

The National Indigenous Australians Agency submission to the Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee inquiry into the provisions of the Jobs and Skills Australia Bill 2022.

August 2022

The National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee inquiry into the provisions of the Jobs and Skills Australia Bill 2022.

NIAA encourages three key issues to be reflected in the Bill:

1. First Nation job seekers are a priority cohort for Jobs and Skills Australia;
2. Prioritise publically available labour force data including Closing the Gap data sharing commitments;
3. Ensure the views of First Nation stakeholders including First Nations led Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) are included.

Ensuring First Nations people are a priority cohort is consistent with National Agreement on Closing the Gap. Specifically, the four Priority Reforms and Outcomes 6, 7 and 8¹. It will also ensure that increasing First Nations employment continues to be progressed as a mainstream employment, workplace relations and skills issue.

Jobs and Skills Australia should publish products that specifically report on First Nations labour market and workforce trends. This will address some of the current data gaps that exist between Census reporting. This is consistent with the Priority Reform 4: Shared Access to Data and Information at a Regional Level under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

To strengthen the proposed partnership approach of Jobs and Skills Australia, it is important that First Nations people are listed as key stakeholders. This is consistent with the Government's commitment to establish a Voice to Parliament and Closing the Gap Priority Reforms 1 and 2: formal partnerships and shared decision making with First Nation peoples and building the community controlled sector.

NIAA would like to propose the following amendments to the draft legislation for the Committee's consideration (amendments highlighted in yellow):

9 Functions of Jobs and Skills Australia

Jobs and Skills Australia has the following functions:

- (a) to provide advice to the Minister or the Secretary in relation to the following:
 - (i) Australia's current and emerging labour market, including advice on workforce needs and priorities;
 - (ii) Australia's current, emerging and future skills and training needs and priorities (including in relation to apprenticeships);
 - (iii) the adequacy of the Australian system for providing VET, including training outcomes;
- (b) to prepare capacity studies, including for emerging and growing industries and occupations;
- (c) to undertake workforce forecasting, assess workforce skills requirements and undertake cross-industry workforce analysis;

¹ [Dashboard | Closing the Gap Information Repository - Productivity Commission \(pc.gov.au\)](https://www.pc.gov.au/research/indicators/closing-the-gap)

- (d) to undertake research and analysis on the resourcing and funding requirements for registered training organisations (within the meaning of the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*) to deliver accessible quality VET courses;
- (e) to inform the public about the matters mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (d);
- (f) to collect, analyse, share and publish data and other information about the matters mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (d) to inform policy development and program delivery; and
- (g) to provide specific advice about the matters mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (d) that affect priority cohorts including First Nations people and people living in regional and remote Australia.
- (h) any other function that:
 - (i) is conferred on Jobs and Skills Australia by the rules, by this Act or by any other law of the Commonwealth; or
 - (ii) is incidental or conducive to the performance of the above functions.

10 Performance of functions

In performing its functions, Jobs and Skills Australia must, where appropriate, consult and work with the following:

- (a) State and Territory governments;
- (b) relevant authorities of State and Territory governments;
- (c) employers, unions, training providers and other industry stakeholders, and other persons or bodies with an interest in the labour market, workforce skills or workforce training needs.
- (d) First Nations people.