

South Australian Skills Commission

Strategic Plan 2022 – 2024



Acknowledgement of Country

The South Australian Skills Commission acknowledges and respects Aboriginal people as the state's first people and nations, and recognises Aboriginal people as the traditional owners and occupants of South Australian land and waters.

This Artwork by Ngarrindjeri artist Jordan Lovegrove shows our journey from past to present and into the future. Artwork created for the Department for Industry, Innovation and Science.

Minister's message

Hon Blair Boyer MP



This Government recognises the important role that quality training and a skilled workforce plays in the South Australian economy, the value that good jobs provide to our communities and the critical function of the South Australian Skills Commission (the Commission) in supporting participation and delivery.

It is every South Australian's right to have the opportunity to be equipped with the skills needed for the existing and emerging workforce. Strengthening and building on existing work, this Government has committed \$205 million to build five new colleges for vocational and technical training and is investing \$8.7 million to deliver courses for trades where there is a skills shortage. These measures will be crucial to addressing skills shortages in key areas of the economy.

The South Australian Skills Commission is a critical strategic driver of the Government's commitment to improving access to and performance of training and skills development in South Australia. The Commission's strategic plan sets out a clear pathway for creating a robust, innovative and highly skilled workforce to meet current and emerging skills needs.

Over the next two years the Commission will focus efforts on four strategic pillars:

Strategic Pillar 1: Connected Skills Sector

Strategic Pillar 2: Responsive Skills System

Strategic Pillar 3: Contemporary Apprenticeship and Traineeship System

Strategic Pillar 4: Futureproofed Workforce

The strategic pillars reflect the value that the community places on a high functioning and fit for purpose skills system. Strong partnerships between industry, employee organisations and government will be key to achieving the objectives of the strategic plan and enabling all South Australians to access the skills and training they need to fully participate in South Australia's vibrant economic future.

Hon Blair Boyer MP

Minister for Education, Training and Skills

Commissioner's message

Renee Hindmarsh



The South Australian Skills Commission is uniquely tasked with ensuring an industry-led skills system in South Australia. At a time when business is facing unprecedented challenges, including in relation to skills and labour shortages, we are working with industry, employee organisations and government to develop both immediate and longer-term responses, including in regional South Australia.

Establishing and maintaining these strong partnerships also enables us to identify where skills development activities intersect, creating new opportunities for collaboration and the promotion of clear pathways to education and training.

The South Australian Skills Commission is committed to creating and supporting innovative skills development solutions, including through high-performing Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Adult Community Education (ACE).

Apprenticeships and traineeships are a proven pathway to skills development. As regulator of apprenticeships and traineeships in South Australia

we are striving for a flexible, streamlined system that responds to the needs of community as well as traditional and emerging industries.

Through the provision of evidence-based advice to our Minister, the work we undertake with the Commonwealth and other jurisdictions, combined with the unique role the Skills Commission plays in the broader skills ecosystem, we are well placed to foster real change.

This strategic plan extends our commitment beyond responding to current needs to playing an important role in developing South Australia's workforce of the future and the pipeline of skills required for the ongoing growth and prosperity of our State. Enabling South Australia's individuals, communities and businesses to thrive drives the work of the Commission. I commend our Strategic Plan (2022 – 2024) to you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Renee Hindmarsh'.

Renee Hindmarsh
South Australian Skills Commissioner

Introduction to the South Australian Skills Commission

The South Australian Skills Commission (the Commission) was established under changes to the *South Australian Skills Act (2008)* (the Act) in 2021. Changes to the Act at that time also sought to create a more streamlined and flexible VET system in response to evolving workforce needs. Operating as a statutory authority, the Commission is chaired by South Australian Skills Commissioner Renee Hindmarsh and comprises ten additional members all of whom are leaders from a range of industry and skills sector backgrounds.

The Commission is responsible for advising the Minister on how the skills system and South Australia's workforce is performing. Mandated with promoting an industry-led skills system, it engages directly with industry, employees and employers to identify the skills and training required for existing and future jobs in South Australia. Seven Industry Skills Councils

(ISCs) support the Commission, providing a direct and ongoing conduit to industry across the economy to inform advice, skills policy, investment in workforce development and programming across government.

The Commission also has responsibility for regulating apprenticeships and traineeships in South Australia, supported by Trainee and Apprenticeship Services (within Skills SA) and in line with the South Australian Skills Regulations (2021) and the South Australian Skills Standards. Facilitating participation in and access to VET and ACE is a further role. Allied to these functions, the Commission provides an information and dispute resolution service to apprentices and trainees, international students, employers and training providers. The table below provides a summary of the roles and functions of the Commission.

The Commission's Strategic Plan (2022-2024) provides the framework for delivering on its key priorities, as defined legislatively and through engagement with industry and community. It provides the basis for playing a support or partnering role in some instances and a lead role in others. Measurement and reporting of strategic plan outcomes will be undertaken over the term of the plan.

Engage	Engage key stakeholders including Industry Skills Councils to ensure VET is responsive to market demand
Regulate	Regulate the state's apprenticeship and traineeship system and deliver the South Australian Skills Standards to be reflective of industry demand
Advocate	Provide a complaint handling and dispute resolution service, mediation and advocacy for all stakeholders participating in the skills system
Monitor	Monitor and report to the Minister on the state's role in VET and ACE
Promote	Promote lifelong learning and flexibility within the skills system as well as career pathways between secondary schools, VET, ACE and higher education

Table 1: Summary of roles and functions of the South Australian Skills Commission

South Australia: Economic, Skills and Workforce Context

The South Australian economy, predicted to continue to grow over the life of this plan, is comprised of a range of traditional and emerging industries.

While this is the case, the State's economy, like many across the developed world, is transitioning to embrace Industry 4.0 and a lower carbon economy. This transition requires scaling up in all forms of advanced digital capability and calls for a range of emerging skills including complex problem solving, creativity, critical thinking, analysis and innovation. Given these conditions, ongoing growth will require a robust skills pipeline aligned to the diversity of need across sectors and the economy as a whole.

For South Australia, the skills challenge is particularly exigent given that this State has the lowest rate of post-secondary qualifications in mainland Australia. Additional challenges are an ageing population, social and infrastructure inequities between metropolitan and regional South Australia and comparatively lower levels of national and international companies headquartered here. The Covid-19 pandemic has also had an impact on skills in the marketplace, exacerbating skills and labour shortages in both regional and metropolitan South Australia. In addition, the pandemic has prompted significant change to business models and operations including accelerating digitisation.

While South Australia has a range of challenges to consider in development of its workforce, apprenticeship completions and commencements in South Australia are at a high and jobs that require vocational qualifications going forward are predicted to increase. South Australia's innovation districts are amplifying South Australia's competitive advantages and drawing global technology companies to Adelaide, fast tracking an uplift in knowledge jobs and digital talent within the State.

We recognise the ongoing importance of existing skills, training and industries to South Australia while positioning the state to also take full advantage of opportunities emerging from technological innovation and changes to the global economy.



Madison Taylor - 2022
Vocational Student of the Year

Purpose

An independent voice ensuring an industry-led skills system that delivers prosperity for South Australia.

Vision

A high-performing workforce aligned to the needs of industry, enabling South Australia's individuals, communities and businesses to thrive.

Values

- **Trusted** – Our stakeholders know that we will always act with integrity and purpose.
- **Responsive** – Listening, understanding and being responsive to the needs of our stakeholders and the South Australian economy is our core business.
- **Collaborative** – We strive to be exceptional collaborators because we understand that it is through partnerships and collaboration that the best outcomes are achieved.
- **Effective** – With a focus on outcomes we always seek to achieve genuine impact through our activities.

Strategic Enablers

- Partnerships and collaboration
- Industry connectivity
- High quality data and intelligence
- Technology
- Innovation mindset
- Our people within the Office of the South Australian Skills Commission



Bhu Chung - 2022 VET Teacher/Trainer of the Year

Strategic Pillar 1:

Connected Skills Sector

The South Australian skills system, comprising VET, ACE and Higher Education, is large and necessarily complex comprising public and private organisations at federal, state and local levels. The Commission, including its seven Industry Skills Councils, plays an important connecting and engagement role, especially between industry and government. Industry Skills Councils provide rich insight and intelligence, especially as a means of ensuring that skills initiatives across the system are responding to business and community needs. Allied to this, the Commission coordinates intra and inter - government partnerships and connects the sector as a whole with local, national and international intelligence and research, enabling evidence - based programming and strengthening skills outcomes of the system.

Strategic Objectives

- 1.1** Facilitate strategic partnerships and connectivity with industry and across government, in response to skills needs to foster better outcomes, expedite innovation and reduce duplication of effort.
- 1.2** Enable and distribute quality skills intelligence and insights to inform planning and programming within the South Australian skills system.
- 1.3** Contribute to the ongoing development of clear, flexible pathways for secondary students through education and training to high - quality employment outcomes.
- 1.4** Promote the South Australian Skills Commission and its Industry Skills Councils as an effective vehicle for proactive engagement with industry.



Mark Reynolds - 2022 Apprentice of the Year

Strategic Pillar 2:

Responsive Skills System

The South Australian Skills Commission is legislatively mandated to monitor and promote development of VET and ACE in South Australia, including as part of an integrated national system of education and training. Over the last three years VET enrolments and completions have declined at a greater rate than the national average. An enhanced focus on student support and user experience will be an important inclusion in the package of initiatives required to address these declines and ensure the pipeline of skilled people into key industries and occupations.

Key challenges for VET and ACE as identified by industry include: positioning to cultivate key emerging skills of the future and ensuring that registered training organisations (RTOs) have the capability and capacity to respond to skills shortages, in part brought on by the Covid -19 pandemic. Reach and effectiveness of VET and ACE in relation to regional South Australia and communities with high disadvantage also needs to be a focus. The use of flexible new platforms to expedite and enrich skills development, including micro-credentials, will be key to meeting a range of these challenges. Micro-credentials, endorsed in South Australia by the Commission, equip learners with skills and knowledge in a particular area expeditiously, providing business and individuals with the flexibility to rapidly adjust to changes in technology and the labour market.

Strategic Objectives

- 2.1** Monitor and enable continuous improvement of VET and ACE in South Australia, including responsiveness to industry and community needs.
- 2.2** Provide prospective learners and those within the skills system with information, career advice, complaint handling, dispute resolution and mediation to support training completions and enhance user experience and engagement in system.
- 2.3** Promote development and uptake of micro-credentials and other innovative options in response to skills requirements of industry and community.
- 2.4** Encourage increased participation in and access to VET and ACE by young people and existing members of the workforce wishing to upskill or reskill, fostering greater equity in the skills system.



Peer/BHP - 2022 Industry Collaboration Award

Strategic Pillar 3:

Contemporary Apprenticeship and Traineeship System

The apprenticeship and traineeship system is an important part of the broader VET system. Similarly, apprenticeships and traineeships are an important and effective means of delivering on the VET pipeline of skills required now and into the future and a proven pathway to rewarding occupations across a range of traditional and emerging sectors. Apprenticeship and traineeship commencements and completions in South Australia have increased significantly over recent years. While this is the case, there is scope for continuing to improve this rate including through enhancing the user experience of the system. Ensuring that young apprentices and trainees in particular, are engaged and supported by the system will be a key focus of the Commission as regulator of apprenticeships and traineeships in South Australia.

Striving for a contemporary, best practice system and in line with the *South Australian Skills Act (2008)* and reforms to the Act made in 2021, the Commission also has a focus on ensuring that the system is flexible, streamlined, valued by the community and innovative in its use of new and existing approaches and regulatory tools. Higher education and accelerated apprenticeships are part of this suite of initiatives. Promoting the benefits of traineeships and apprenticeships to young people and providing targeted support and information to existing and prospective apprentices and trainees pre commencement, including through partnerships with schools and industry, will also be a key strategy.

Strategic Objectives

- 3.1** Deliver innovative, best practice regulation of South Australia's apprenticeship and traineeship system.
- 3.2** Support prospective and existing apprentices, trainees and their employers with information, complaint handling, dispute resolution and mediation.
- 3.3** Continue to promote apprenticeship and traineeship commencements and completions, including through enhanced user experience of the system.
- 3.4** Create pathways into apprenticeships and traineeships to position them for success.



Sakina Qamari - 2022
School-based Apprentice or Trainee of the Year

Strategic Pillar 4:

Futureproofed Workforce

The Commission has a legislated role to provide advice to the Minister on workforce strategies and priorities to support employment growth and investment in South Australia. Primary workforce challenges in South Australia include skills and labour shortages in key industries and in regional South Australia, in part resulting from effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. Prior to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and associated public health response, many of the shortages currently being experienced were addressed through migration and working holiday programs.

Allied to this, ensuring the skills pipeline for future jobs as the State's economy transitions to Industry 4.0 is identified as a key workforce priority by industry. In particular, these include specialist skills across emerging technologies and digital fields as well as basic digital literacy across the entire workforce. Additional, 'non-technical' skills including emotional intelligence, initiative, complex problem solving, analytical and critical thinking, resilience and other 'life' skills have also been identified as critical to a high-performing workforce of the future and will be a focus of the work of the Commission.

Strategic Objectives

- 4.1** Provide advice to the Minister on workforce strategies and priorities to support employment growth and investment in South Australia.
- 4.2** Collaborate with industry and government to develop and implement innovative approaches to addressing skills shortages including pathways for school leavers and the existing workforce into complementary new industries.
- 4.3** Facilitate connectivity of employers, school leavers and the existing workforce with training and development to ensure the skills pipeline for existing and future jobs.
- 4.4** Provide clear information on alternate and flexible pathways to employment in key industries.



South Australian State Emergency Service - 2022
Large Employer of the Year

Acknowledgement of Contribution

The South Australian Skills Commission extends its thanks and gratitude to previous and current members of Industry Skills Councils for their valued contributions to this Plan.

The South Australian Skills Commission also extends its thanks and gratitude to the business, not-for-profit and industry leaders as well as community members who contributed to the development of this Plan.

South Australian Skills Commission

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