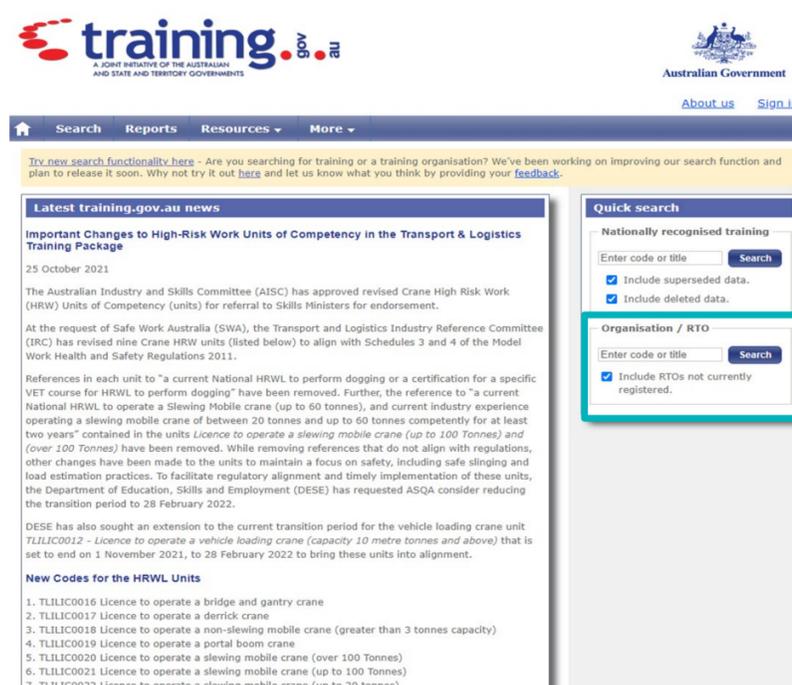
Go to [www.training.gov.au](http://www.training.gov.au) and select the National Register of VET



The National Register of VET contains information about RTOs, what they can deliver and any regulatory decisions against them.

## Step 2

Type the name of the RTO into the search bar.



To find out information about an RTO, put their name or RTO code in this area. The RTO code is usually located on RTO marketing materials or website e.g. RTO999999

**Step 3**

Look at the ‘Scope’ tab to find information about what qualifications and units of competency the RTO is registered to deliver.

Look at the ‘Regulatory Decision Information’ tab to see if there is any regulatory action being taken against the RTO.

Look at the ‘Registration’ tab to find out how long they have been an RTO. Also, check their ‘Status’ to ensure it is current.

Look at the ‘Contacts’ tab for details of key personnel of the RTO.

**0000-College (name) PTY LTD**  
 Status: **Current** 1  
 Registration Manager: **Australian Skills Quality Authority**

Summary	Registration	Contacts	Address	Scope	Regulatory Decisions	Delivery
Summary <span style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">2</span> <span style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">3</span> <span style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">4</span> <span style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">5</span> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;">                         Code: 0000                          Legal Name: College (name) PTY LTD                          Business Names: A College &amp; Training Business                          Status: <b>Current</b>                          ABN: 000 000 000                          ACN: 000 000 000                          RTO Type: Private or Government or Not-For-Profit or Enterprise RTO                     </div>						

1. Status should be Current
2. The Registration tab shows when they first became an RTO
3. The Contacts tab has details of key personnel of the RTO
4. Under the Scope tab you can find out about training the RTO may deliver (note though that although a course may be ‘on scope’, the RTO may not currently deliver it)
5. Under the Regulatory Decision Information tab you can find out about any regulatory action being taken against the RTO

# A CHECKLIST FOR ESTABLISHING A RELATIONSHIP WITH A TRAINING PROVIDER

Working through the following steps will help to lay a foundation for an effective relationship between you and the training provider.

Steps to take	Discussed and resolved?
<b>1. Clarify outcomes and details of training</b>	
What skills and knowledge will participants gain?	
What training will be delivered? (e.g. training content, number of hours)	
How and where will delivery and assessment take place?	
Can we have a detailed timeline for training delivery and reporting?	
What costs and charges will we have to pay and when?	
<b>2. Define the roles and responsibilities</b>	
How often will trainers visit employees or students in the workplace?	
How often will the provider communicate with your employees? What method will they use?	
What support will the training provider/trainer give to employees or students who are struggling?	
What is expected of employees or students during training and how will you and the training provider/trainer ensure they understand this?	
How much time off will you give employees for training and study?	
What kinds of work experiences will you provide to support their training?	
How will you supervise and mentor employees in the workplace?	
Who will be the workplace supervisor, and do they need training to do this?	
What support will you give to help employees, if needed?	



Steps to take	Discussed and resolved?
<b>3. Establish ground rules for communicating and resolving conflict</b>	
How and how often will you communicate? (e.g. regular meeting times, or regular email updates on employee progress)	
What kinds of issues would you like to be told about and how?	
What are the channels of communication and respective points of contact?	
Are there any potential risk factors or barriers to successful outcomes?	
What is the process for resolving problems?	
<b>4. Formalise the agreement</b>	
Will you put your agreement in writing? (e.g. through an MOU or partnership agreement)	



# TRAINING PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

## Training Partnership Agreement between

\_\_\_\_\_

**(full name RTO)**

and

\_\_\_\_\_

**(full name employer)**

## Purpose of the training agreement

For example:

This Agreement specifies the conditions and operating arrangements for the delivery of vocational education and training by \_\_\_\_\_ (full name RTO). Both parties agree to work in partnership to maintain the quality of training delivery and assessment.

## Guiding principles

For example:

Both parties acknowledge that this Agreement will be guided by a commitment to quality education and training delivery and assessment practices that lead to successful and beneficial outcomes for learners and employers. Both parties will communicate constructively to continuously review and improve the program and to address any issues promptly and in a mutually satisfactory way.

## Relationship between the parties

For example:

The relationship will be one of cooperative mutual support. A high level of integrity and mutual regard shall govern the relationship. The Agreement is binding only on the basis of this integrity and mutual respect and does not represent a legally binding commitment.

## Communication

For example:

The parties agree to communicate openly and regularly about training and student progress. At a minimum, the RTO will report on student progress every \_\_\_\_ weeks by \_\_\_\_\_ (method). The employer agrees to notify the RTO of any matter that may affect student progress.

The parties will meet every \_\_\_\_\_ to discuss and review the progress of training.

## Conflict resolution

For example:

Any conflicts or disputes which cannot be resolved through discussion shall be set down in writing and submitted to the other parties. Within seven days of receipt of such notice, the key personnel from both parties will meet to:

- review and resolve the matter; or
- resolve that the matter requires further investigation and instigate that investigation, or
- refer the matter to a relevant third party to assist in resolution, within 30 days of the initial complaint.

## Intended outcomes of training

A broad description of the intended outcomes of training and the skills and knowledge participants will gain. Further details can be provided in Schedule 3.

## Services to be provided

This section includes details of the training to be delivered by the RTO, such as:

- amount of training
- who will deliver training
- how and where delivery and assessment will be conducted.



## USEFUL CONTACTS & RESOURCES

### Roles and responsibilities

#### RTO

\_\_\_\_\_ (RTO name)

commits to:

For example:

- Visiting learners in the workplace \_\_\_\_\_ times per month.
- Providing reports on students' progress (give further detail if necessary) every \_\_\_\_\_ week/s.
- Supporting students by \_\_\_\_\_ at the very least. If required, students will also have access to \_\_\_\_\_.
- Notifying \_\_\_\_\_ (employer) if (provide details of events/situations which the employer would like to be notified of).

#### Employer

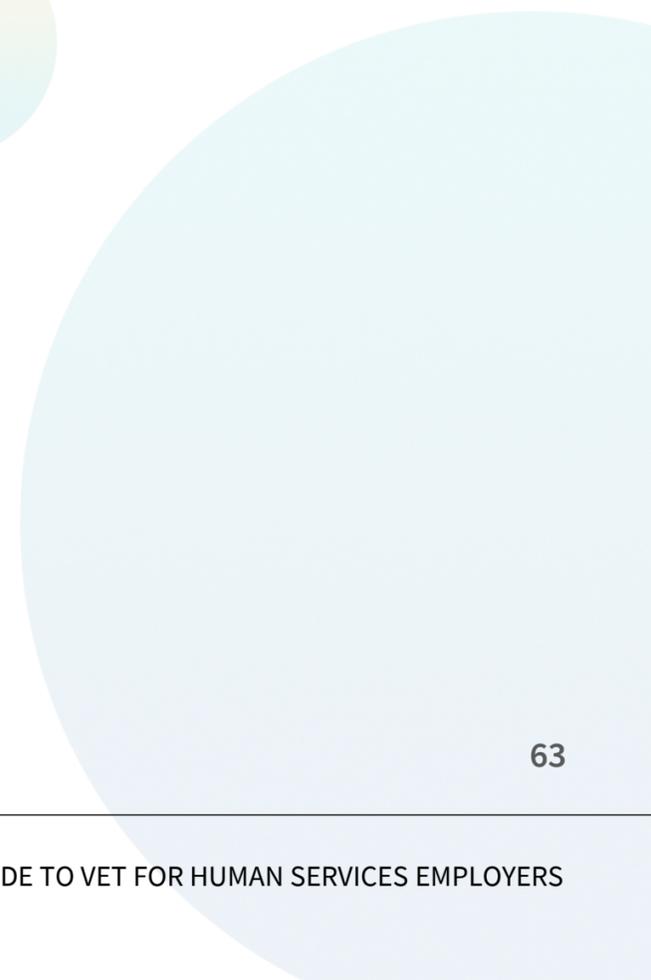
\_\_\_\_\_ (Employer name) commits to:

For example:

- Giving learners \_\_\_\_\_ (amount of time off) each \_\_\_\_\_ (nominate a period) for the purposes of training and study.
- Providing relevant work experience aligned to training, including but not limited to, \_\_\_\_\_.
- Supervising and mentoring learners in the workplace by \_\_\_\_\_ (detail how this will be done and who will be involved).
- Supporting learners by offering \_\_\_\_\_.

### Costs and charges

Detail all costs and charges.



**Schedule 1: Key reporting dates**

Activity	Date
Delivery start	
Delivery completion	
Results finalised	

**Schedule 2: Key contacts**

Details of key contact people in each organisation.

**Schedule 3:  
Details of delivery arrangements**

NTIS code	Qualification name	RTO code	Training package
Full qualification (Y/N?) <i>If yes over what period will the qualification be delivered? (e.g. 1 year/ 2 years)</i>			

NTIS code	RTO code	Units of competency



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This guide was designed on the basis of extensive consultation with employers across the human services, along with other industry experts and representatives of RTOs.

The HSSO would like to thank all those who contributed their experience and insights to inform development of the guide and provide feedback along the way, as well as to those who gave their time to be the subject of case studies. These contributions are highly valued.

The Human Services Skills Organisation Pilot is funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment through the Delivering Skills for Today and Tomorrow program.

