



The Group of Eight Limited
ABN 98 089 687 990

GPO Box 139
Canberra ACT 2601
Level 4, 10 Moore Street
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

t: +61 (0)2 5123 6700
www.go8.edu.au

11 April 2023

Committee Secretary
Senate Education and Employment Committees
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Email: eec.sen@aph.gov.au

Go8 Submission to Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee inquiry into the provisions of the Jobs and Skills Australia Amendment Bill 2023

The Group of Eight (Go8) welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission to the Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee inquiry into the provisions of the Jobs and Skills Australia Amendment Bill 2023.

Recognition of the importance of higher education

The Go8 supports the permanent establishment of Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) and in particular the amendment to include higher education with respect to JSA's advisory role on Australia's current, emerging, and future skills and training needs and priorities. This amendment, together with the retention of the clause requiring JSA to consult universities in the performance of its functions, will ensure that there is a holistic approach to identifying, analysing, and addressing Australia's workforce needs.

Australia needs the advanced skills taught in our universities, and in particular the research that will underpin that teaching.

Rapid technological change across all sectors of the economy has resulted in unprecedented demand for a highly skilled workforce. More than nine out of 10 jobs to be created will require post-secondary education – jobs in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) are predicted to grow by 14.2 per cent, twice as fast as non-STEM jobs at 7.4 per cent.

The development of a fit for purpose workforce will require a shared partnership across the entire post-secondary sector from vocational education and training (VET) through to our world leading research-intensive universities.

Scope of JSA functions

The Go8 supports the additional JSA functions this Bill provides for, which include:

- Analysis of relative demand and supply of skills and needs.
- Analysis of workforce needs, including in regional, rural, and remote Australia, and in relation to migration.
- Undertaking studies, including on opportunities to improve employment, VET, and higher education outcomes for cohorts of individuals that have historically experienced labour market disadvantage and exclusion.
- Contributing to industry consultation forums.



The inclusion of migration in the analysis of workforce needs is an important feature of this Bill. Recognising the crucial role of migration in workforce supply, the Go8 has advocated for the introduction of a new high potential individual (HPI) visa to attract and retain world leading researchers and educators, and enable high achieving international PhD students to remain in Australia and contribute to our social and economic prosperity.

Governance of JSA

The Go8 notes the amendments establishing the JSA Commissioner and Deputy Commissioners (with appropriate expertise), as well as the Ministerial Advisory Board. We support the appointment of two deputy positions given the breadth of the JSA's functions and strongly recommend that the Board include representation from the higher education and VET sectors.

The requirement for the JSA Commissioner to prepare a work plan and invite public submissions on the plan will enhance the ability of broader stakeholders to understand and contribute to the JSA's priorities in a transparent way.

The flexibility provided for in the Bill for the JSA Commissioner to engage additional people with specific expertise on short-term critical studies, as well as be assisted by other public sector employees (Commonwealth and State/Territory) will provide additional capacity and expertise as required.

The Go8 is ideally placed to support the JSA as both a valuable knowledge source and 'sounding board'. Our universities include leading researchers in the areas of the labour market, skills and workforce needs. In addition, Go8 universities graduated more than 120,000 students in 2021 and Go8 researchers contribute over 70 per cent of expenditure on research and experimental development by Australian higher education institutions.

We welcome the progression of JSA and look forward to contributing to the future workforce and skills needs of Australia. I would be pleased to discuss the contents of this submission in further detail and can be contacted via my Chief Operating Officer, Tracey Wright

Yours sincerely

VICKI THOMSON
CHIEF EXECUTIVE