



**ACT**  
Government

# What We Heard Report

## Skilled to Succeed Implementation

Caring Industry Round Table

29 November 2022

## Consultation purpose

Launched in 2022, *Skilled to Succeed* is the ACT Government's skills and workforce agenda that strives to ensure Canberrans have the right skills for in-demand jobs now and into the future. This agenda focuses on four priorities:

- Delivering skills inclusively to provide all Canberrans with a foundation for lifelong learning
- Build a more responsive, flexible, and future-focussed skills system
- Assisting employers to build, attract and retain the right workforce
- Strengthening skills sector foundations

To deliver this agenda, the ACT Government is developing Industry Plans for the Care, Technology, Construction, Experience, and Renewables and Sustainability sectors. These Plans will identify actions that both government and industry can take to ensure that the training and skills system supports Canberra's future workforce.

To underpin the development of these plans, the ACT Government has been hosting roundtables with industry stakeholders to hear their views on how the skills sector can support the growth of their industry and develop the workforce that they need going into the future.

On 29 November 2022, the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate hosted an ACT Caring Industry Roundtable with providers, industry associations, Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and advocacy groups. The Caring Industry is defined as residential care services and social assistance service. This includes aged care, childcare, and other support and does not include general hospital, medical, and other health services.

Yellow Edge, a Canberra-based leadership and performance development company was engaged by the ACT Government to facilitate the Roundtable and to prepare the following Listening Report. The views recorded in this report were captured from participants on the day. A list of those invited to the Roundtable is provided at [Attachment C](#).

## What we heard

Participants from the caring industry engaged in a discussion on the opportunities and challenges facing the industry and on ideas to address the issues.

Four key themes emerged over the course of the discussion. They included:

1. Information asymmetry
2. Workforce attraction and retention
3. Refining VET offerings and practices
4. VET funding

These themes are interconnected, and together provide a picture of what the industry is currently experiencing as well as opportunities for improvement in the future. The actions and solutions proposed in the report have been suggested by Roundtable participants.

# What are the opportunities and challenges facing the caring workforce now and into the future?

## Theme 1: Information asymmetry

- Participants recommended an open dialogue between caring industry, key stakeholders and the community more broadly about what knowledge, skills, and experiences it requires of its current and future workforce.
- Participants felt that individuals entering the caring workforce sometimes had unclear or unrealistic expectations regarding the nature and requirements of the work, including their earning capacity, work hours and training and development requirements. There was a concern that a lack of information and unclear expectations may lead to higher turnover rates in the industry.
- Increased awareness of care providers and the industry more broadly of the training programs and units of competency currently on offer so they can encourage staff or trainees to select units, programs and qualifications which will benefit them and their respective organisations.
- Participants recommended industry talk to young people in high school about the caring profession, including the variety of careers and professional pathways on offer. Participants recommended engagement with school career advisors and opportunities for meaningful discussions with students about the personal qualities and experiences the industry is seeking.

## Theme 2: Workforce attraction and retention.

- The increasing demand for quality, accessible childcare, paired with high casual staff turnover rates and a shortage of qualified staff, places a high level of stress on the care industry. It is therefore important to address this while identifying the barriers to long-term staff retention and develop strategies to hold onto staff for longer.
- Many young people are entering the caring workforce looking for a career with purpose and meaning. The challenge for the industry is that while there may be meaning in the work they do, there is no clear long-term career path or opportunity to grow professionally.
- It is recommended industry provide individuals and their employees with tools and training to help them progress their careers. Career progression and professional development opportunities, such as bachelor's degree scholarships, can help address the issue of staff turnover rates.
- The high demand for quality, accessible early childcare and education appears likely to continue. There is, however, a high turnover of qualified childcare educators, particularly in the long day care and outside school hours care (OSHC) settings, given the casualised nature of the workforce and relatively low remuneration. Ideas for improving workplace attraction and retention include offering staff other roles within the school setting and better training opportunities, including traineeship programs, and ensuring backfilling when staff take up these opportunities.
- Some participants suggested some school-based training processes, including the Australian School-based Apprenticeships (ASbAs), could be refined, including improving the way potential trainees are screened. More information from government on key contacts and the processes adopted within schools and colleges would be helpful.

- Learners and many in the workforce are experiencing challenges with securing affordable housing and impacts from the high cost of living.

### Theme 3: Refining VET offerings and practices.

- Participants discussed the role of Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) in providing learners with all the basic training needed to enter and progress their careers within the care industry. It was also felt RTOs had a responsibility to help learners develop realistic expectations of the care industry.
- Participants recognised there was variation in the training products delivered by different organisations, covering different skills sets and training learners to a different standard. For example:
  - Mental health training is not provided as part of the Aged Care Certificate III, despite it being viewed as an important competency. Staff could be enrolled in standalone units including undergoing training in working with people with schizophrenia and PTSD.
  - Customer service skills are increasingly viewed as important skills for staff in the industry, however it is not emphasised enough in training programs.
  - Participants reported inconsistencies between RTOs in the number of practical hours trainees were required to do as part of their courses, some suggesting that more regular ASQA auditing could improve quality across RTOs.
  - Participants also observed differences and delays in the timing of training package development.
- Suggestions for improving consistency between RTOs included instituting some form of monitoring process, e.g., periodic audits, to help with continuous improvement.
- The processes of recognising prior learning (RPL) was not clear to providers either. For example, what training would be necessary to support a ‘cleaner to carer’ pathway? There is a disconnect between industry and the VET sector in relation to re-skilling and up-skilling.
- Participants explored potential changes to caring roles in the future, including “higher level” relationship facilitators. Training for care roles would place a strong onus on facilitating individual and collective wellbeing; building relationships within and outside the care setting; and conversational skills which nurture connection and potential.

### Theme 4: VET funding

- A greater level of cooperation and coordination between the ACT Government, industry, and the training organisations, would prove beneficial in terms of resourcing. Pairing a refined five-year strategic plan with sufficient government funding could lead to an increase in workforce supply for the care industry.
- Participants believed greater funding for RTOs could address many of the challenges facing the industry and lead to a better VET programme for learners, their employers and the industry and thus lowering turnover rates.
- Care providers often ask themselves whether they have sufficient resources to onboard and train new staff. For example, there are occasions when home and community care providers hire several staff at once. They don’t have the available staff or internal resources (including the ability to backfill their roles) to induct and onboard these staff members to the sector and in this case, to their clients’ homes.

## What actions can industry stakeholders take towards greater success in the next 10 years?

Government	Industry
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring and auditing compliance.</li> <li>• Recognition of industry funding challenges.</li> <li>• Encouragement and support of industry framework redesign in line with relevant legislation (i.e., aged care, disability care, childcare).</li> <li>• Ensuring that students have the basic legal requirements when they enter the workforce (i.e., WWVP card).</li> <li>• Funding of free VET training courses.</li> <li>• Provide support for vulnerable participants (i.e., disability, lived experience).</li> <li>• The government has a role in facilitating some of the connections between RTOs, employers, and industry bodies - perhaps a regular program of dialogue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fulfil needs for entry-level workers.</li> <li>• Provide pathways for succession planning, upskilling, and specialised skill development.</li> <li>• Provide scholarships to university.</li> <li>• Develop and support clear career pathways.</li> <li>• The setting of reasonable hours or wages.</li> <li>• Open dialogue with key stakeholders around industry expectations.</li> <li>• Collaboration with government and skills sector to train, attract and retain employees.</li> </ul>
RTO (Training Organisations)	Learners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration with industry to better understand industry expectations and required skill sets.</li> <li>• Support from government for work placements.</li> <li>• Recruit more industry specialists in apprenticeship centres.</li> <li>• Deliver I.T. training for students.</li> <li>• ASQA auditing of training providers to ensure consistency.</li> <li>• Availability of industry specialists for RTOs (i.e., marking specialists)</li> <li>• Recognition of existing skills and learning is a standardised feature of training. There are structured tools and guidelines for RPL.</li> <li>• Refine customer service and relationship skills training (120 hours of training is insufficient).</li> <li>• Ensuring that student placements are spread out to be relevant to coursework.</li> <li>• Consistency in training delivery i.e., modes skill sets, and methods.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of the best fit (industry fit rather than “easy” fit)</li> <li>• Clear and reasonable expectations of the industry, their employer, and their role/entitlements.</li> <li>• Have an openness to learning and building a career within the sector.</li> <li>• Learners providing feedback to their RTOs.</li> </ul>

## What does success look like for the industry?

Participants identified the following desired outcomes for the industry.

- Staff stay in the caring industry for longer.
- The reputation of the caring industry grows.
- The caring workforce feels confident, capable, and safe.
- There is greater alignment and consistency in the qualifications being provided by various RTOs.
- There are more migration pathways to bring workers into the ACT / Australia.
- There are strong relationships across the industry i.e., across Government, industry providers, RTOs etc.

## Mentimeter crowd-sourcing tool

### What do you believe are the priorities for action?

Collaboration and communication between all stakeholders

Develop framework for improvement

More consultation about areas of concern for all stakeholders

Finding the right people for the right jobs, attracting and keeping candidates to the industry

Networking opportunities facilitated by government are always helpful

Industry engaging in traineeships

Establish network of collaboration across the sectors

This morning itself was helpful as opportunities to network and share ideas are key. Government facilitation can be very helpful.

Network and inclusive project focus

VET and industry network to start content and expectation discussion

Staff retention, client satisfaction, upskilling for staff, consistent quality training

### Is there anything we discussed today you'd like to expand on?

Mentimeter

No

Traineeship development in the ACT

## Next steps

The insights from this roundtable will inform the development of a Caring Industry action plan. The ACT Government will stay connected with stakeholders as it progresses the development of the action plan. The plan is expected to be released in 2023.

If you or others from your organisation would like to provide a further submission, please write to [skills@act.gov.au](mailto:skills@act.gov.au) by **Tuesday 28 February 2023**. All input is greatly valued, and we thank you for your participation in this forum.

# Attachments

## Attachment A. Key slides from discussion paper referenced in session

### Industry Overview

**11,051\*** Total number employed in the caring industry in 2021

**Growth in Employment**  
 58% Last 10yrs  
 32% Last 5yrs  
 22% Avg 5yrs (All industries)

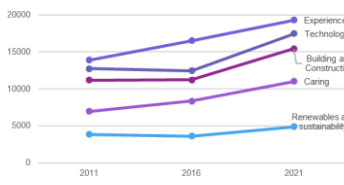
**Largest Growing Occupations**

- Aged Care and Disability Carers
- Nursing Support and Personal Care Workers
- Welfare Support Workers

Source: ABS census 2021

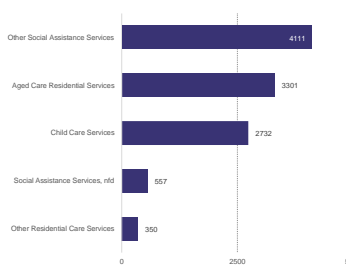
\*The caring industry is defined as residential care services and social assistance service. Hospital, medical and other health services are not included in the definition.

#### Employment by industry in the ACT

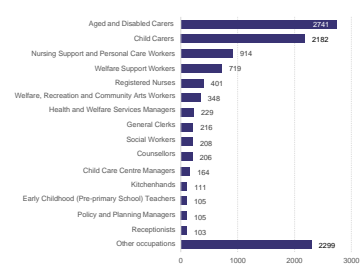


#### Caring Industry - Employment Snapshot (2021 census)

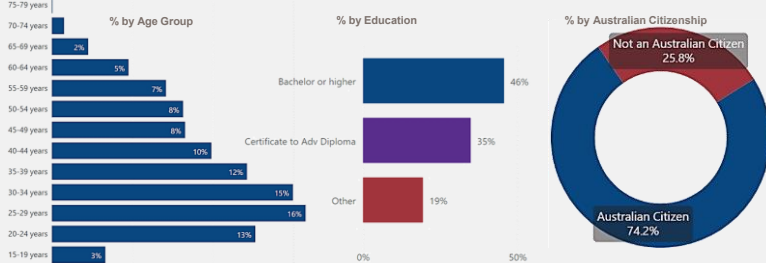
##### Employment by industry



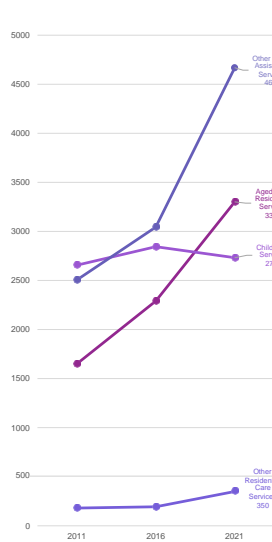
##### Employment by occupation



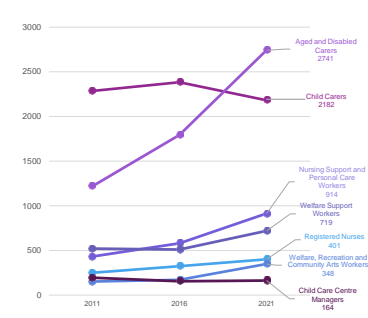
#### Employment characteristics



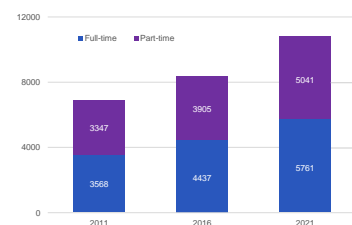
#### Employment by top sub-industries



#### Employment by top occupations



#### Employment by type



### Industry snapshot

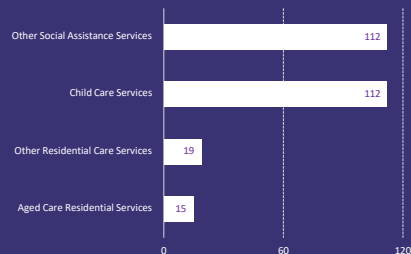
**258**

Total number of businesses in the caring industry in 2021

#### Contribution to ACT economy

**4.4%** of total employment

#### Number of business by sub-industry



Source: ABS 2021



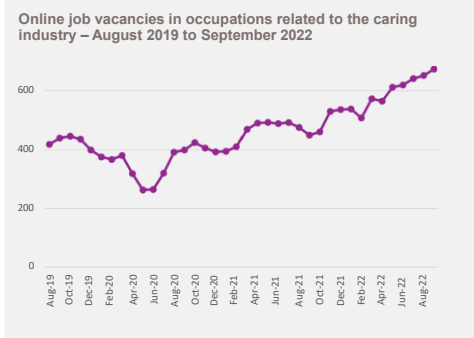
# Online Vacancies

## September 2022

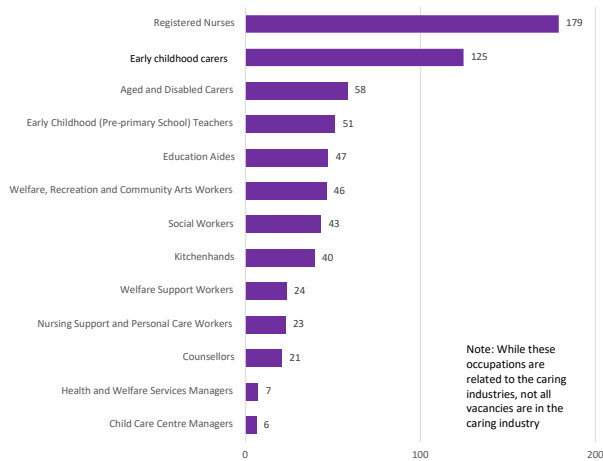
**671** Online job vacancies in occupations related to the caring industry

**8,155** Total online job vacancies in all occupations in the ACT

Source: Internet Vacancy Index (NSC, October 2022)



Online job vacancies by occupations related to the caring industry - September 2022

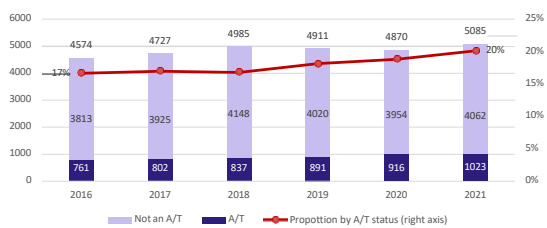


Note: While these occupations are related to the caring industries, not all vacancies are in the caring industry

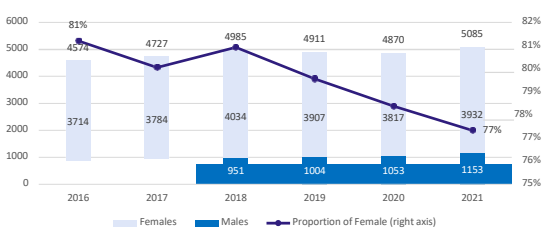
Source: Internet Vacancy Index (NSC, October 2022)

The Internet Vacancy Index (IVI) is a monthly data series measuring online job advertisements, compiled by the National Skills Commission (NSC). IVI data count job advertisements newly lodged on the SEEK, CareerOne and Australian JobSearch online job boards during the reference month.

Government Funded Student Enrolment by apprentices and trainees (A/T) status

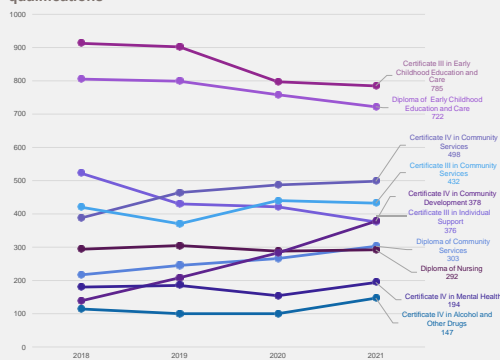


Government Funded Student Enrolment by gender



Source: VOCSTATS (NCVER, 2022)

Student Commencement (Apprentices and Trainees) by top 10 qualifications



Source: AVETARS

Student Completion by top 5 qualifications

Qualifications	4 year complete
Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care	50%
Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care	43%
Diploma of Community Services	39%
Certificate III in Individual Support	52%
Certificate IV in Mental Health	45%

\*students who successfully completed the course as a percentage of students that commenced in 2018

# Megatrends



## Impactful technology

Technological advances are changing the renewable industry. Increasing use of artificial intelligence to improve efficiency and assure quality. Technological advancement and connectivity are empowering individuals across the world as teleworking, telehealth, online shopping and digital currencies has become popular.



## Urbanisation and demographic change

The world is experiencing rapid and massive demographic change, such as an ageing workforce, which adds a new challenge for businesses.



## Climate and resource security

The megatrend of climate and resource security describe the growing pressure on critical resources especially food and clean water scarcity. This drives the need for climate resilient infrastructure and the growing demand for environmentally sustainable, climate-ready and zero emissions approaches.



## Demand for work-life balance

Work-life balance is of increasing importance to the workforce. Trends such as hybrid working has shifted the nature of work in the post-pandemic workplace.



## Focus on cleaner and greener solutions

This trend emphasises on solutions to resource constraints through cleaner and greener means driven by population growth, industrialisation and urbanisation. The renewables sector is growing and will contribute to the establishment of new industries and occupations.

## Attachment B. Roundtable scenarios

### Scenario 1

Australia's ageing population, increasing numbers of older Australians requiring care and increasing demand for community care contribute to skills shortages. Consistency and quality of care being provided have also been under the spotlight. Relatively low remuneration and perceived low status of caring roles, the physical, emotional, and psychological demands of caring work also impact numbers seeking to enter the field.

Ideas to remedy this challenge include reframing and elevating the traditional caring role towards the building of relationships and facilitating connections, and psychosocial support. This could broaden the talent pool to include others who might be attracted to such roles and responsibilities.

- How might the specialised training with a focus on delivering well-being outcomes, be best delivered, for new entrants to the industry and those currently employed?
- What other approaches would support increased interest in joining the industry and the building of a diverse workforce?

### Scenario 2

Application of new technologies in health care and the caring industry more generally is expanding rapidly and the trend is likely to continue. Examples include remote monitoring and monitoring devices, digital tools allowing clients to express their timing and other preferences, augmented reality and robotics technology for health and wellbeing exercises and more efficient data recording and management.

There are also emerging skills development digital tools, where for example workers have access to flexible, light, mobile learning platforms that allow the curation of material, plug-in apps, and the linking of external learning resources. New apps will enable just-in-time micro-learning as well as deep content learning, active experiential reflection, group coaching and peer-to-peer learning and support.

- How can employers and training providers, in all parts of the caring industry, respond quickly to these sorts of emerging opportunities?
- What types of training delivery would best support skills in using new technology applications, for new entrants to the industry and those currently employed? What does the data tell us about future changes and shifts in demand for training skills areas and approaches to learning?
- How can emerging skills needs be better anticipated rather than playing catch up? E.g., Emerging technologies, new government priorities/programs or changes in consumer demand.

### Scenario 3

The increasing demand for quality, accessible early childhood care and education appears likely to continue. There is a high turnover of staff, particularly in long day care and OSHC settings with a relatively casualised workforce and relatively low remuneration. Ideas for improving retention levels, as well as recruitment performance, include offering staff other roles beyond for example the OSHC, within the school and better training including traineeships.

- What do families in the ACT want from early childhood care now and in the future?
- What training offerings and approaches or other measures would result in longer-term retention of staff?
- What scope is there to extend the role of carer staff in school settings to enhance the appeal for existing staff and to those considering entry into the industry?
- What forms of training would suit developing skills in broader roles

### Scenario 4.

Positive and inclusive organisation cultures and flexibility in employment arrangements now feature highly across industries generally as factors in achieving high levels of staff satisfaction, well-being, productivity, and retention. Flexible arrangements in training participation and employment are acknowledged as factors to achieve better accessibility and greater diversity in the workforce. The desire by employees for flexibility in where, how, and when they work has become better recognised as a result of people's experience of COVID-related disruptions in the last few years.

- How well does the system work for people who need flexibility in when and how they participate in training and education and over what period they are able to complete their studies?
- Do arrangements for upskilling current staff properly recognise prior learning?
- How can we make training and employment more accessible to those in special circumstances including access to permanent, casual, and part-time arrangements?
- What barriers exist to participation? What can employers do to ensure the culture in their organisation supports well-being and inclusiveness?

## Attachment C. Roundtable attendees

<b>Organisation</b>
Goodwin Residential Aged Care
Capital Region Community Services
RSL LifeCare At Home
Australian Training Company Limited
Key 2 Learning
ACT Government officials from Economic Development

## Attachment D. Roundtable notes

↳ Not training  
Specialised won't fix the problem

- 1. Can't afford because of time + resources.
  - ↳ cost of backfilling
- 2. Not meeting legal requirements (WVVP card) (Medications training)
- Resources to induct.
  - ↳ Clients choices
- 3. High turnover in home + community
  - ↳ wages
- 4. Pathways → opportunities for progression

1. Can be a challenge to support wellbeing.  
Forming attachments => loss.  
Mental health first aid (also included)

2. Specialised training & areas of interest supported in career progression.  
Traineeships vs. casual.

③ Mental health training is a gap in Cost III

- standalone units of competencies
  - eg mental health aged care
  - eg schizophrenia, PTSD
- patients and families
  - ↳ Can direct mental health issues towards all staff
- customer service & communication

Language barriers (separate barrier) - documentation (not IT)

① VET sector can include more in the context of progress notes.
 

- ↳ VET sector needs to understand
  - progress notes
  - behavior incident report

Connection of RTO's + industry  
who to contact?
 

- ↳ + Apprenticeship centre
- ↳ communication from government to RTO's + industry
- ↳ Delay in Training package development
- ↳ Inconsistency (Audits!)

\* Taking on trainees takes a back seat as organisations are focused on dealing with multiple priorities

② IDEA: Initiated for work placement

- ↳ see if both trainee/employee are suitable, & then present with traineeship (usually talk prior in mind)
- ↳ ATTRACT 'RIGHT' CANDIDATES'
- ↳ ASBA - information sessions all being - inhibit screening
- ↳ Information from government about school/college contacts for ASBA's

① Barrier => cost
 

- ↳ training in IT + equipment
- ↳ ageing workforce

 However this becomes a cyclic problem:
 

- ↳ no staff
- ↳ no time for trainees
- ↳ increasing
- ↳ decreasing

③ increase in the technology across industry

\* Clear career pathways based on strengths (ex. communication)

\* RPL → focus on established strengths to facilitate pathways → Contact a RTO

\* e.g. RSL → 'cleaner to career' pathway  
 ↳ what training to support this pathway

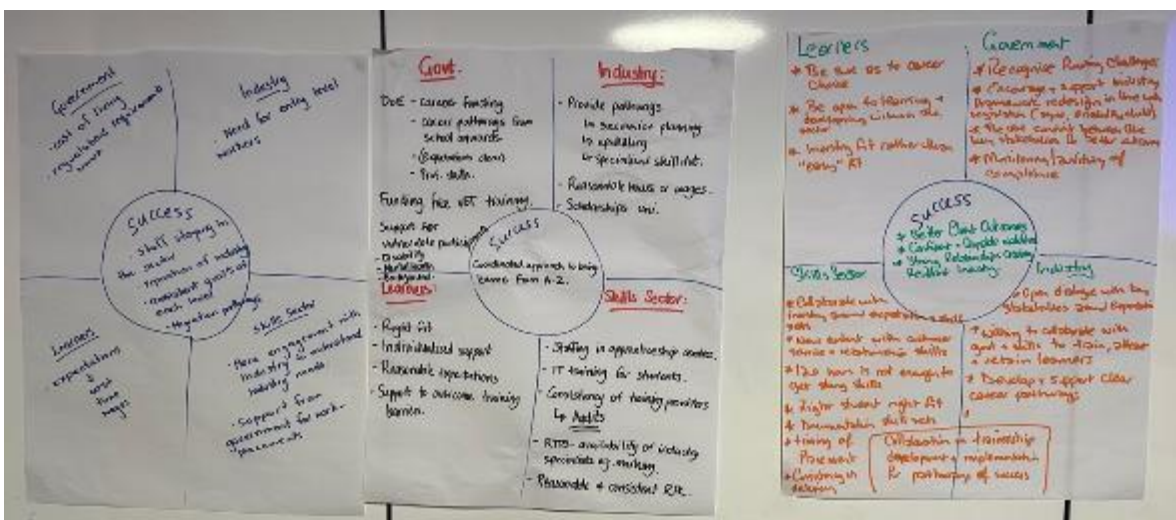
⊗ ↑ retention through attracting the right people

↳ re-skilling/up-skilling

↳ what are the requirements from industry?

- currently not done well by VET sector
- sp disconnect between VET & industry

1. Flexible care arrangements  
 Quality education & care  
 Low staff turnover  
 Quality resources & environments  
 Affordability
2. Accurate expectations of the role  
 Ongoing training & development - personalised  
 Further quals.  
 "Perks" - parking, salary packaging  
 Hours - can be problematic
3. Accurate expectations at beginning  
 Change career/life opportunities ⇒ potential
4. Prof. skills.



Peak bodies role?

- Govt
- support to enable work placement
  - cost of being regulated - VET work must be enforced
  - careers funding to get people in free VET
  - industry monitor/audit compliance

Industry about outcomes  
 confidence in people, workforce  
 strong relationships & resilient industry

- Success
- Staff stay
  - ↑ industry reputation (people feel comfortable & safe)
  - consistency qualifications
  - migration pathways
  - bring learners from A to Z

Collaboration between all for success

- Industry
- provide pathways
  - curriculum planning
  - upskilling
  - specialised development
  - scholarships in this
  - open dialogue of gov & VET sector of what's needed
  - willing to collaborate w/ VET to attract trainees return

- Learners
- school pathway of career advisers
  - right fit for training
  - individualised support for learners overcome training barriers
  - give focus on RTOs

- Skills Sector
- more engaged w/ industry in apprenticeship centres
  - RTOs not consistent
  - new context of relationship customer service
  - workforce + availability industry specialists
  - ensure consistency between courses
  - ASAA
  - right student for right training
- (challenge: lack of consistency in quality + speed/responsiveness of ATOs)
- ASAA