

NSW UE ITAB News Service 133 - Skills Ministers release 2024 National Skills Plan, Smart and Skilled updates qualification prices for 2024-25, NSW Skills List updated, NSW Fee Free (NFF) waivers to close, New smart and skilled operating guidelines released for 2024-25, NCVER releases apprentice and trainee completion 2023 rates, New report unveils strategies to tackle electrical skill shortage in clean energy transition, First look at NSW Hydrogen Centre of Excellence, Future Workforce for Building & Construction MBA 2024 Report released, Celebrating National Skills Week viva engage highlights, a closer look at work-related safety in 2024, Staying safe from 'low-risk' electrical hazards.

Executive Officer Message

A big thank you to Tony Palladino for his long-standing commitment to NSW Utilities & Electrotechnology Industry Training Advisory Body, but more importantly to the VET sector and his genuine passion for upskilling and strengthening the quality of the utilities and electrotechnology training and assessment in NSW.

With the beginning of spring, and my appointment as Executive Officer, I have big expectations to fill, especially when it comes to the contents of the newsletter. Over the last 5 years, Tony has made this newsletter one to be proud of. The newsletter is keenly sought after by industry and educational stakeholders alike, with over 1320 subscribers.

After meeting the most welcoming NSW Utilities and Electrotechnology Board, I am already planning some exciting new opportunities for the industry including a potential 2025 conference and engaging with school stakeholders to increase interest in our industries.

In this newsletter we have an:

- [**2024 NATIONAL SKILLS PLAN NOW AVAILABLE**](#)
- [**UPDATE ON SMART AND SKILLED QUALIFICATION PRICES FOR 2024-25**](#)
- [**NSW SKILLS LIST UPDATED – VERSION 15.1**](#)
- [**CLOSE OF NSW FEE FREE \(NFF\) WAIVERS \(JULY TO DECEMBER 2024\)**](#)
- [**NEW SMART AND SKILLED OPERATING GUIDELINES FOR THE 2024-25 ACTIVITY PERIOD: NEW RELEASE**](#)
- [**APPRENTICE AND TRAINEE COMPLETION RATES 2023**](#)
- [**NEW REPORT RELEASED: CHARGED UP: STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING THE SKILL SHORTAGE IN ELECTRICAL TRADES FOR THE CLEAN ENERGY TRANSITION**](#)
- [**FIRST LOOK AT NSW HYDROGEN CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE**](#)
- [**THE FUTURE OF THE WORKFORCE FOR THE BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY: MASTER BUILDERS ASSOCIATION 2024 REPORT**](#)
- [**CELEBRATING NATIONAL SKILLS WEEK: VIVA ENGAGE HIGHLIGHTS**](#)
- [**A CLOSER LOOK AT WORK-RELATED SAFETY IN 2024**](#)
- [**STAYING SAFE FROM 'LOW-RISK' ELECTRICAL HAZARDS**](#)

I hope you find it an informative read !

2024 NATIONAL SKILLS PLAN NOW AVAILABLE

The National Skills Plan outlines Skills Ministers' vision for the national vocational education and training system, and the approach to achieving the shared goals of the National Skills Agreement.

The inaugural National Skills Plan is a key early milestone for Skills Ministers under the National Skills Agreement that:

- communicates Skills Ministers' shared vision for the VET system and how governments will work together to deliver on shared outcomes and priorities.
- provides direction for industry, employers, and the VET sector to help align efforts towards the same objectives.
- details planned initiatives to strengthen the VET system architecture and workforce, better meet the needs of students and industry, and address cross-cutting and industry-specific national priorities.
- identifies early action to address national priorities and agreed outcomes as well as an overview of key milestones over the period of the National Skills Agreement.
- communicates how governments will work collaboratively and provides a base for further engagement with stakeholders.

The National Skills Plan supports shared stewardship of the VET system – a new focus on collaboration, planning and evidence-based reform, with all governments working in partnership to deliver a responsive skills and training system.

The first National Skills Plan is the start of the planning process over the five years of the National Skills Agreement. The Commonwealth, states and territories will also produce individual jurisdictional action plans that detail the action each government will take to deliver on the National Skills Plan and National Skills Agreement. These will be published beginning in November 2024.

The National Skills Plan and Jurisdictional Action Plans will be updated through an annual review cycle that considers new evidence, including on the effectiveness of the initiatives in this Plan, data on progress against outcomes, and possible shifts in national priorities.

For more information visit: www.dewr.gov.au/skills-reform/national-skills-agreement/national-skills-plan

UPDATE ON SMART AND SKILLED QUALIFICATION PRICES FOR 2024-25

The NSW Department of Education (Training Services NSW) has carefully considered Smart and Skilled qualification prices in light of the FY2024-25 NSW Budget. The NSW Government remains committed to ensuring the delivery of quality vocational education and training, but as we continue to operate in a challenging budget environment, the following changes will be implemented for this financial year:

a. Indexation of full qualification prices

Smart and Skilled prices for all qualifications on the NSW Skills List will be indexed by 2% for training that commences from 1 July 2024 onwards

There will be no change to student fees and the full increase will be applied to the subsidy component of the price. Loadings will also increase as a result.

Version 15.1 of the Smart and Skilled Prices and Fees schedule reflects these changes and can be accessed at: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/education-and-training/vocational/funding/smart-skilled-fees>.

b. Indexation of part qualification prices

The indexation adjustment of 2% will also apply to part qualification prices.

NSW SKILLS LIST UPDATED – VERSION 15.1

The NSW Skills List and Smart and Skilled Prices and Fees schedule have been updated. In addition to the price changes described above, this update covers changes because of:

- qualifications added to the NSW Skills List
- updates to training packages
- updates to Vocational Training Orders (VTOs)
- ASQA extensions to qualification transition periods.

Version 15.1 of the NSW Skills List is now available at: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/education-and-training/resources/nsw-skills-list>

A relevant qualification added to the updated skills list for our stakeholders is *CIV in Rail Safety Management (TLI42422)*. This is under targeted priorities, full qualification & entitlement traineeships. This qualification was re-added to the skills list in response to evidence of increased demand.

CLOSE OF NSW FEE FREE (NFF) WAIVERS (JULY TO DECEMBER 2024)

NSW Fee Free waivers (July to December 2024) have ceased enrolments as of 19 August 2024.

Apprenticeship and traineeship qualifications are not affected by the NSW Fee Free arrangements for 2024. Fee Free Apprenticeships and Traineeships remain in place for eligible students who commence training up until 30 June 2025.

NEW SMART AND SKILLED OPERATING GUIDELINES FOR THE 2024-25 ACTIVITY PERIOD: NEW RELEASE

Training Services NSW has released a new version of the Smart and Skilled Operating Guidelines for the 2024-25 Activity Period. The new version released on 15 August 2024 is now available on the NSW Government website at <https://www.nsw.gov.au/education-and-training/resources/smart-and-skilled-operating-guidelines>.

APPRENTICE AND TRAINEE COMPLETION RATES 2023

The latest NCVER report shows overall completion rates for apprentices and trainees decreased in 2023 but increased for trade occupations.

As reported in *Completion and attrition rates for apprentices and trainees 2023*, individual completion rates for apprentices and trainees who commenced training in 2019 decreased by 1.0 percentage point to 54.8%, when compared with those who commenced in 2018.

Individual trade completion rates increased by 0.7 percentage points to 54.1%.

Electrotechnology and Telecommunications Trade Workers had the highest individual completion rate for trade occupations (61.8%), followed by Automotive and Engineering Trades Workers at (57.6%) and ICT and Science Technicians (55.3%).

Individual non-trade completion rates declined by 2.5 percentage points to 55.7%. The highest individual completion rate for non-trade occupations was seen in Managers (64.9%), Sales Workers (57.2%), and Clerical and Administrative Workers (56.7%).

[Read the report](#) to find out more

NEW REPORT RELEASED: CHARGED UP: STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING THE SKILL SHORTAGE IN ELECTRICAL TRADES FOR THE CLEAN ENERGY TRANSITION

The Federal Government has a big agenda to drive Australia's clean energy transition with the goal of turning our sunburnt and windswept country into a *Renewable Energy Superpower*. And this is a plan to make sure that we have the workforce to do it. The Federal Government's ambitious plan to transform Australia into a Renewable Energy Superpower requires a corresponding ambition to fix critical shortages in the electrical workforce.

The report outlines the barriers to building and retaining a skilled electrical workforce and charts a comprehensive roadmap to develop the workforce that will light the way to a clean energy future:

Recommendations in the report include:

- That the Federal Government implement labour conditionality in all forms of public investment and government funded support to deliver the workforce and social licence needed to drive the energy transition.
- That the Federal Government funds the expansion of industry-led Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), in partnership with TAFE, including support for infrastructure development.
- That the Federal Government invest in industry-led apprentice mentoring and support programs.
- That the Federal Government embed industry-led Group Training Organisations in all Renewable Energy Zones.
- That the Federal Government implement an industry-led Electrical Industry Labour Agreement, where genuine skills shortages are identified.

- That the Federal Government develop and implement a wage supplement scheme to support qualified industry professionals from critical clean energy occupations to undertake training and qualify to work as Vocational Education and Training teachers and trainers.
- That the Federal Government establish a Clean Energy Jobs Commissioner to support industry and Government to create and support good, well-paid and secure jobs through the transition.

For more information visit: https://percapita.org.au/our_work/charged-up/

FIRST LOOK AT NSW HYDROGEN CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

NSW's first Hydrogen Centre of Excellence will train thousands of plumbers and gas fitters to support the state's shift to renewable energy. The \$25 million investment will deliver a practical training centre capable of training and upskilling 8,250 plumbers and gas fitters in its first 5 years of operation. The centre will be built in partnership with the Plumbing Industry Climate Action Centre (PICAC), boosting the numbers of plumbers and preparing them to work with emerging technologies.

The centre will employ more than 100 apprentices and create 500 construction jobs, supporting jobs in western Sydney. Owned and operated by PICAC, the centre will be co-located at its existing Glenwood training site and is expected to be operational by 2027.

THE FUTURE OF THE WORKFORCE FOR THE BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY: MASTER BUILDERS ASSOCIATION 2024 REPORT

The report forecasts that the building and construction industry will need 130,000 additional workers this year to overcome workforce shortages. This shortfall is on top of those required for natural attrition and requires federal and state governments to prioritise reforms that will attract and retain more workers.

This figure does not include shortfalls in the associated electrical industry which is predicted to have an undersupply of electrical workers up to 17,400 by 2030. There will also be a need for an increase of 40% of electrical apprentices annually according to Power Skills Organisation Workforce Plan to meet predicted demand.

The MBA report suggests possible ways forward for solving workforce shortages in the industry. Some of the suggestions include:

- bringing more women into the industry
- development and funding the implementation of a rolling apprentice commencement and retention strategy
- promoting the value of apprenticeships
- skilled migration
- lifelong learning
- business acumen

- *Regulator Burden changes*: the Government needs to make regulatory frameworks that are mandatory

For more information visit: <https://masterbuilders.com.au/the-future-of-the-workforce-the-building-and-construction-industry/>

CELEBRATING NATIONAL SKILLS WEEK: VIVA ENGAGE HIGHLIGHTS

National Skills Week took place from 19-25 August and was celebrated through a range of programs across the EPP schools. A highlight of the week was visit from NSW Department of Education senior executives to an [Apprenticeship and Traineeship Head Start course in Electrotechnology and Utilities with NECA](#), hosted at the Vocational Innovation Centre at Seven Hills High School.

A CLOSER LOOK AT WORK-RELATED SAFETY IN 2024

Workplace safety remains a critical concern for electrical contractors, with the construction industry accounting for 23% of all worker fatalities in 2023. Safe Work Australia's *Key Work Health and Safety Statistics 2024* highlights the growing risks, including falls from heights and mental health challenges, underscoring the importance of safety protocols and mental health support. By investing in proper training, equipment checks, and fostering a safe work culture, electrical contractors can reduce injuries, protect employees, and boost business productivity.

To find out more visit: https://www.masterelectricians.com.au/2024/09/21/think-your-job-site-is-safe-a-closer-look-at-work-related-safety-in-2024/?utm_medium=email&utm

STAYING SAFE FROM 'LOW-RISK' ELECTRICAL HAZARDS

What can be done to help businesses that are deemed 'low-risk' for electrical inspection and testing comply with their legal obligation to provide a safe work environment from electrical hazards as posed by the continued use of untested portable electrical equipment?

If you are a business or employer, you must make sure that electrical equipment is regularly inspected and tested by a competent person if it:

- is supplied with electricity through an electrical socket outlet ('plug-in' equipment), and
- used in an environment in which its normal use exposes the equipment to operating conditions that are likely to result in damage to the equipment or a reduction in its expected life span. These include conditions such as exposure to moisture, heat, vibration, mechanical damage, corrosive chemicals or dust.

Another option is to shift to using cordless, battery-operated equipment.

Find more [information on electrical inspection and testing](#).

For the latest and past News Services visit: www.uensw.com.au/news/

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