



## Acknowledgement of Country

The State Training Board acknowledges the Aboriginal people of Western Australia as the traditional custodians of the lands and waters. The Board honours their wisdom, cultures, languages and communities, and pays respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

## State Training Plan 2021–2022

Published by the State Training Board, December 2020

For further information:

Office of the State Training Board

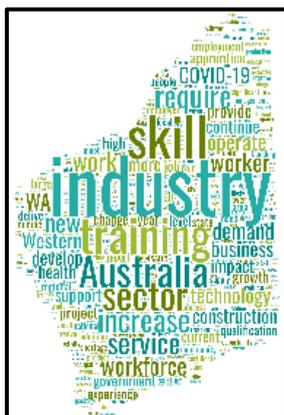
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## Front Cover

The image on the front cover is a word cloud generated from Industry Training Councils' *State Training Plan Industry Profiles 2020*. The profiles are a key source of information for the *State Training Plan*.

## About the State Training Board

The State Training Board (the Board) is a statutory body established by Part 3 of the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1996*. The Board is the peak industry training advisory body to the Minister for Education and Training in Western Australia.

The Board provides independent expert advice to the Minister on matters relating to vocational education and training in Western Australia:

- The existing and anticipated supply and demand for skills in various industries
- Strategies to support industries which are experiencing skill shortages
- Policy which aims to improve the links between specific industry developments and VET so as to gain optimum employment opportunities for people and ensure the availability of appropriately skilled labour in the state
- Strategic directions, policies and priorities for the state training system
- Emerging international, national and state training issues
- The extent to which training services meet the current and future requirements of industry and the community, including the requirement for equal opportunity of access to those services
- Any other matters as directed by the Minister

The Act also requires the State Training Board to provide the Minister with a *State Training Plan* that sets out for a period the training needs of the state's various industries and how those needs should be met by registered training providers, using funds provided under the Act.

### State Training Board Members



Jim Walker



Chris Hall, AM



Professor Cobie  
Rudd



Meredith  
Hammat



Ray Sputore



Captain Angela  
Bond, RAN



Fran Kirby



Professor Juli Coffin



Stephen Moir



On behalf of the State Training Board, I am pleased to present the *State Training Plan 2021-2022*. The plan identifies eight priorities for Western Australia, to guide the State Government's investment in the vocational education and training (VET) sector over the next two years. It focuses on the wide-reaching impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and identifies strategies to support the state's recovery and make it more resilient to future pandemics.

To date, Western Australia's economy has been less impacted than many others. Thanks to a well-coordinated public health response and good management of the economy, we have avoided the disastrous impacts on lives and livelihoods seen in many other countries. However, it is important to acknowledge that COVID-19 has had wide ranging impacts, and has not affected all Western Australians equally. The measures that were implemented to keep our state safe impacted some industries more than others and at the peak of the crisis, young people experienced higher rates of unemployment and underemployment than other cohorts. Going forward, VET has an important role in the state's strategies to ensure that the economy emerges stronger from this pandemic.

I have been proud to see the VET sector's prompt and innovative responses to COVID-19. Infection control training has helped ensure that businesses can continue to operate while keeping staff and customers safe. State Government support and flexible approaches to training are ensuring that apprentices can continue learning their trade during a period of economic uncertainty. New short courses are boosting people's skills and enabling them to explore new career options in areas of demand. This is supported by significant reductions in course fees, to ensure that training is accessible to all Western Australians.

The *WA Recovery Plan* outlines a wide range of initiatives to restart, stimulate, reform and transform the state's economy. The *State Training Plan 2021-2022* identifies how targeted State Government investment in VET can harness the strengths of the sector to support these initiatives. It identifies eight priority areas that the State Training Board believes will help to strengthen the state's workforce to support a strong, resilient economy. The plan is based on extensive consultation with industry through the state's Industry Training Councils, TAFE colleges and the Independent Tertiary Education Council of Australia, as well as quantitative data from the Department of Training and Workforce Development and policy analysis undertaken by the State Training Board.

On behalf of my fellow Board members, I would like to thank Industry Training Councils, TAFE colleges, private training providers and the Department of Training and Workforce Development for their ongoing efforts to strengthen Western Australia's training sector, and for their input into the development of the *State Training Plan 2021-2022*.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Walker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mr Jim Walker  
Chair, State Training Board

## Apprenticeships and Traineeships

Provide high levels of funding and a range of support services for apprenticeships and traineeships.



## Priority Industry Qualifications

Provide high levels of funding and promotional activities for institutional training that Western Australia has identified as a state priority.



## Micro-credentials

Deliver accredited, industry-endorsed skill sets that are tailored to different career stages:

- entering the workforce
- growing within an industry
- changing careers



## Digital Literacy

Ensure digital literacy skills are embedded in all training and that training practitioners are skilled in the digital technologies required by industry.



## Links with Industry

Training providers and the Department of Training and Workforce Development should adopt a range of strategies to establish relationships with local industry.



## Community Engagement

Training providers and the Department of Training and Workforce Development should adopt a range of strategies to link with the local community to increase awareness of training options and to promote the value of VET.



## Pathways for Young People

Prioritise high quality pathways into employment for young people, including pre-apprenticeships and pre-traineeships. Maximise the benefit of VET delivered to secondary students by prioritising courses that increase employability.



## Local Skills

Use TAFEs and private training providers to ensure that training provides the skills needed for local jobs, so that people have the opportunity to train and work within their community.





## Apprenticeships and Traineeships

Apprenticeships and traineeships are a direct entry into employment, providing industry-endorsed skills and extensive on the job experience. The State Government should continue to focus on apprenticeships and traineeships, through high levels of funding, support for employers and initiatives that help to attract high calibre candidates to apprenticeships and traineeships.

To support WA's recovery from COVID-19, the State Government has committed to a significant pipeline of work that will deliver economic stimulus projects in a sustainable way and maximise employment opportunities. This will require a supply of appropriately skilled local workers across Western Australia. Many of the skills required for these projects are in traditional trade areas, such as construction and engineering. It provides a rare opportunity for the State Government to boost the uptake of apprenticeships and traineeships, which will ensure that people who gain employment through these projects also complete training that improves their long-term employability.

In 2020, the State Government implemented a range of initiatives to ensure that apprentices and trainees could complete their training in times of economic uncertainty. These initiatives should be maintained over the next two years. In addition, apprentices and trainees should be supported with flexible approaches to delivery and assessment. It is also important to ensure that employers make full use of the subsidies and other supports available to them, so that they can retain their apprentices. Employers should also be fully supported to engage with the establishment and variation of apprenticeships and traineeships to ensure that they are responsive to industry need.



## Priority Industry Qualifications

Many of the state's key industries and occupations require institution-based qualifications, rather than apprenticeships and traineeships. High levels of funding and other supports should continue to be provided for these qualifications, where they are linked to industry need. Graduates will benefit from strong employment outcomes and industry will benefit from a local pool of skilled workers. In 2020, the State Government gave industry more direct involvement in identifying

high-priority courses. This approach should be continued over the next two years.

COVID-19 has highlighted that Western Australia's economy is different from that of Australia as a whole. Any approach used to determine priority training areas must be sensitive to the unique skills needs of Western Australia and its industries, including regional variations within the state. Strong engagement with local industry will ensure that this is successful. In addition, funding subsidies should recognise the significant variation in training delivery costs across the state, to ensure that Western Australians in regional areas have access to high quality training with strong employment outcomes within their local area.



## Micro-credentials

COVID-19 accelerated the VET sector's adoption of micro-credentials (also called skill sets). These use units of competency from recognised qualifications that address a defined industry skill need or regulatory requirement. They provide flexible training that can update skills, enhance a person's workforce mobility and create pathways into, within and between occupations.

Micro-credentials are not a substitute for full qualifications. They must be designed so that students may articulate into a full qualification, and Government strategies should support students and employers to make this progression. In addition, Government must ensure that micro-credentials strengthen the culture of life-long learning and raise the overall skills and productivity of the state's workforce.

The State Training Board identifies three key types of micro-credentials, categorised by the career stage of the student, and recommends that promotional activities, policies and training support programs are appropriate to each type:

- Entry level training for job seekers. This covers basic industry skills and may also include employability skills and language, literacy and numeracy support.
- Existing worker training that updates or extends skills. This training updates skills so that workers can remain employed, or increases skills to help workers advance within their current industry.
- Pivot training for experienced workers. This training builds on workers' existing skills and experience to help them to shift into another occupation or industry.



## Digital Literacy

Digital literacy is a foundation skill that is required across most work environments and in daily life. The VET sector has a vital role in ensuring that all Western Australians have the digital skills required to participate fully in the workforce and the community. Digital literacy skills should be embedded in all training courses, to ensure that students gain the skills necessary for work and daily life. Micro-credentials in digital skills may address skill gaps for existing workers.

Blended training delivery can be a valuable strategy to ensure that training is accessible to all Western Australians. Programs should build the sector's capability for blended training delivery.

Western Australia's industries benefit from workers who continually update their skills to keep up with technological advances. The VET system must operate with agility to train students in the latest industry practices and technologies in order to ensure that Western Australia remains competitive in national and global markets. With rising demand for workers with science, technology, engineering and mathematics skills, the VET sector should play a key role in developing these skills in the local workforce.



## Links with Industry

VET is a shared responsibility between industry, training providers and government. Strong collaboration and clear communication is crucial to an effective VET system. In a context of rapid technological change, it is more important than ever for industry to take the lead in the development of local training programs and make the most of local training options so that they can maximise the skills of their workforce.

Training providers have strong connections with local industry, through a range of channels. However, there are still many employers who are unaware of the workforce development options available to them. To reach these employers, a range of engagement strategies will be needed. The State Training Board recommends that strategies begin at the local level, through direct engagement with industry. Structured collaborations should be established between training providers and local industry, involving staff at a range of levels. Industry Training Councils should be engaged to implement localised, direct communication strategies to promote State Government training initiatives and local training options.



## Community Engagement

Efforts to promote VET to prospective students need to be increased and diversified. Targeted programs should attract and retain students from groups that are under-represented within an occupation, such as people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, women and Aboriginal people. Attracting a wider range of students to VET will increase diversity in the training environment and the workforce.

As more and more school leavers choose a university pathway, VET should be promoted to this cohort as part of a well-rounded tertiary education. Promotional strategies should highlight that VET develops different types of skills that complement a university education. This will attract a wider range of students to VET and provide industry with a workforce that has a wider range of skills and knowledge.

Across Western Australia, TAFE colleges are part of the fabric of their community. However, there are still many people who are unaware of the opportunities provided at their local college. Training providers should be enabled to use a range of strategies to engage with the local community and foster understanding of the value of VET as a pathway into employment and as an avenue for continuous upskilling and lifelong learning. Industry Training Councils should be engaged to support these activities, to draw on their extensive industry and community networks.



## Pathways for Young People

Targeted State Government support may enable young people to make effective transitions from school to further education, training and employment. This includes industry-endorsed school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, high quality VET programs for secondary students and industry-endorsed pre-apprenticeships and pre-traineeships.

In particular, the State Government's *Job Ready* pilot programs are a valuable investment in the state's future workforce and provide clear career pathways for young people. They should continue to ensure high-quality work experience placements for VET students and align with identified employment opportunities.

Communication strategies aimed at young people should promote the career opportunities that can come from a VET qualification. It is important that young people are made aware that VET is the most appropriate pathway into certain occupations that are in high demand. Strong links between schools, training providers and employers will help ensure that students are provided with high quality career guidance that enables them to make informed decisions.



## Local Skills

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues around the world, closing borders has proven to be a valuable mechanism for keeping Western Australians safe and minimising impacts on the state's economy. It has also reinforced the need for the state's industries to meet their skill needs from the local workforce as far as possible. Determining local skill needs will require collaboration between TAFEs, private RTOs, industry and government. Industry supports the use of TAFEs and private training

providers to meet the State's training needs, as this ensures that a wide range of training markets can be served, including niche training and training in regional and remote communities.

The Training Accreditation Council (TAC) gives Western Australia a unique advantage in the development of training products. High-quality, accredited training can be developed quickly, ensuring that training remains up to date with the latest developments. In an environment of rapid technological advances, speed to market will become increasingly valuable in the VET sector. The State Government, industry and training providers should make full use of TAC, where necessary, to ensure the timeliness and relevance of training in the state.

Western Australia's regional diversity has significant potential benefit for the diversification of the state's economy. Locally appropriate training will ensure that this benefit is maximised. Appropriate regional funding will ensure that training providers can attract high-calibre staff from local industries, and will also remove barriers for local students by addressing regional differences in training delivery costs and the capacity of local student cohorts to pay for training.

The *State Training Plan 2021-2022* identifies vocational education and training priorities for Western Australia that aim to ensure Western Australia's economy emerges stronger and more resilient from the global COVID-19 pandemic. The Plan draws on a range of quantitative and qualitative information. It has been developed in the context of broader State Government policies and priorities, to ensure that public investment in vocational education and training supports the strategic development of the state's economy, while giving all Western Australians the opportunity to reach their full potential.



Data from the sources identified above is used in the following ways in the *State Training Plan*:

- Labour market data is used to identify industry demand for skills and the need for targeted training initiatives for demographic cohorts, regions, and industries.
- Training data is analysed to determine the current supply of skills from the VET sector, trends in student demand and the sector's capacity, to identify areas for training investment.
- The *Review of Skills, Training and Workforce Development* outlines priorities for development and reform of the VET system in WA to create optimal outcomes for industry and students.
- The *WA Recovery Plan* identifies where the training sector can support the State Government's targeted investment to ensure the state's economy returns stronger from COVID-19.
- Industry Training Councils provide rich qualitative information that adds context and depth to the labour market and training statistics and provides valuable insights into specific issues.

### Review of Skills, Training and Workforce Development

On 21 May 2020, Premier Mark McGowan and the Minister for Education and Training, Sue Ellery jointly announced a review of skills, training and workforce development (the Review) in response to the impact of COVID-19 on Western Australia's workforce. The Review identifies skills and training needs resulting from COVID-19 and practical and responsive solutions for the post COVID-19 recovery period. Review findings were submitted on 30 June 2020, covering five key themes:

- New futures for Western Australians
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century apprenticeships
- Maximising skills from Government investment
- Live-learn-work in regional WA
- Next generation training

The Review identifies a need to prioritise State Government funding and other supports for apprenticeships and traineeships. This will help employers to retain apprentices and trainees as the economy recovers, and will ensure there is a pipeline of local skilled workers into the future. The Review made recommendations relating to the need for skill sets, digital technology skills, promoting VET, maximising training opportunities through State Government stimulus initiatives, and increasing training capacity in the regions. It also identified industry engagement strategies for TAFEs and the Department of Training and Workforce Development.

### WA Recovery Plan

The *WA Recovery Plan* will inject \$5.5 billion into the Western Australian economy. It sets out how the state will recover from the impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic by restoring business confidence, restoring consumer confidence and rebuilding the economy. The plan focuses on 21 priority streams, many of which have implications for the vocational education and training sector. Two priority streams (discussed in detail below) provide funding to the VET sector for capital works programs and skills development.

A key strategy of the *WA Recovery Plan* is to leverage investment in infrastructure projects to generate jobs and grow the state's economy. These include expanding the state's defence industry capabilities and manufacturing and energy sectors, and fast tracking projects such as METRONET. In addition, a range of stimulus measures will boost residential construction. These projects will require a workforce with skills in building and construction, engineering, electrical technology, welding and other trades. To maximise the long-term benefits of the State Government's investment, projects will create opportunities for additional apprenticeships, traineeships and other priority training. To ensure that all Western Australians can access the opportunities created by this investment, there is a need for diverse pathways into training and employment, including strategies to retrain and upskill displaced workers.

### Pipeline of Work

On 19 November 2020, the State Government announced the *Pipeline of Work* - a state-wide work plan for \$27.1 billion in government infrastructure projects scheduled to 2024. The program includes assistance for businesses bidding for work and information on workforce development initiatives such as government funding for apprenticeships and traineeships and free short courses.

## State Government Training Initiatives

Launched on 1 July 2019, the **Jobs and Skills WA Employer Incentive** provides financial assistance to Western Australian businesses who employ an apprentice or new entrant trainee.

The **Out of Contract Register** helps displaced apprentices and trainees to connect with potential employers, to enable them to finish their training. Until 30 June 2021, employers who sign up a displaced apprentice or trainee are eligible for an additional incentive payment.

On 28 July 2020, the McGowan Government announced the \$229.2 million *Rebuilding our TAFEs program* as part of the *WA Recovery Plan*. It includes the following key initiatives:

- **Training infrastructure stimulus package** – An investment of \$167.4 million for 14 capital works projects over four years will upgrade essential infrastructure at TAFE colleges and create an estimated 1,000 jobs. Projects will support training in a range of industries including resources, automotive, engineering, construction, agriculture, tourism, hospitality, health and aged care. This is the largest TAFE capital works program in the State's history.
- **Expansion of the Lower Fees, Local Skills initiative** – An investment of \$32 million from the State Government expands the Lower fees, local skills initiative. By signing up to the Heads of Agreement for Skills Reform, Western Australia has accessed additional Commonwealth funding through the JobTrainer fund., and fees will be reduced for a further 107 courses from 1 January 2021. The program now includes 180 courses in total with people under 25, concession students and eligible people of all ages looking for work to pay no more than \$400 in annual course fees.
- **Free Short Courses** – An investment of \$25 million will provide free short courses to meet immediate and emerging skill needs as the economy recovers. These skill sets are fee free for people under 25, concession students and eligible people of all ages looking for work to help get them into jobs. Courses are an opportunity to up-skill for new jobs and also provide pathways into full qualifications.
- **Apprenticeship and Traineeship Re-engagement Incentive** – An investment of \$4.8 million provides incentives for employers to take on displaced apprentices and trainees whose training contract has been terminated or cancelled by a previous employer after 1 March 2020. The incentive is available until 30 June 2021 and provides employers with a one-off payment of \$6,000 for hiring an apprentice and \$3,000 for hiring a trainee.

## National Skills Agenda

All states and territories have signed a *Heads of Agreement for Skills Reform* with the Commonwealth Government, which sets out priorities for VET reform and recognises that Australia's VET system will play a critical role in supporting Australia's economic recovery from COVID-19. It also outlines how a new national skills agreement will be developed to replace the existing *National Agreement on Skills and Workforce Development*.

The State Training Board acknowledges the intent to improve the national VET system, and notes that Western Australia's current approach to prioritising investment in training is fit for purpose and is supported by local industry. Decisions about Western Australia's training needs are made in Western Australia, informed by direct engagement with Western Australia's industries and consideration of Western Australia's regional diversity. It is important that any national funding reforms do not adversely affect this approach.

## Industry Training Council Advice

The State Training Board recognises various industry training advisory bodies (known as Industry Training Councils) from which the Board takes advice. This advice is used to inform the *State Training Plan* and to make recommendations to the Minister throughout the year concerning vocational education and training matters in Western Australia.

During the development of the *State Training Plan 2021-2022*, the Board recognised nine Industry Training Councils, who provided the Board with regular reports on the workforce and training needs of their sector, as well as an annual *State Training Plan Industry Profile*. The Profiles are developed over the course of the year and are informed by training councils' ongoing engagement with industry. They outline the education and training needs of each industry and matters relating to the supply of, and access to, publicly funded training in Western Australia. In 2020, Industry Training Councils also consulted extensively about the impact of COVID-19 on the state's industries and identified training and workforce development responses.

The consultation undertaken by Industry Training Councils ensures that the voice of Western Australia's industry is included in decisions regarding training and workforce development. In preparing the *State Training Plan*, the State Training Board took advice from the following industry training advisory bodies. Note that the Retail and Personal Services Training Council has since ceased to operate.



## Labour market impact of COVID-19

The first half of the 2019-20 financial year was a period of relative economic stability, in which Western Australia's unemployment rate gradually trended downward, from 5.9% in July 2019 to 5.2% in February 2020. This stability came to a sudden end with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in Australia, which caused drastic changes in demand and the introduction of restrictions to manage the health crisis.<sup>1</sup>

The unemployment rate reached 8.7% in June 2020, with more than 110,000 people looking for work but unable to find it. The effective unemployment rate would have been higher if there had not also been a decline in the participation rate (as some people temporarily stopped looking for work) and government interventions like JobKeeper. There may be further volatility as JobKeeper and JobSeeker payments are wound back.

In the first few months of the pandemic, demand for labour decreased due to shutdowns and economic uncertainty. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data shows a temporary reduction in the number of job vacancies across every industry sector in the May quarter of 2020.<sup>2</sup>

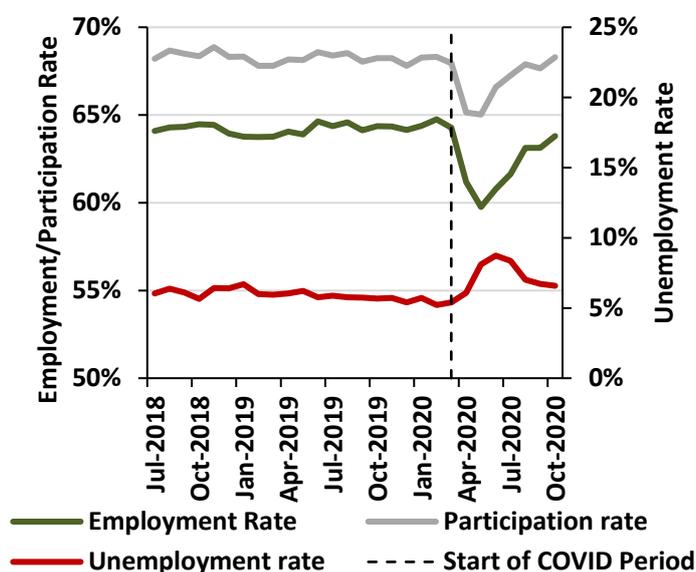
As Western Australia continued to successfully manage COVID-19 and the economy reopened with the support of significant Government investment, demand for labour increased. SEEK's Candidate Availability Index (a measure of the number of applicants per job) is now at the lowest it has been since 2014.<sup>3</sup> While this may be partly a result of JobKeeper and JobSeeker policy settings, it also indicates that there continues to be competition for skilled labour. Research undertaken by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA in September 2020 found that business confidence is improving but that one out of four respondents cited availability of skilled labour as the largest barrier facing their business in the year ahead.<sup>4</sup>

Training remains essential to ensure that the WA workforce has the skills required to meet current and future demand. Apprenticeships, traineeships and priority institutional qualifications remain as important as ever for the state's industries.

## Local skills

Western Australia's controlled border has been a successful strategy to keep the state free of COVID-19. For many employers it has also highlighted the risks of relying too heavily on interstate and international skilled labour. Until the pandemic is under control globally, international arrivals in Australia are likely to be limited, with priority given to returning Australians. This will reduce the

Figure 1. Headline Labour Force Figures, WA<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Source: ABS, 6202.0 - Labour Force, Australia, October 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Source: ABS, 6354.0 - Job Vacancies Australia, August 2020

<sup>3</sup> Source: SEEK Employment Report, September

<sup>4</sup> Source: WA Super – CCIWA Business Confidence Survey: September Quarter 2020

supply of skilled migrants. It may also be difficult for Western Australia to attract skilled workers from interstate, as all states and territories are now implementing stimulus measures that create demand for skills. Western Australia’s training sector will need to work closely with local industry to provide timely and responsive training that ensures the local workforce has the skills required.

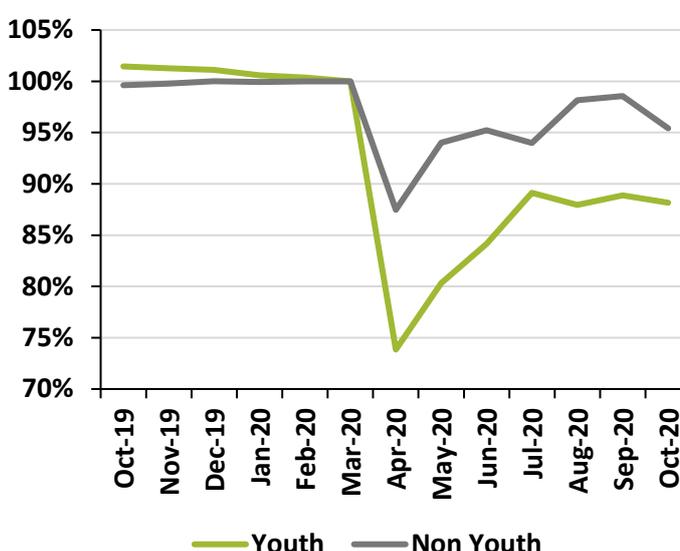
At the peak of the crisis, COVID-19 significantly disrupted global supply chains, reinforcing the importance of manufacturing essential items locally. The WA Recovery Plan allocates \$92.4 million to initiatives that boost local manufacturing. These will need to be supported with relevant training. In some cases, industry and government may need to work closely together to establish new apprenticeships, traineeships and institutional courses.

### Young people

During the peak of the crisis, many people remained in employment but at reduced hours. Figure 2 shows the change in total hours worked, which captures loss of employment as well as reduced hours, stand-downs and leave (including paid leave).

At the height of the crisis, young people were disproportionately affected. Between March and April, hours worked by youth (aged 15 to 24) decreased by 26% and as the economy reopened, their hours worked did not recover to the same extent as non-youth.<sup>5</sup>

Figure 2. Indexed Total Hours Worked, National<sup>5</sup>



Research has shown that youth who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) for a period of more than six months between the ages of 15 and 19 were only 35% as likely to be in employment at age 24 as those who were not NEET in the same period.<sup>6</sup> Measures that keep young people engaged in training may have long-term individual and economic benefits.

The youth NEET rate in WA had been declining since April 2019 before increasing due to the impacts of COVID-19. Training initiatives targeted at young people should continue to be a key component of the state’s recovery. Reductions in course fees will make training more accessible to young people and the release of a wide range of short courses will provide new pathways into training.

### Apprenticeships and traineeships

Apprenticeships and traineeships are available in a wide range of industries, from Certificate I to Advanced Diploma level. Apprenticeship and traineeship completers have strong employment outcomes. Recent research by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) found that around 90% of apprentices in traditional trades and 80% in non-trade areas were

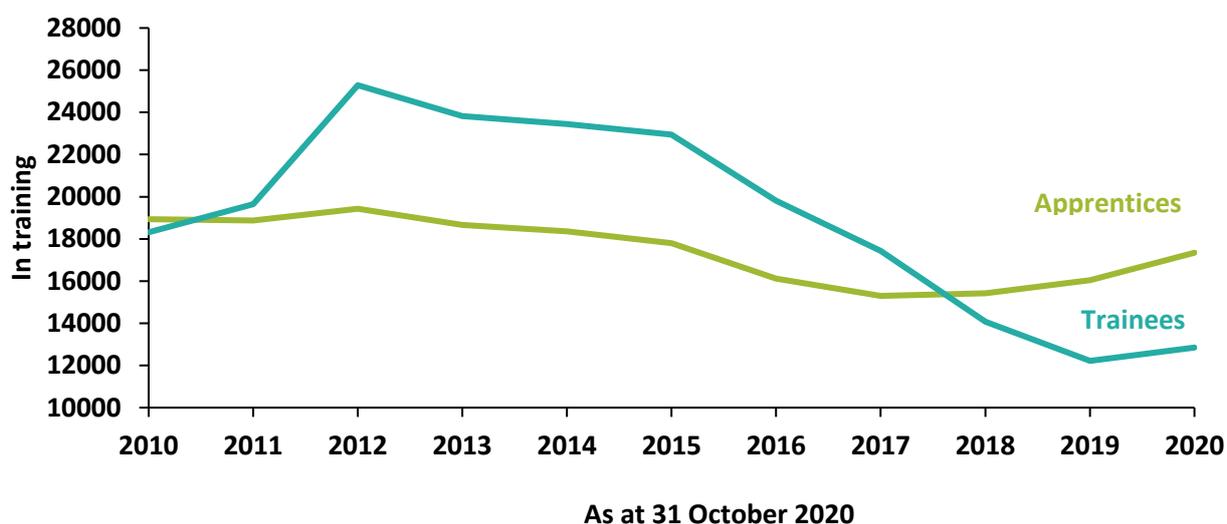
<sup>5</sup> Source: ABS, 6291.0.55.001 - Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, October 2020. Indexed to March 2020 (before the immediate impacts of COVID-19).

<sup>6</sup> Source: Stanwick, J., Forrest, C. & Skujins, P. (2017). *Who are the persistently NEET young people?*, NCVER, Adelaide.

employed after training.<sup>7</sup>

In Western Australia, apprenticeship and traineeship commencements began to decline in 2012, but have recently started to recover. This may be partly due to the wide range of State and Commonwealth Government initiatives that have recently been introduced.

**Figure 3: Apprentices and Trainees in Training, Western Australia (as at 31 October 2020)<sup>8</sup>**



### Priority funding

The Department of Training and Workforce Development provides higher subsidies to priority training, to ensure that the out of pocket cost to employers and students is minimised. This is a key mechanism to ensure that public investment in training effectively and efficiently meets the needs of the Western Australian workforce and the broader community. Prioritising funding in this way helps to right-size training delivery for the Western Australian workforce.

The highest level of subsidy is provided for foundation skills training that addresses fundamental barriers to training and employment, such as language, literacy and numeracy skills development. This includes the Course in Applied Vocational Study Skills (CAVSS), the course in Underpinning Skills for Industry Qualifications (USIQ) and accredited courses such as the Certificate I in Gaining Access to Training and Employment. Reducing the cost of these courses ensures they are accessible to all Western Australians.

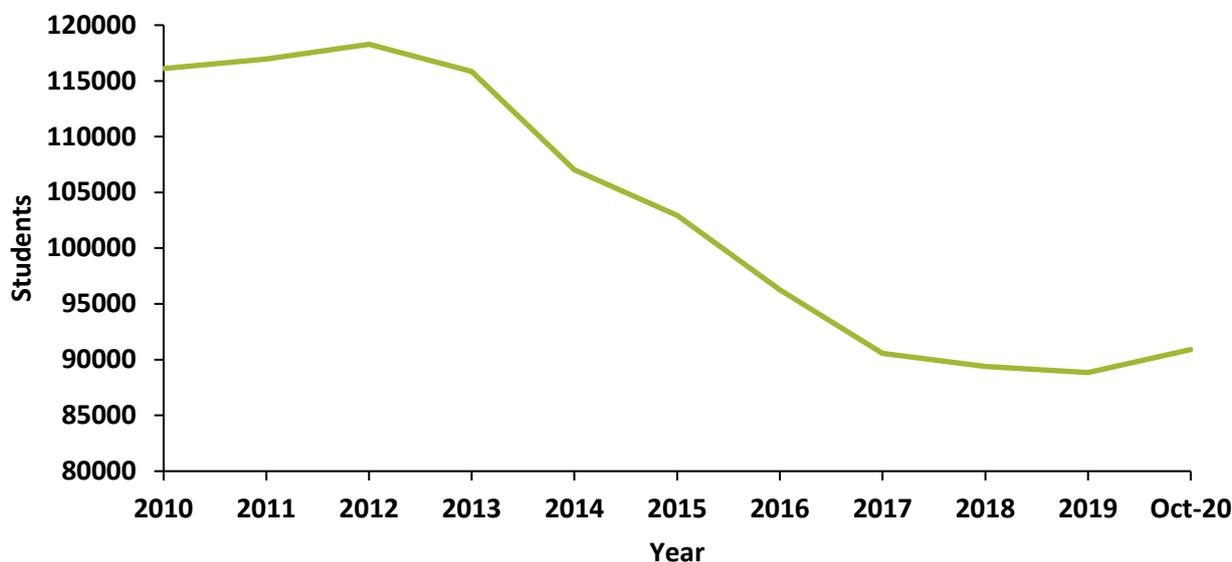
The next highest levels of subsidy are provided to qualifications or skill sets that are identified as a priority by industry. By default this includes all apprenticeships and most traineeships, as they have a direct employment outcome and are strongly supported by industry. All other qualifications are subsidised at the General Industry Qualification rate. It is worth noting that courses that do not receive the highest level of subsidy may still attract a large number of enrolments, reflecting the personal aspirations of students and indicating that the VET sector is meeting community needs.

<sup>7</sup> Source: Hargreaves, J., Stanwick, J. & Skujins, P. (2017). *The changing nature of apprenticeships: 1996-2016*, NCVET, Adelaide.

<sup>8</sup> Source: Department of Training and Workforce Development, WAAMS, November 2020.

Overall, publicly funded VET student numbers had been decreasing for some time, but have recently started showing an upswing. Early indications are that this is likely to be a result of the wide range of Government initiatives to boost training.

**Figure 4. All publicly Funded VET Students 2010-2020 (to October 2020)<sup>9</sup>**



### Satisfaction with VET

Satisfaction with training is consistently high for VET students and employers. Most recent NCVER survey data (2019) shows that 89% of graduates of publicly funded VET courses in WA were satisfied with their training.<sup>10</sup> Employer satisfaction with training as a way to meet skill needs in WA is also high: 82.5% for employers using institutional training, and 77.3% for employers with apprentices or trainees.<sup>11</sup>

Employers who use the VET system report high level of satisfaction. However, there are many employers who are unfamiliar with the VET system and the opportunities it provides. Recent research by NCVER found that the majority of employers surveyed did not discuss their training needs with registered training organisations.<sup>12</sup> In order to provide training that is relevant and current, there must be communication and coordination between industry and training providers at the local level.

To ensure that employers are fully informed of the VET options available to them, greater effort should be made to connect employers with training providers. Initiatives should make full use of the state’s Industry Training Councils and the unique place they hold in the state’s training system.

<sup>9</sup> Source: Department of Training and Workforce Development, VET enrolment data collection, November 2020.

<sup>10</sup> Source: NCVER, VET student outcomes 2019 summary findings.

<sup>11</sup> Source: NCVER, Employers' use and views of the VET system 2019.

<sup>12</sup> Source: NCVER, Employers' use and views of the VET system 2019



For more information about the State Training Board, please visit [stb.wa.gov.au](http://stb.wa.gov.au)