

August enews

Introduction

The NSW Public Services Industry Training Advisory Body (PS ITAB) contract was awarded to Manufacturing Skills Australia (MSA) by the NSW Department of Education. The remit of the ITAB contract has not changed though the name and branding are new. Sarah Rosen has been appointed the Executive Officer and will manage the ITAB for the contracted period from 1 July 2026 to 31 December 2027. Sarah has extensive experience in ITAB roles including community services and health, and the service industries sectors.

Sarah will continue Lisa Giammarco's work engaging with industry and training system stakeholders across Public Sector, Local Government, Public Safety (Fire and Rescue), Police, Corrections, Defence and Water industries. She is keen to get to meet stakeholders and is planning a series of meetings and regional activities to promote engagement and to identify training issues and emerging workforce needs. She will continue to provide independent advice to the NSW Department of Education on training and skills needs on behalf of stakeholders to ensure industry has the skills and training needed.

NSW Update

NSW Training Awards

Congratulations to the finalists and winners of this week's NSW Training Awards event held at Sydney Town Hall on Tuesday evening. The Gala event was a fun and celebratory occasion, supported by candidates, industry and the VET sector training community across NSW.

Finalists were announced across 13 award categories for students, teacher / trainer, industry collaboration, small and large employer and small and large training provider and a new award category for *Disability Inclusion in the VET Sector* to recognise those organisations that champion access and equity in the VET workplace and / or the delivery of VET for people with disability.



[Click here](#) for the full list of 2026 winners.

The NSW Skills Board

There is a refreshed NSW Skills Board announced by The Hon. Steve Whan Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education, at Monday's launch of Skills Week. The NSW Skills Board is responsible for providing independent, high level, strategic advice on the skills system in NSW. It plays an important role in shaping the state's VET and tertiary education system. In late 2025, a comprehensive review of the board was undertaken in line with the [NSW Skills Plan](#) and [VET Review](#) priority to reform skills and industry governance. It identified the need to refine the board's focus areas and update its membership to respond to emerging workforce challenges.

The new board members bring a broad range of expertise spanning industry, education, VET and skills development, economics and local, state and federal government. Notably, the Board now includes a student and an employee representative, ensuring their perspectives help shape the advice provided to government. Collectively, it better reflects the diversity of NSW and the people it serves through the VET system.

With widespread skills shortages across industries and growing demand for skilled workers, improved workforce analysis and strategic planning are critical to keeping NSW competitive. The Board will continue to provide expert, strategic advice to the NSW Government that supports workforce development and strengthens the economic future of NSW. In addition, its guidance will help ensure skills and training meet the needs of individuals, industry, regions and the wider NSW economy. [Click here](#) to meet the 8 new NSW Skills Board members.



Smart and Skilled No. 284 (31 July 2026)

The latest update provided advice on

- **Fee Free Construction** Pre-Apprenticeship Part Qualification arrangements from July to December 2026
- **Fee Free Programs** from July to December 2026 (including Certificates II, III, and IV in Water Industry operations, and Certificate II in Water Industry Operations as a School Based Traineeship)
- **Smart and Skilled NSW Skills List** updated 17 July Version 17.1 [Click here](#)
- **Smart and Skilled Qualification Prices and Fees** updated 17 July Version 17.1 [Click here](#)



Training Services



1000 NSW Public Sector Apprentices and Trainees Program

Real Skills for Real Careers



NSW Public Sector Apprenticeship and Traineeship program. Now in its 3rd year the \$93.5million program has successfully reached its milestone of employing 1000 additional apprentices and trainees across the NSW Public Sector. The program has created valuable career pathways by providing apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities across public sector agencies and State-Owned Corporations.

The program will continue to support NSW Government Organisations and State-Owned Corporations looking to employ apprentices and trainees with the Recruitment, Post-Placement and Training Support to be available without cost until 30 June 2029. While the wage subsidy no longer applies, the Recruitment Support team can assist with promotion of apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities, recruitment planning, applicant attraction, screening and testing, and options to improve candidate engagement and recruitment outcomes.

Post-placement support will provide regular engagement with apprentices, trainees and workplace supervisors, identify emerging risks and additional support needs, supervisor support and assistance to strengthen retention and completion. Training support includes additional training such as personal financial basics, applying for Government jobs, supervisor training and pre-employment training.

Click contacts below for

[Recruitment and post-placement support](#) and [Training nominations and enquiries](#)

Apprentices and trainees

Grants to help councils employ apprentices, trainees and cadets to address skill shortages.



OLG Fresh Start Program. In July the NSW Office of Local Government announced the expansion of the *Fresh Start for Apprentices, Trainees and Cadets Program*. The NSW Government has committed to support an additional 400 local government employees commencing in FY 2027-28. Round 4 funding, to be released later this year, will provide funding for up to 572 positions. Funding also includes upskilling existing workers and supervisor workshops. Grant applications will be opening soon. Grant applications workshops are also available to support councils in preparing their Fresh Start applications. [Click here](#) for details.

LGNSW – Workforce and Future Skills. Local Government NSW (LGNSW) is the independent peak body representing NSW Local Councils, County Councils, Joint Organisations and Regional Organisations of Councils. It helps member councils build a skilled and sustainable workforce by providing research, practical resources and advocacy. LGNSW works with councils, training providers, universities and government to identify workforce challenges, improve skills development, and support workforce planning. Collaboration initiatives have included the [Local Government Skills Audit](#) report and the [Local Government Skills Insight report](#) released by Public Skills Australia. These reports help councils identify workforce challenges, benchmark skills shortages, and strengthen workforce and succession planning. Together with the [Workforce Development Network](#), LGNSW continues to help local government professionals connect, collaborate and build workforce capability.

2026 Workforce Composition Survey. The NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) Water Group and BuildSkills Australia (Jobs and Skills Council) launched the **2026 Workforce Composition Survey** to address recruitment, retention, and operational skill shortages in NSW local water utilities (LWUs). The purpose of the project is to collect data on workforce demographics, operational roles, and training needs to combat critical shortages of trained water operators and build team resilience. The report on the 2026 survey findings is scheduled for publication in the second half of 2026. [Click here](#) to download the 2024 NSW Local Water Utility Workforce Composition Report to understand the workforce needs of the LWUs, and [click here](#) to download the previous Workforce Development Roadmap.

Based on extensive consultation with the water and training industries, DCCEEW released the Competency Benchmark for LWU operators to address the challenges impacting the sectors workforce. [Click here](#) to get the latest DCCEEW updates via the LWU newsletter. For more information on the BuildSkills Australia Water Sector Roadmap [click here](#).

AWA NSW Water Conference was held in Wollongong 17-19 August. The 3-day event drew over 300 industry experts and leaders to explore how to do more with less – squeezing every last drop out of water resources and usage. The Hon. Rose Jackson, MLC Minister for Water, Minister for Housing, Minister for Homelessness, Minister for Mental Health, and Minister for Youth, joined a panel session leading a discussion on the value of water to the community and industry, noting it remains undervalued relative to energy and despite infrastructure cost.

Image L-R: Corinne Cheeseman, Lisa Andersons, Aboriginal Pathways graduates, The Hon. Rose Jackson MLC, Dylan Rae, Aboriginal Pathways graduates, Front row: Brendan Guiney, Tait Farram and Peter Fry.



The Hon. Steve Whan, MP, Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education also joined the conference on a panel session on Future Workforce and Skills. The Minister noted the challenges and additional cost of delivering niche qualifications such as Water Industry Operations in thin markets and the impact on regional, rural and remote water and wastewater workforce and service delivery to communities.

Programs such as the DCCEEW's Competency Benchmark for local water utility operators and the Aboriginal Pathways: Fresh Start into Water Operations short course pilot make a strong start to addressing skills, training and workforce development into the future. Graduates from the Aboriginal Pathways program attended the conference adding insights on their personal journeys to secure full traineeships and careers with Shoalhaven Water.



Image L-R: The Hon. Steve Whan MP with Tait Farram, Belinda Bright, Lisa Andersons and Stuart Khan

Jobs and Skills Councils (JSC) Updates



Public Skills Australia has released the *Local Government Skills Audit 2025–26* report. It provides a national picture of workforce challenges, skills shortages and future workforce needs across the local government sector.

LGNSW and NSW councils played a leading role in the Skills Audit, with 80 councils contributing to the research. NSW findings highlighted persistent workforce pressures, including shortages of engineers, building surveyors and town planners, alongside growing demand for leadership, digital, AI and regulatory skills. NSW councils also identified funding certainty, housing pressures and changing local economies as key factors affecting workforce attraction and retention. [Click here](#) for national and jurisdiction reports.

Public Skills Australia projects include:

- [Police Training Package Release 11](#) updated to support supervisory and management capabilities in police agencies.
- [Police Occupational Pathways](#) project was commenced in response to 2025 Public Safety Workforce Insights Report which identified workforce sustainability pressures and police specialist occupation shortages. Project due for completion by December 2026.
- [Auslan, Interpreting and Translating](#) qualification review (Phase 2) product development.
- [Procurement and contracting](#) qualification review, consultations concluded.
- [Correctional Services](#) Training Implementation (Phase 2) to strengthen delivery of *CSC30122 Certificate III in Correctional Practice* and *CSC30222 Certificate III in Immigration Detention Operations*. Consultation ends September.
- [Cross-Industry Biosecurity Skills Review](#) a cross-JSC project to support implementation of the Australian Government's National Biosecurity Strategy. Consultation concludes August.
- [Complex Infrastructure](#) research project with Fire and Emergency Services to address emerging risks faced by responders. This PUA training package project is being finalised.
- [Emerging Technology](#) Skills Review for Fire and Emergency Services to respond to emerging emergencies involving electric vehicle and lithium-ion batteries, in final stage.
- [PSP Public Sector](#) training package update to reflect current industry practice and update superseded units, in final stage.
- [Defence Capability](#), VET Systems Pathways Framework to support the skilling requirements of the Defence sector across occupations and capability domains, in final stage.
- [Review of Government Investigations](#) qualifications to align to the Australian Government Investigation Standards, in final stage.
- [Volunteer Leadership](#) project to address critical capability gaps in non-operational leadership roles in volunteer-based Fire and Emergency Services. The Volunteer Leadership Skills Review Report (for the PUA Public Safety Training package) was published in April.
- [Defence Youth Development](#) Project done in partnership with the Australian Defence College to develop vocational training products that create career and learning pathways into the Australian Defence Force (ADF), Defence industry, and the Australian Public Service (APS). This resulted in the development of 2 entry-level qualifications; *DEF10126 Certificate I in Defence Skills* and *DEF20326 Certificate II in Defence Skills*.
- [VET Workforce Study](#) for Public Safety and Government industry sectors, to examine workforce capability and identify actions to strengthen and sustain. Project finalised.



BuildSkills Australia

The Water Sector Workforce Roadmap final report is due for release by December. Clean, safe and reliable water and sewerage services underpin daily life and economic growth. However, the sector faces a range of workforce challenges.

The 10-year roadmap will address these challenges and identify sector-wide skills needs and strategies to ensure the sector has the workforce capability needed to meet future water service delivery needs. [Click here](#) for the project page.

Reports and Data

Apprenticeship Support Australia released its *National First Year Experience* report, the first of its kind to explore what challenges first year apprentices and trainees face. The first 12 months has the greatest attrition rate and is where employers, educators and policy makers can better support completions and long-term success for the learner. Based on the survey responses of 12,376 current and former apprentices and trainees, the project focussed on the Apprenticeship or Traineeship experience, access to information, support and incentives, training and education, workplace conditions and support, wellbeing and mental health, and retention, continuation and future intentions. [Click here](#) to request the report.

NCVER

VET in Schools 2025. NCVERs *VET in Schools 2025* provides data on VET undertaken by school students as part of their senior secondary certificate of education (SSCE), where the training is delivered by the school or through partner training providers. It shows:

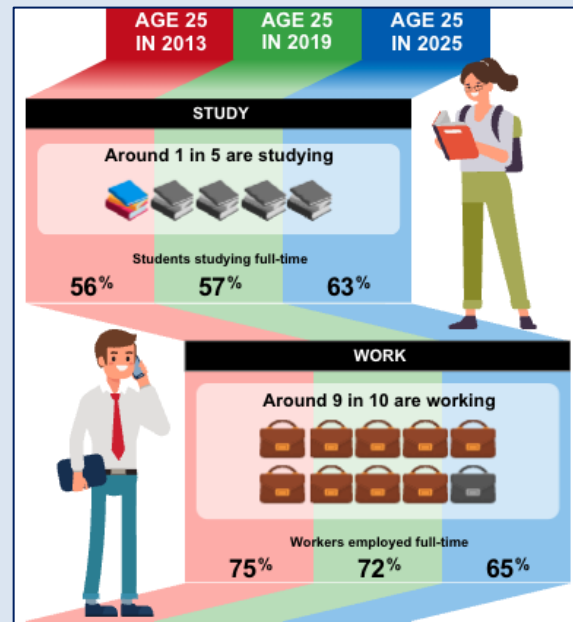
- VET in Schools (VETiS) continues to grow strongly, with record numbers of students aged 19 and under in 2025, increasing 4% on 2024 and 20% since 2010.
- 276,860 students used VET in Schools to support achieving their senior secondary certificate, highlighting the role of vocational pathways in aiding school completion and further education and employment.
- Participation is widespread but varies by jurisdiction, with particularly high engagement in Queensland and solid uptake in Western Australia and Northern Territory.
- Activity is focused on Certificate II & III pathways, entry into key industries.
- Popular study fields remain consistent, led by hospitality, sport and recreation, building, and business services.

[Click here](#) for the full report.

LSAY Gen Z. NCVER has released its latest Longitudinal Survey of Australian Youth (LSAY) tracking the experiences of young people aged 15 to 25 years as they navigate leaving school, pursuing further study and enter the workforce. Its latest [infographic](#) examines young people's experiences of work, study, health and wellbeing. It also compares the experiences of 25-year-olds in 2013, 2019 and 2025, revealing how life at 25 has changed over the past decade.

Key findings include:

- Young Australians remain highly engaged in work and study, with around 9 in 10 employed and around one in 5 studying at age 25.
- Financial stress and mental health challenges have increased significantly, with financial stress more than doubling and high psychological distress more than tripling between 2013 and 2025.
- Traditional markers of independence are occurring later, with more 25-year-olds living with their parents and fewer married than a decade ago.



[Click here](#) for the latest survey data.

DataBuilder. NCVER is launching its upgraded version of DataBuilder on Monday 31 August 2026. The upgrade will deliver a more user-friendly experience, with new functionality, and improved ways to explore and analyse VET data. This includes a simpler and more intuitive user interface, improved search and sorting functionality, the ability to save and share customised DataBuilder views, and copy-and-paste functionality making it easier to transfer data tables into other documents. NCVER will host a series of webinars to help users navigate the updated version, providing an overview of the new DataBuilder experience, demonstrating key features and enhancements, and highlighting available support resources.

Webinar dates and times:

- Tuesday [1 September 2026](#), 12.00pm AEST
- Monday [7 September 2026](#), 12.00pm AEST
- Wednesday [9 September 2026](#), 12.00pm AEST

A recording of these sessions will be shared with attendees, as well as shared on the NCVER website after the event. If you are new to DataBuilder, additional introductory webinars are available providing a comprehensive walkthrough of DataBuilder's features and functionality, including how to access, explore and analyse VET data. Further details will be shared in the next edition of NCVER News and on NCVER's LinkedIn page.

Events

LGNSW Water Management Conference Ballina 2-5 September. This year's theme 'Local water, shared responsibility' reflects the idea that while water is managed at the local level by local water utilities its stewardship is a collective effort shared across communities, industries, and all levels of government. Sustainable water management depends on collaboration, informed decision-making, and mutual commitment to protecting this vital resource for current and future generations. Join industry leaders delivering insights, practical solutions, and forward-thinking strategies for local water utilities. [Click here](#) to register.

NSWLGAN Annual Conference 16-18 September. The NSW Local Government Aboriginal Network (NSWLGAN) is holding its Annual Conference in Armidale 16-18 September. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elected members and Council staff, Aboriginal Advisory Committee members, and anyone interested in progressing Closing the Gap outcomes and reconciliation activities in their communities, are encouraged to take part.

This important event will celebrate 38 years of advocacy, leadership and collaboration while providing opportunities to connect, share experiences and strengthen outcomes for First Nations communities across NSW. The program includes inspiring speakers, cultural experiences, council case studies, and the election of the 2026-27 NSWLGAN Executive Committee. [Click here](#) to register.

Hawkesbury and Hills Jobs Expo

The Local Jobs Program teams from Sydney Greater West and Sydney North & West are hosting this information and recruitment event at the Windsor Function Centre from 10am to 2pm on **Wednesday 23 September** to address employment needs across the Hawkesbury, The Hills, Windsor, Penrith and surrounds. Interested employers and organisations looking to recruit in that region with current vacancies are encouraged to participate in this free event.

- ◇ Employers can promote their organisation, services and jobs
- ◇ Connect with motivated local job seekers looking for opportunities
- ◇ Build relationships and networks with community stakeholders and service providers
- ◇ Provide awareness of careers and training pathways in your sector.

[Click here](#) to register your Expression of Interest.



**HAWKESBURY & HILLS
FREE JOBS EXPO 2026
EMPLOYER EOI**

**Wednesday 23rd September 2026
10am - 2pm**

**Windsor Function Centre NSW
7 Dight St, Windsor**

Workforce Australia
Sydney North and West

**HAWKESBURY
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

**Sydney Hills
BUSINESS
CHAMBER**

Workforce Australia
Sydney Greater West

Employers & businesses looking to recruit motivated jobseekers are strongly encouraged to submit an Expression of Interest to participate in this event.

The Hawkesbury Jobs Expo is an excellent FREE platform for you to:

- ✓ Promote your organisation and services
- ✓ Connect with local jobseekers seeking employment opportunities
- ✓ Build relationships & network with other employers and community stakeholders
- ✓ Provide awareness of available career and training pathways within your sector

**Please register your Expression of Interest here.
Just Scan the QR Code**



Workforce Australia Local Jobs is funded by the Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

National Water Week 19-25 October

National Water Week makes a splash across Australia each year by inspiring communities and organisations to work together on water issues and



future fixes. Hosted by the Australian Water Association, the event encourages individuals, communities, schools and organisations to be inspired to promote the importance of water – *Water is Life*, the theme for 2026. National Water Week reminds everyone that water must be used wisely – and celebrates water innovation and achievements supporting Australia's sustainable future. Communities, schools and organisations are encouraged to access resources and participation kits tailored for schools or workplaces and communities. [Click here](#) for more information and get involved. **#NationalWaterWeek**

LGNSW Annual Conference, Wollongong 22-24 November. The LGNSW Annual Conference is the premier policy-making event for the local government sector, bringing together councillors from across NSW to shape the sector's future direction. The conference provides a platform to submit and debate motions on strategic issues affecting councils statewide, helping define advocacy and policy priorities. [Click here](#) for details.

RIEP Careers - Illawarra. The Regional Industry Education Partnerships (RIEP) team is seeking participation from NSW Government departments and agencies in an upcoming careers event to showcase the diverse range of career opportunities across the public sector. This event will bring high school students, career advisers and teachers to learn about government careers, pathways to employment and where to access information on current and future opportunities. The Government careers event will be held on Wednesday **25 November** 9.30am to 11.30am at DoE Training Services Training Room, 84 Crown St, Wollongong.

There will also be a careers panel, with representatives from participating departments. Participants will have the opportunity to introduce themselves, their role in the department, provide an overview of their organisation and its services, discuss career pathways, employment opportunities, traineeships, apprenticeships, graduate programs and other entry pathways, and share information and resources for students to find current vacancies and career resources. Students and teachers will have the opportunity to ask questions directly of industry representatives. The event will conclude with a quick tour of the Government building.

This event provides public sector employers with the opportunity to promote jobs and inspire young students to consider rewarding careers across a range of public sector departments and agencies. Contact RIEP Officer Jennifer Watts at Jennifer.watts6@det.nsw.gov.au for more information.

Digital NSW 2026 Showcase, 25 November. The one day a year that every senior digital decision-maker in NSW Government is in the same room. The Technology focus areas are Machine Learning and AI, CRM, citizen experience, and application Performance Management. Digital NSW is delivered in partnership with the NSW Department of Customer Service and brings departments together around the priorities of NSW Government and the NSW Digital Strategy. There are four tracks mapped to the Digital Strategy and underpinned by AI in practice: Inclusive and Connected Services, Smarter Services and Productivity, Trusted and Resilient Digital Infrastructure, and Capability and the Future Public Service. [Click here](#) to register.

Call for Papers – National Biosolids Conference 2027.

The theme for the next conference is **Evidence into Action**. The Australian Water Association is inviting practical case studies, applied research and operational insights that can help advance the sustainable management of biosolids. The biosolids sector is navigating increasing complexity, from emerging contaminants and evolving regulation to changing technologies, market pressures, environmental priorities and community expectations. Over two days, conference participants will explore how research, operational experience and sector knowledge can be translated into confident decisions and practical outcomes. Bringing together producers, regulators, researchers, practitioners, consultants, technology providers and end users, the conference will examine what is working, what we are learning and how the sector can respond to both current challenges and future uncertainty. The conference will be held in Melbourne 3-4 March, with submissions for papers **closing 21 September**. [Click here](#) for details.



Engage with your NSW Public Services ITAB

Promote your activities, programs and resources. If you have career or learner resources, tools or platforms that help improve services and skills within the Public Services sector that you would like to share on our Resources and Careers page contact sarah.rosen@publicservicesitab.org.au.

The enews is published on the website and LinkedIn.

Visit our website at <https://www.publicservicesitab.org.au> for news, events and resources.

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The ITAB plays an important role in informing the training landscape for the Public Services sectors across NSW. We are an independent not-for-profit resource hub providing advocacy, advice, support and leadership. We support our sectors by providing a voice to government on skills needs, emerging issues, challenges and trends. Your input guides the key issues around workforce and skills shortages, training needs and identifying barriers to accessing the skills that employers need. Stakeholder insights and evidence can impact policy and funding for the VET sector to support the delivery of a wide range of training programs.

*The NSW Public Services ITAB is funded by the NSW Department of Education.