



ACT
Government

What We Heard Report

Skilled to Succeed Implementation

Training Organisations Round Table

6 December 2022

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

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 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, Building & Construction, Experience, and Renewables & Sustainability sectors. These Plans will identify actions for government, industry, and training providers 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 6 December 2022, the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate hosted an ACT Training Organisation Roundtable with registered and group training organisations. A list of those who attended the Roundtable is provided at [Attachment C](#).

Yellow Edge, a Canberra-based leadership and performance development company was engaged by the ACT Government to facilitate the Roundtable and prepare the following Listening Report. This paper captures the key themes and perspectives of attendees.

What we heard

Participants from a variety of training organisations had a robust discussion on the opportunities and challenges facing the sector and ideas on addressing the issues. The views recorded in this report were captured from participants on the day.

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

1. Attraction and retention of students.
2. Recognition of prior learning.
3. Skills pathways.
4. Greater collaboration with government and industry.

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.

What are the opportunities and challenges for training organisations now and into the future?

Theme 1: Attraction and retention of students

- Participants recognised the challenges with students completing the required minimum number of units for a particular qualification, and then leaving the course or institution. In situations where a student changes their employer mid-traineeship, this is considered to be a cancellation and the student needs to re-enrol again.
- The current funding model is set up to fund qualifications, not short courses or units. Completion rates could be improved through:
 - Language, Literacy, Numeracy and Digital (LLND) skills assessment prior to entering a training contract.
 - Better application, pre-acceptance, and onboarding of students.
 - Stronger support and engagement with learners throughout their course.
 - Clearly articulating the value of completing a course and obtaining the qualification
- There are opportunities to improve the level of cooperation between training organisations and school career advisors. This may help with parents' perception of the industry and the career paths on offer. Stronger cooperation and engagement may also ensure higher standards of LLND training during secondary schooling.
- Participants felt more could be done to assist mature age students, migrants and individuals whose first language is not English, to successfully engage in their courses including:
 - Understanding and utilising technology to support their learning, i.e., tablets, online platforms.
 - Access to time during week/work time to support training to happen.
 - More funded short courses to support LLND skills.
- Participants discussed a variety of ways to attract and make it easier for individuals to engage in learning through training organisations. Ideas included:
 - Strong promotion of training and career options in social media and targeting of specific groups, i.e., women, mature age, to highlight support on offer and to address specific concerns.
 - Short introductory programs / units, i.e. tasters.
 - Open night / days / events to encourage people and their families into training organisations.
 - Scheduling flexible training and delivery options, including offering childcare for out of hours courses and child friendly study sessions.
- Participants recognised the benefits of training organisations working together to create a supportive environment. This was in relation to:
 - Educating employers and industries on registered training organisations (RTOs) and learner needs.
 - Celebrating and sharing good practice between RTOs.
 - Working with community organisations to better meet their training needs.
 - Taking a system approach to supporting migrants.

Theme 2: Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

- There was a strong need for more consistency and transparency when it came to recognising a student's prior learning and skills. Roundtable participants reported RPL processes were costly, varied in quality and raised several difficult challenges for training organisations including:
 - Privacy issues, for example childcare educators uploading of video content associated with their experiences in childcare.
 - Changes to legislation and industry standards impacts upon what individuals can reasonably demonstrate through the RPL process.
 - Use of technology for evidence submission / collection, i.e., video and audio content verses written reports.
 - In some cases, it was easier to recognise the skills / qualifications an individual earned overseas.
- Training Organisations have slightly different approaches to assessing prior learning. Some participants described a disconnect between the training course and the RPL assessors. Participants felt the current system was resource intensive, i.e., one student to one trainer, and often requiring more personalised one-on-one interviews and tailored assessments to better assess skill levels.

Theme 3: Skill Pathways

- The traditional one qualification and a job-for-life is no longer the norm. The younger generations, in particular, want to experience a variety of jobs and pursue multiple careers over their lifetimes. Roundtable participants discussed:
 - Specific skill / competency sets leading to various "optimal" pathways.
 - The concept of "building blocks" for various qualifications.
 - Degree apprenticeships.
 - Expanding the number of electives students can access.
 - Ensuring students develop digital literacy and tech skills whilst studying at training organisations.
 - The role public training providers play in the skills industry.
- Some participants were unclear on what pathways from trade to training looked like, i.e., cross-trade / cross-skilling.
- The Certificate IV in Training and Assessment was deemed by some to be too broad with some participants commenting that the qualification doesn't provide industry specific context or skills.
- The concept of "train and maintain" was discussed by participants. This would require students to sign up to ongoing study post-initial qualification i.e., two competencies or units per annum. This study would enable individuals to cross-train, up-skill and become more agile in their career(s).

Theme 4: Greater collaboration with government and industry

- Some participants recognised the need for enhanced performance monitoring and reporting across the sector to identify non-performing / non-compliant training organisations, whilst others felt there was already a lot of overlap between Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) and the ACT Government in terms of the amount of regulatory and compliance information provided to government.
- Participants discussed seed funding and government grants to engage with industry and employers in relation to the development of innovative training products including micro-credentialing.

- Some participants felt that some training packages were not appropriately aligned with the needs of industry. For example:
 - Courses are not meeting industry or learner needs.
 - Training packages are slow to change.
 - Training organisations and learners were not involved in the important conversations around the design and development of packages.
 - Skills Councils may not be getting the full picture from the industry.
- There were calls for more funding for RTOs. RTOs invest a lot of money, resources, and time into the development of courses. The cost of materials, software products and support admin is extensive. Off-the-shelf products are not always fit for purpose or compliant and will often require a sizable amount of research and customisation. For example, approximately 50-100 hours of staffing time goes into the development of a half-day training program. There were some participants who raised the idea of weighting the amount of funding based on learners needs as some learners need greater resources than others.

What actions can training organisations take towards greater success in the next 10 years?

<p>Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help identify the skills needed by industry. • Provide increased funding to improve LLND skills and access to technology. • Investigate weighted funding model i.e., based on individual student needs. • Reduce the amount of compliance on RTOs and invest in technology to enable regulation. • Encourage variations in training. • Establish a community of practice. • Promote benefits of VET including through the school system. 	<p>Industry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help to identify the skills needed by industry. • Provide feedback on the skills pathways. • Communicate and collaborate more with skills industry.
<p>RTO / GTO (Training Organisations)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help identify and promote skills pathways. • Employ creative approaches to assessment i.e., RPL. • Change unit of competency (UOC) structure to mirror tasks in the workplace. • Communicate and collaborate more with industry. • Collaborate with universities so that students can also seamlessly transition i.e., enrolled nurse to registered nurses, degree apprenticeship etc. 	<p>Learners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide feedback on the skill pathways.

What does success look like for the industry?

Participants identified the following desired outcomes for the industry.

- Industry has better qualified employees.
- The ACT is not experiencing a skills shortage.
- The ACT has a highly skilled labour force.
- There is stronger retention and completion rates.
- Trainers and assessors meet industry standards.
- There is a clear and streamlined process for recognising prior learning.
- The government achieves value for money outcomes.
- RTOs are able to respond to industry/learner needs.
- There is a greater respect for the work of RTOs.
- The relationships between RTOs, learners and employers is strong.
- Learners are skilled, motivated, and employable.

Mentimeter crowd-sourcing tool

Of the issues and actions explored in today's roundtable, what are one or two actions, which could be "quick wins," which you believe would have the most impact on the delivery of ACT's skills and workforce agenda?

What do you believe are the priorities for action?

Better recognition of the importance of RTOs in skills development.

Education of career advisers and parents that there are alternatives to a university education that lead to well paying careers.

What is the biggest economic challenge you face as a training organisation?

Keeping up with technology advancement.

Purchasing multiple devices for student use.

Rising wages without being able to increase prices or funding

Next steps

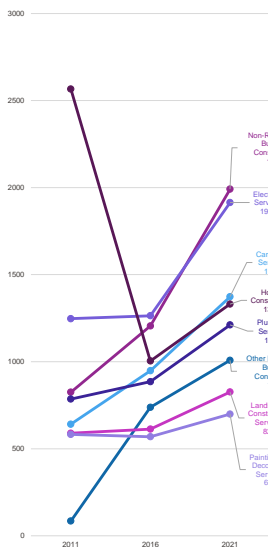
The insights from this roundtable will inform the development of action plans for the building and construction; renewable and sustainability; caring; technology and experience industries. The ACT Government will stay connected with stakeholders as it progresses the development of the action plan. The plan is expected to be released in 2023.

In the meantime, if you or others from your organisation would like to provide a further submission, please write to 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

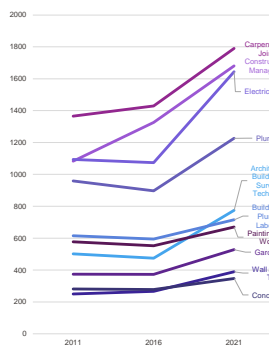
Attachment A. Key slides from discussion paper tabled in the session

Employment by top sub-industries

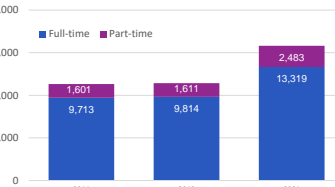


Source: ABS census 2021

Employment by top occupations



Employment by type of employment



Industry snapshot

5,743

Total number of businesses in the Building and Construction industry in 2021, 2,406 of which are employing businesses

Contribution to ACT economy

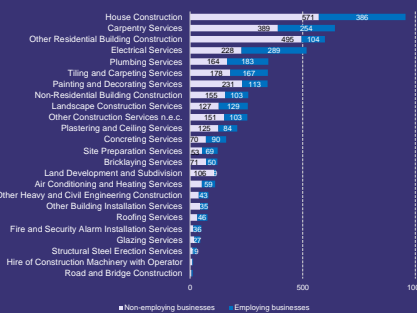
6.8%

of Gross Value Added

6.3%

of total employment

Number of businesses by sub-industry



Source: ABS 2021

Online Vacancies September 2022

1,003

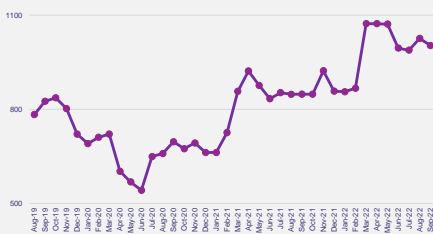
Online job vacancies in occupations related to Building and Construction industry

8,155

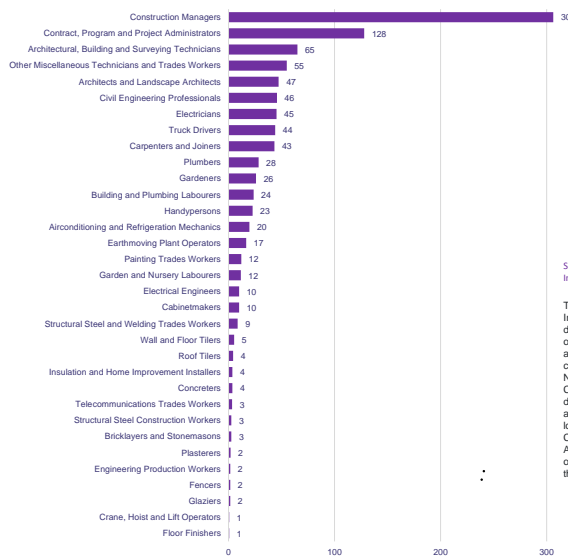
Total online job vacancies in all occupations in the ACT

Source: Internet Vacancy Index (NSC, October 2022)

Online job vacancies in occupations related to the building and construction industry – August 2019 to September 2022



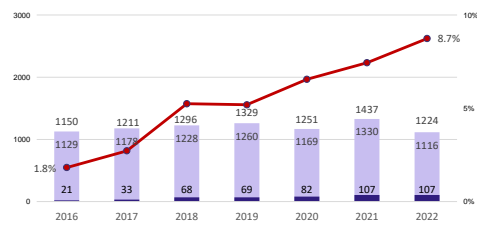
Online job vacancies by occupations related to the building and construction industry - September 2022



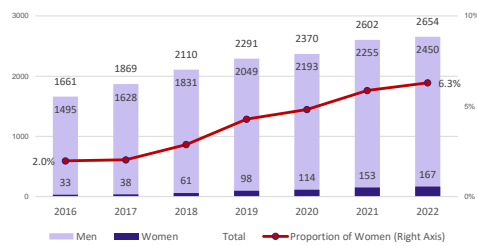
Source: Internet Vacancy Index (NSC, October 2022)

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.

Student Commencement (Apprentices and Trainees) – all qualifications by gender

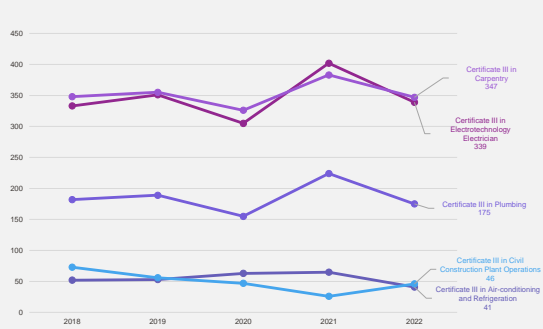


In-training Apprentices and Trainees – all qualifications by gender



Notes:
 (a) In-training apprentices and trainees is the average number of apprentices/trainees who are actively being trained and working in any given year
 (b) 2022 data is year to date (1 January to 25 October)
 (c) Totals include persons who have not identified as either gender. Totals may also be different to the sum of categories due to rounding.

Student Commencement (Apprentices and Trainees) by top 5 qualifications



Student Completion by top 5 qualifications

Qualifications	4 year completion rate*
Certificate III in Civil Construction Plant Operations	49%
Certificate III in Air-conditioning and Refrigeration	42%
Certificate III in Plumbing	41%
Certificate III in Carpentry	40%
Certificate III in Electrotechnology Electrician	39%

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

Source: AVETARS

Active Apprentices & Trainees (A&Ts) October 2022

Qualification	Number of A&T
Certificate III in Electrotechnology Electrician	831
Certificate III in Carpentry	610
Certificate III in Plumbing	344
Certificate III in Air-conditioning and Refrigeration	119
Certificate III in Scaffolding	89
Certificate III in Cabinet Making	88
Certificate III in Landscape Construction	78
Certificate III in Civil Construction Plant Operations	66
Certificate III in Electronics and Communications	42
Certificate III in Civil Construction	37
Certificate III in Painting and Decorating	35
Certificate III in Bricklaying/Blocklaying	33
Certificate III in Roof Plumbing	28
Certificate III in Arboriculture	27
Certificate III in Horticulture	24
Certificate II in Resources and Infrastructure Work Preparation	23
Certificate III in Fire Protection	21
Certificate III in Rigging	20
Certificate IV in Building and Construction (Building)	19
Certificate III in Wall and Floor Tiling	19
Certificate III in Wall and Ceiling Lining	14
Certificate IV in Civil Construction Operations	11
Diploma of Building and Construction (Building)	10
Certificate III in Flooring Technology	10
Certificate III in Glass and Glazing	8
Certificate II in Construction Pathways	6
Certificate III in Stonemasonry (Monumental/Installation)	4
Certificate III in Sports Turf Management	1
Diploma of Arboriculture	1
Certificate II in Horticulture	1
Certificate III in Solid Plastering	1
Grand Total	2620

Short courses (examples)

Provided by CIT

- Asbestos Awareness
- Working Safely with Asbestos Containing Materials
- Crystalline Silica Exposure Prevention
- Entry into Working Safely in Construction
- Introduction to Construction Planning
- Estimating for Builders Basics
- Understanding Building Plans

Provided by Private Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)

- Civil Construction Operations - skid steer, excavator, wheeled front end-loader, dozer, grader, scraper
- Solar- battery system fundamentals, power system fundamentals, solar awareness for tradespeople, utility scale solar, hot water systems
- License to perform rigging, perform rigging, erect, alter, and dismantle scaffolding

Scaffolding – various levels

Rigging – various levels

Welding – various levels

Working safely – construction industry, asbestos, bituminous materials, heights, electrical safety, silica exposure

Enter and work in confined spaces

First Aid, CPR

Funded by JobTrainer

- Introduction to Construction

What we've heard

As a significant source of employment in the ACT government, the building and construction industry offers pathways for **at-risk youth** through Australian School Based Apprenticeships and supports their **engagement** in and outside of school.

Many apprentices focus on receiving specialised **on the job training** rather than completing their qualification.

The industry has expressed the following needs/issues that could be addressed through the VET sector:

- More courses to **upskill** employees
- Employees often lack essential **non-technical job requirements**, despite having strong technical skills
- There is often poor **language, literacy and numeracy** skills

In general, the industry is currently facing the following pressures

- **Rising costs** due to high price of fuel, imported materials, and higher wages
- **Skills shortages** exacerbated by increased local demand and employee population near retirement age.

Source: Skills Needs Survey

Megatrends



Impactful technology

Technological advances are changing the Construction industry. Building information modelling (BIM) and augmented reality (AR) are adding to improved efficiency. Construction drones are used for site mapping, safety and security purposes. Technological advancement and connectivity are empowering individuals across the world including in the building and construction industry to allow worksite access and real-time inspections.



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. Population growth is driving increased demand for buildings and construction.



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 buildings.



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.



Safety protocols and protective equipment

This trend emphasises the strict safety protocols including replacing human with robots for high risk tasks.

Source: Skills Canberra Research

Attachment B. Roundtable scenarios

Scenario 1

The skills market is becoming increasingly complex with new skills areas emerging, changing expectations of new starters, as well as workers seeking to broaden their employment options. This includes an increasing focus on technology and sustainability. Demand for skilled workers by industry continues to be difficult to meet.

Discussion points

- How can RTOs be more innovative and adaptable in tailoring/creating offerings to changing learner expectations and rapidly changing needs of industry? What options can RTOs provide to employers to tailor courses according to their needs?
- What are the barriers to adapting existing and developing new course offerings to respond to those changes?
- How can training organisations help futureproof the VET system in the ACT so that it can anticipate, plan for and lead skills development?

Scenario 2

Mature age workers/mid-career workers are looking to broaden their potential employment options. Skilled migrants and those from groups generally under-represented in vocational roles have the potential to add substantially to the supply of skilled workers. Some students may require greater flexibility or different delivery methods to give them the best chance of success.

Discussion points:

- How can the training and education sector better seek to understand the previous capabilities and skills of those that are seeking to upskill/re-skill and develop courses accordingly?
- How can the training and education sector support, promote and take advantage of greater workforce diversity (e.g., older workers, neurodiverse people, and women)?
- How can the training sector make training more accessible to those requiring flexibility, e.g., caregivers?

Scenario 3

Attracting people to enter vocational training and high retention of those enrolled have been identified as two major levers to reduce widespread skills shortages. Skilled migration and retirees re-entering the workforce are examples of other levers.

Discussion points:

- How can recognition of prior learning (RPL) be streamlined to attract and retain learners without compromising quality?
- What are the barriers to retention and completion? How can training organisations support more completions?

Scenario 4

Training organisations operate within a highly competitive and diverse education and training environment.

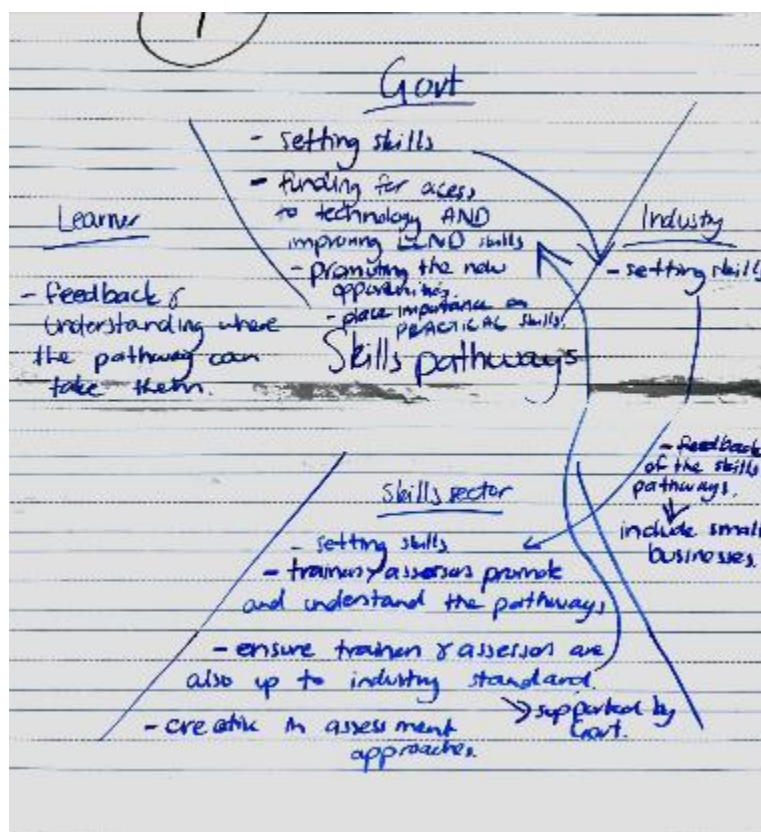
Discussion points:

- How can training organisations attract and retain skilled and qualified teachers and trainers?
- How can we achieve consistency in training quality from different training organisations? How can training organisations ensure that the needs of industry are reflected both in terms of quality of content and delivery method?
- How could the training sector in the ACT collaborate with others in the Tertiary sector to effectively meet learner aspirations and industry needs?

Attachment C. Roundtable attendees

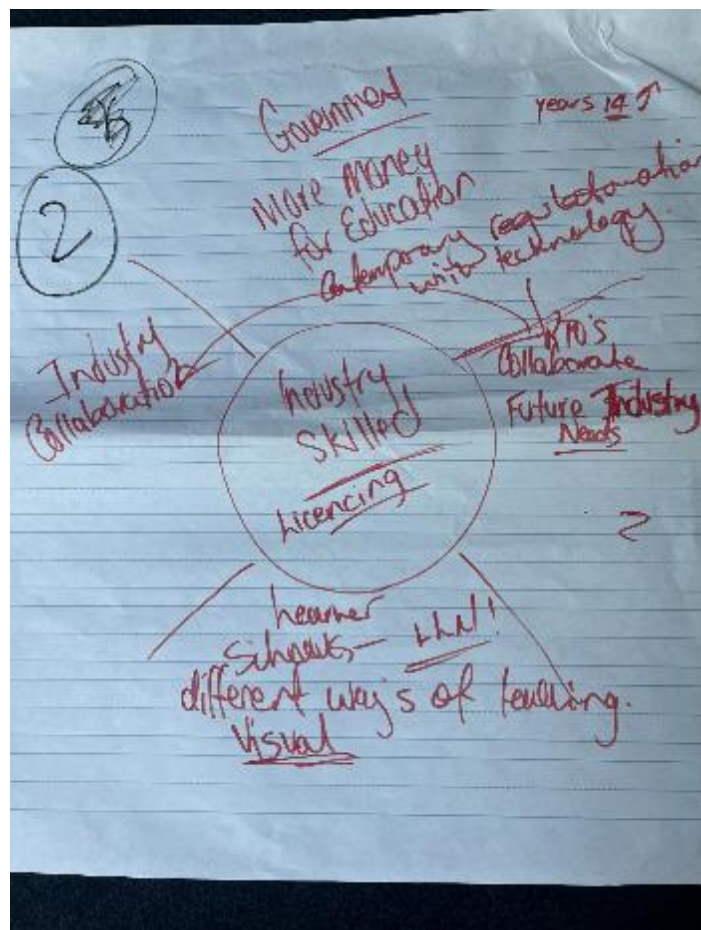
Organisation
Canberra Institute of Technology
LEAD Disability Services Ltd
JCE Positive Outcomes Pty Ltd ATF JCE Positive Outcomes Trust
LJS CONSTRUCTIONS PTY LTD
MBA Group Training Limited
Communities@Work Ltd
Anglicare NSW South, NSW West & ACT
Flexible Training Solutions Pty Ltd
College of Transformation, Education and Training Pty Ltd
ORBUS3 PTY LTD
University of Canberra
Creative Safety Initiatives
Senior Advisor, Minister for Skills
ACT Government officials from Economic Development

Attachment D. Roundtable notes



- ①
- ✓ Skills councils receiving wrong information from the wrong people
 - ↓
 - goals are then not meeting industry or learner needs
 - ✓ Training packages too slow to change
 - ✓ Bring learners into the conversation in the right way
 - ✓ Technology - access to resource AND skills to use technology
 - fear of the unknown
 - cost
 - ✓ Skills sets leading to various 'optional' pathways based on student's preferences
 - more options
 - 'building blocks' for various qualifications

- ① - Seed funding/grants from govt. to engage w industry & develop innovative training products (inc. microcredentials) - inc. non-accredited.
- Ongoing communication with industry ✓
 - Training package standards/requirements are not aligned with needs of industry/ what's feasible for RTOs
 - RTOs views need to be incorporated into training packages
 - e.g. in introducing new technologies into the industry
 - Off the shelf products are not fit for purpose or compliant - quality products are available, however, research + customisation required
 - 1/2 day training - 50 - 100 ^{hours} estimate to pay in staff labour to develop + cost of materials
 - Costs of materials, software products and support staff admin are extensive costs to supplying training ✓



- ②
- more personalised 1 on 1 assessment / interviews to better assess skill level
 - USE of technology for evidence submission / delivery
 - RTO collaboration for flexibility
 - ↳ if students aren't online class but RTO does not offer can refer to other RTO

Diversity: create supporting environment that enables them

- Support / encourage employers understanding
- Celebrate, share good practice between RTO employers
- taking training to community organisation & offering qualifications
- System approach to migrants pathway / visa

- Mature age / immigrants
- ✓ - Skill of individual / (existing) - better acknowledgment of skills learnt overseas
 - Adapting to technology
 - ↳ providing training on being proficient with using tablets for learning
 - ↳ access to time & during week / weekends to support training to happen

Numeracy / literacy skills taken into account

- individualised learning
- better than training during secondary schooling
- LMI assessment prior to entering a training contract to offer support needs - BY OUTSIDE ORG.

- Taster / introductory programs (workshop) to provide as potential students informed choice

Promotion via social media / targeted groups (eg - women only, older only to support networks & appeals to specific needs, interests)

Open nights / days / events to encourage people into RTOs to see & get hands on - TASTERS.

- ✓ Scheduling of flexible options / and childcare for women out of hours
- CHILD FRIENDLY STUDY SESSIONS.

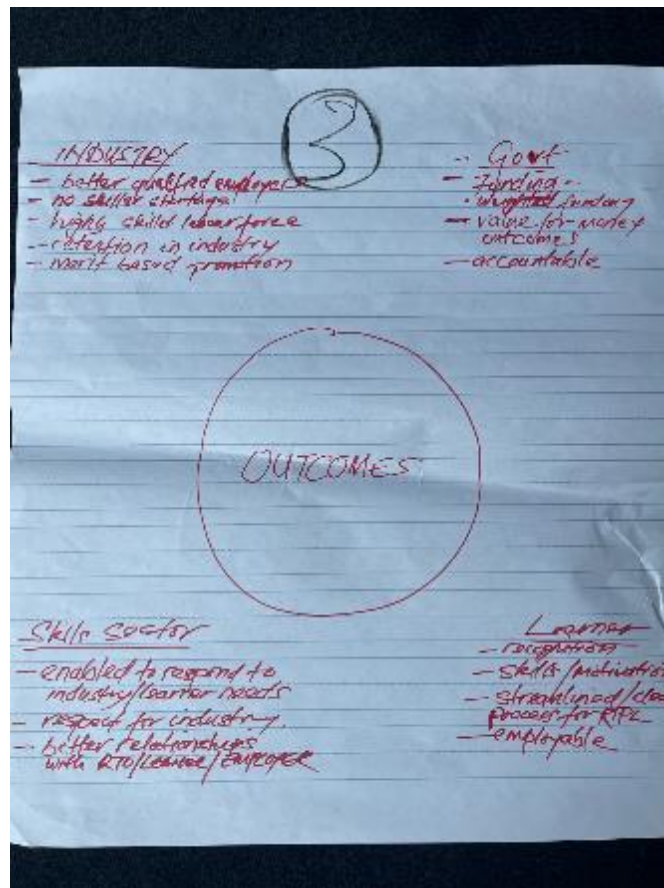
Completion / Retention (3)

- * Trade licensing requirements
- * mandatory requirements for jobs/roles
- * support from employers
- * people complete required units in a qual and then leave full qual.
- * funding structure of qual vs short course / pathways to app/finance need units
- * LLND
- * CHANGING EMPLOYERS MID TRAINEESHIP IS A CANCELLATION + REENROL - FALSE STAT.
- * TIME - EMPLOYER + EMPLOYEE.
- * MORE FUNDED SHORT COURSES TO SUPPORT LLND.
- Completion issues
 - going into workplaces
 - switching content
- Completion rates can be increased by
 - having close engagement with learners & their issues
 - explain the value of completing
 - screening
- * BETTER PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN RTOs + CAREER ADVISORS.
- * PARENT PERCEPTION OF THE INDUSTRY OR QUAL.

(3)

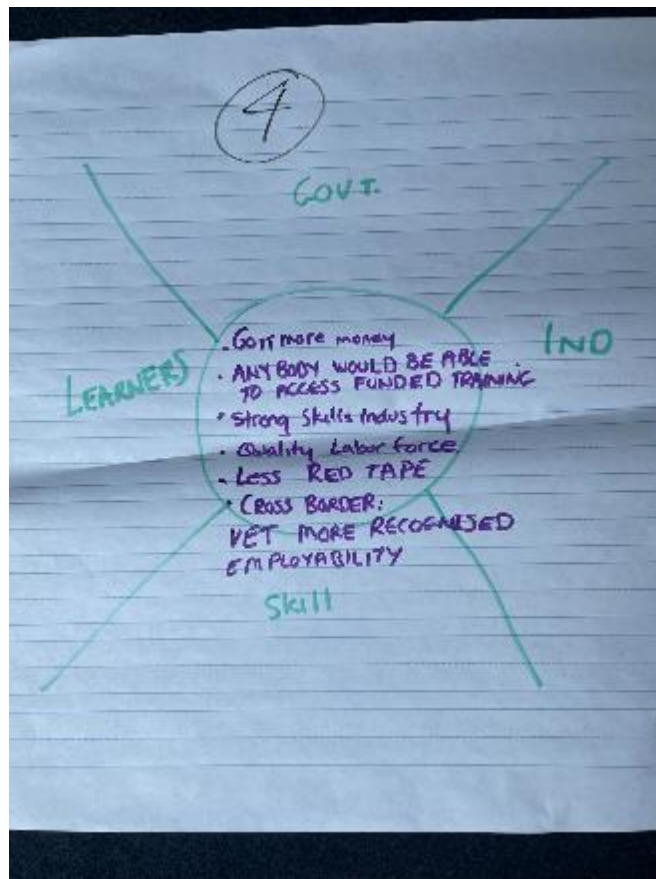
RPL

- * RPL lets - can be 100%
- Employer learner RTO
- product quality varies
- (Evidence through App including audio/video etc)
- challenges with evidence e.g. health records
- PRIVACY ISSUES WITH VIDEO
 - child care?
- RETURNEES - CHANGE OF LEGISLATION AND WAYS OF WORK.
- EASIER RECOGNITION OF O/S SKILLS.
- Better consistency required for understanding RPL
- Inconsistency in application of RPL (rigid v flexibility) (assessments) video/photo evidence
- Cost to RTO to assess (1 student: 1 trainer)



④

→ funding needs to be weighted based on learner needs (some learners need greater resources than others)



- ④
1. Pay condition, flexibility
 - invest in them, training, etc.
 - Communities of practices
 2. Communication with industries
 - ↳ Training Package rules
 - ↳ Variations in training should be encouraged
 3. Flexibility
 - VET promotion through the school system
 - Collaborate with unis so that students can also work, e.g. enrolled nurse to registered nurses
 - progression, cheaper (Lower HECS debt)
 - Degree Apprenticeship ●●
- CONSISTENCY OVER A.TOs.
 CHANGE UOCs STRUCTURE TO MIRROR TASKS IN THE WORKPLACE.

④

- Comp w, public training providers ✓
- Additional qualit. to train & maintain 2 currencies pla. (less arduous ASQA requirements) (paid for by individuals)
- Disconnect b/w training & application
- Overlap in trainers & assessors
- Unclear about the pathways from trade to training
- Redirect funding (or more) for RTO's (students, employer)
- Already lots of reg & compliance ✓
- Enforcement of RTO's (non-performing)
- Overlap in requirements from ASQA & ACT Gov (streamline info requirements)
- CERT IS THE TOO BROAD SKILLS
- DOESN'T TRANSLATE TO INDUSTRY TRAINER UNDERSTANDING - STREAMLINE TO WHAT YOU NEED - EG. TRAINER NOT DESIGNER ASSESSOR NOT A TRAINER.