

Sunday 28 August 2022



## ACTU, Ai Group, ACCI, BCA release common interests on skills & training ahead of jobs summit

The ACTU, Ai Group, ACCI and the BCA are launching their ‘*Statement on Common Interests on Skills and Training*’ ahead of the Jobs Summit today.

Australia must tackle today’s workforce and skills shortages and must modernise skills and training systems to respond to current and future opportunities and challenges. To do this, unions and business groups have worked together to outline reforms for the mutual benefit of learners, employers and employees, and the Australian economy and society at large.

Together, we recommend that the Albanese Government work with industry (both unions and employers) and State and Territory governments to:

1. Urgently establish Jobs and Skills Australia, as the agency responsible for producing advice to government and industry partners on economy-wide workforce needs to guide the allocation of skilling investments.
2. Invest in Vocational Education and Training by providing real and sustained funding increases to ensure the system meets labour market needs and increases accountability, with reforms focussing on learner outcomes.
3. Reinvigorate and adapt Australia’s apprenticeship system by increasing funding from the October 2022 budget. Investment must increase apprentice wage subsidies, provide incentive completion payments for both employers and apprentices, and payments for mentoring programs for apprentices.
4. Guarantee foundational skills, including digital literacy, for all Australians. This should be done through updating the National Foundation Skills Strategy for Adults to recognise the impact of digital disruption; refreshing national language, literacy, numeracy, and digital skills strategies to include tangible and realistic KPIs to ensure accountability; and expanding funding for initiatives to deliver relevant training.
5. Support lifelong learning to ensure the workforce adapts to ever-changing needs through incentives to upskill and increasing the delivery and integration of more flexible training options.

### Quotes attributable to Ai Group Chief Executive Innes Willox:

“Ai Group has long advocated for action to create a revitalised and appropriately funded Vocational and Education Training system. VET is the bedrock of the skills for our nation. Never before has the demand for skills been more urgent or more important. The establishment of Jobs and Skills Australia is a critical step in driving a high performing training sector with industry engagement at every level. The task ahead is large, achievable and urgent.”

**Media contact:** Tony Melville 0419 190 347

**Quotes attributable to ACCI Chief Executive Officer Andrew McKellar:**

“This joint statement is a powerful demonstration by peak business and union organisations that there is a genuine willingness to work together where we share common ground.

“The best way to grow our workforce and future-proof against recurring shortages is by training Australians. Skills reform is needed to provide consistent funding increases to vocational education and training, and grow apprenticeship numbers, ensuring the system is in lockstep with industry needs.”

**Media contact:** Jack Quail 0498 181 207

**Quotes Attributable to Business Council Chief Executive Jennifer Westcott:**

“It is Australians with the best skills in the world that will drive us to the frontier, secure new opportunities and build a more productive economy with better jobs, so getting this right is critical. The workforce challenge ahead is monumental but with a shared purpose businesses, unions and government can put Australians in the box seat for good jobs in new and developing industries, and make Australia a world leader in education, skills and lifelong learning.”

**Media Contact:** BCA Media 02 8224 9214

**Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O’Neil:**

“The upcoming Jobs and Skills Summit gives us the unique opportunity for national reform and the ACTU, Ai Group, ACCI and the BCA are working together in the national interest to expand, modernise and make more accessible our skills and training system.

“We must do everything possible to stop inequality growing in Australia – by investing in skills and training we can give workers in Australia greater opportunities, end skill shortages and be ready for the jobs of today and of the future. Our economy and workforce never stop growing and changing, and neither should education. Through investment in VET and TAFE, national foundational skills strategies, apprenticeships, and lifelong learning we can ensure no worker is left behind.”

**Media contact:** Peter Green 0400 764 200