

30 July 2025

New Skills Commission Appointed to Drive State's Strategic Skills Priorities

The South Australian Skills Commission (the Commission) is pleased to announce the appointment of ten members to guide the strategic direction of skills and workforce development across the state, under the continued leadership of Commissioner Cameron Baker, Chair of the South Australian Skills Commission. The new term commenced on 8 July 2025, with members serving on the Commission for the next 2 years.

The Commission reflects both continuity and renewal, with seven reappointed members and three newly appointed members. Together, they bring respected experience across industry, education, and community sectors—all deeply committed to building a workforce equipped to support employment growth and economic outcomes for South Australia.

Over the term of the previous Commission, significant achievements were realised through a deliberate and sustained focus on apprentice and trainee training and safety. South Australia remains the only jurisdiction to support Degree Apprenticeships, reflecting our commitment to nation leading innovation in apprenticeship and traineeship systems. The Commission has also led the creation and expansion of the dual trade apprenticeships that equip apprentices with broader, job-ready skills and respond directly to industry workforce needs. Additionally, the Industry Accelerated Apprenticeship Pilot is fast-tracking apprenticeships in key trades facing significant workforce shortages.

These initiatives underscore the Commission's ongoing commitment to evolving South Australia's training system to meet the changing needs of industry and learners.

Appointed Members of the South Australian Skills Commission:

- **Andy Keough CSC**, Managing Director, SAAB Australia
- **Donny Walford**, Managing Director, Behind Closed Doors and Bottom Line
- **Estha van der Linden**, State Head South Australia, Australian Industry Group
- **Helen Gibbons**, Executive Director, United Workers Union
- **Ian Horne**, Director at the South Australian Tourism Commission and Adelaide Venue Management Corporation, Chair of Business Events Adelaide Ltd
- **John Chapman OAM**, South Australian Industry Advocate, Whyalla Regional Coordinator and Presiding Board Member of the Construction Industry Training Board
- **Joshua Peak**, Secretary, Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association, South Australian Branch
- **Michael Luchich**, Chair of South Australia Health, Statewide Clinical Support Services Committee and Women's and Children's Hospital Foundation and Board Director for ACH Group

- **Robyn Verrall**, South-East Farmer, Founder, Bully's Meats, 2022 SA AgriFutures Rural Women's Award Winner
- **Stuart Gordon**, State Secretary, Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union South Australia

The Commission extends its thanks to the outgoing members for their valuable service and contributions to South Australia's training and skills ecosystem.

This announcement coincides with the release of the South Australian Skills Commission 2025–2030 Strategic Plan, which sets out a bold vision for a responsive, inclusive, and high-performing skills system. The Strategic Plan outlines four key priority areas:

- attracting and retaining apprentices and trainees to VET to meet workforce needs
- innovation and advocacy to enable the skills system to adapt to workforce requirements
- providing stewardship for industry to improve equity and access
- strengthening connections with the Commission's key stakeholders across industry, the South Australian community, and government.

For more information about the Commission and to download the 2025–2030 Strategic Plan, visit [Commission members - South Australian Skills Commission](#) and [Strategic Plan - South Australian Skills Commission](#).

Quotes attributable to the Minister for Education, Training and Skills, Blair Boyer

The newly appointed Commission reflects the skills and experience our state needs to guide the decisions in the sector that best support our growing economy.

South Australia will be central to some of the nation's most exciting projects, and we need an agile skills system that can adapt to make the most of these opportunities.

The Skills Commission's leadership will be crucial to the delivery of the State Government's skills agenda and ensuring all South Australians have access to high-quality training and career pathways.

Quotes attributable to Commissioner Cameron Baker, Chair of the South Australian Skills Commission

This is a pivotal time for skills development in South Australia.

Our new Commission members bring a wealth of experience and knowledge from across industries and regions with a strong understanding of the training system. Their collective leadership will strengthen our ability to respond to emerging challenges and embrace a more visible and vibrant skills system.

We remain focused on ensuring South Australia's training system continues to deliver real outcomes — for learners, for employers, and for our economy.

I am proud to launch our 2025–2030 Strategic Plan, which sets a clear direction for improving access to skills, focusing on safety and wellbeing, and identifying the support required to ensure learners complete their studies. Underpinning this is an increased focus on engaging with industry and providing considered, evidence-informed advice on skills policy development, innovation, and funding allocation within South Australia.