

Consultation Strategy – Review of Drilling Operations Qualifications

This document describes the stakeholder consultation that AUSMASA will undertake during the Review of Drilling Operations Qualifications project.

Project Overview

This project seeks to review and revise a suite of RII drilling qualifications and develop up to 3 Skill Sets to support national water well drilling licensing requirements.

The project will:

- Review and update Certificates II, III and IV in Drilling Operations
- Review superseded units in the Diploma and Advanced Diploma of Drilling Operations
- Develop new skill sets for Water Well drilling to underpin licensing requirements via the National Uniform Drillers Licensing Committee (NUDLC)
- Ensure qualifications reflect current and emerging industry practices across mineral exploration, geotechnical investigation, water access, and infrastructure drilling

Project Background and Rationale:

Drilling underpins exploration and investment, enabling the discovery of mineral deposits, particularly critical minerals essential for clean energy technologies. Australia invests over \$5 billion annually in exploration, with long-term demand and strong commodity markets driving sustained growth. Beyond mining, the sector is vital for geotechnical investigation and water access which are key inputs for projects such as pumped hydro, dam upgrades, transmission lines and desalination plants.

Drilling will be critical to delivering the net zero emissions target by 2050, providing the enabling services needed to build new infrastructure, access groundwater and unlock energy and mineral resources. Forecasts indicate a 26% increase in mining investment and sustained exploration activity through to 2029, driven by high demand for copper, lithium, gold, uranium and other base metals.

During AUSMASA's 'Superseded Units Review' project, the drilling industry identified that certain superseded and imported units in the core of drilling qualifications should be replaced with more appropriate RII units. Industry feedback indicates the need for:

- Comprehensive review of occupations and roles within Drilling Operations
- Updated qualifications reflecting current and emerging industry practices
- New skill sets to underpin water well licensing requirements through the National Uniform Drillers Licensing Committee (NUDLC)
- Support for workforce mobility, licensing consistency and career development
- Clear, industry-led career and licensing pathways to improve workforce supply and productivity

Workforce challenges include an ageing workforce and loss of experienced drillers to stable sectors like water well and geotechnical drilling. This project addresses the critical need for up-to-date, comprehensive training that reflects evolving industry demands across mineral exploration, geotechnical investigation, water access and infrastructure drilling.

Qualifications

The following qualifications are in scope for this project:

- [RII20920 Certificate II in Drilling Operations](#)
- [RII31820 Certificate III in Drilling Operations](#)
- [RII40920 Certificate IV in Drilling Operations](#)

Additionally, a review will be undertaken of the superseded units of competency in the core of the following qualifications:

- [RII50620 Diploma of Drilling Operations](#)
- [RII60415 Advanced Diploma of Drilling Management](#)

Skill Sets

Up to three Skill Sets will be designed to support licensing requirements for water well drilling occupations and specific categories of licenses.

Unit of Competency

This project involves the review of 69 units of competency across drilling operations, well servicing, and related support functions. The complete list of units is provided in Appendix A.

Activity Timeline

This project will begin in December 2025 and is scheduled to be completed in July 2027.

Activity	Timeframe
Commencement	December 2025
Establish a Technical Committee (TC)	January 2026 – April 2026
Stakeholder consultation to inform the development of draft training products.	January 2026 – July 2026
Draft 1 Training Products approved by TC for public and government consultation	July 2026
Public and government consultation	August 2026
Feedback from public and government consultation reviewed by TC	September 2026 – January 2027

Activity	Timeframe
Draft 2 Training Products (if required) approved by TC for public and government consultation*	September 2026 – January 2027 (if required)
Final version Training Products reviewed by TC	January – February 2027
Senior Officials Check	February 2027 – March 2027
Submission to the Assurance Body	April 2027
Upload the endorsed training products to the National Training Register following endorsement of the training products by Skills Ministers	June 2027 (within 10 business days of endorsement)
Promotion, implementation and monitoring of the endorsed training products	June 2027 – July 2027

*A second round of consultation will be determined following a review of feedback received from the draft 1 training products. If a second round of consultation is required it will take place in September 2025.

Stakeholder Consultation

Key stakeholder groups have been identified for this project and we will ensure each is contacted to seek their participation and gather feedback on the draft training products. Through broad public consultation, interested parties will be invited to contribute their insights, the results of which will inform further targeted consultations and guide the development of the training materials.

During consultation, the Technical Committee will help identify any additional stakeholder groups that should be included. The identification and consultation with these stakeholder groups will offer more opportunities for feedback before the draft training products are released.

Interested stakeholders can visit the AUSMASA website project page as the primary source of information regarding the project status and activities. Stakeholders can subscribe for updates to the project and view the draft training products when available for consultation. Feedback is welcome at any time and encouraged via the project page links.

To keep up to date with project developments and be notified of consultation opportunities stakeholders are encouraged to:

- Visit the website project page – [Review of Drilling Operations Qualifications - Training Product Development](#)
- Subscribe to project updates - <https://ausmasa.org.au/subscribe-to-review-of-drilling-qualifications/>
- [Subscribe](#) to The Journey newsletter
- [Follow](#) AUSMASA on LinkedIn

Key stakeholder groups

A wide range of stakeholders will inform the project. It should be noted that consultation is not limited to the organisations listed below. All interested participants are encouraged to engage in the

consultation opportunities of this project, and provide feedback when the draft training products are available.

Mining SWAP members

Our Strategic Workforce Advisory Panels (SWAPs) are a vital source of industry knowledge, ensuring vocational education and training (VET) programs remain aligned with employer needs.

Our SWAPs serve as a wealth of knowledge. Their insights help us ensure that vocational education and training (VET) programs meet the evolving needs of employers and remain relevant. These individuals also engage and consult with us on workforce matters affecting the mining and automotive industries.

Through consultation with a broad range of industry representatives, the panel helps us understand and respond to the workforce demands of this rapidly evolving sector.

SWAP membership details can be found on the AUSMASA webpage

Mining SWAP – <https://ausmasa.org.au/get-involved/mining-swap/>

Table 1 - Industry Stakeholders

Organisation	Location	Stakeholder type
A & M Drilling and Blasting Services	South Australia	Employer
Association of Mining and Exploration Companies (AMEC)	National	Industry Association
Australian Drilling Industry Association (ADIA)	National	Peak Body
Australian Workers' Union (AWU)	National	Union
BHP	National	Employer
Bunbury Drilling Company	Western Australia	Employer
Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia (CME)	Western Australia	Industry Association
Coldwell Drilling	Queensland	Employer
Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety (LIGIRS)	Western Australia	Regulator
JSW Drilling	Western Australia	Employer
National Uniform Drillers Licensing Committee (NUDLC)	National	Regulator
Mineral Resources	Western Australia	Employer

Organisation	Location	Stakeholder type
Mining and Energy Union	National	Union
Mitchell Services	National	Employer
Ophir Drilling	New South Wales	Employer
Phoenix Drilling	Queensland	Employer
Queensland Resources Council	Queensland	Industry Association
Resources Safety & Health Queensland (RSHQ)	Queensland	Regulator
Rio Tinto	National	Employer
Strike Drilling	Western Australia	Employer
Swick Mining	National	Employer
Titeline Drilling	Victoria	Employer
Wallis Drilling	Western Australia	Employer

Table 2. Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)

Organisation
All RTOs listed in training.gov.au with qualifications on the scope listed on the project webpage

Table 3. Senior Responsible Officers (SROs), regulators and other JSCs

Organisation	Location	Stakeholder type
Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade	NT	STA
Victorian Skills Authority	VIC	STA
Skills Canberra	ACT	SRO/STA
Department of Education NSW, Skills Policy	NSW	SRO/STA
Department of Trade, Employment and Training	QLD	SRO/STA
Skills SA	SA	SRO/STA

Organisation	Location	Stakeholder type
Department of Employment and Workplace Relations	Commonwealth	SRO
Northern Territory Government, Training Package Development	NT	SRO
Skills Tasmania, Department of State Growth	TAS	SRO
Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR)	VIC	SRO
Department of Training and Workforce Development (DTWD) WA	WA	SRO
BuildSkills Australia	National	JSC

Table 4. Jurisdictional distribution of stakeholders

Stakeholder type	National	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA
RTO	✓		✓				✓		✓
Employer	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
Union	✓								
Industry association/ peak body	✓								
State & Territory Officials	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Key stakeholder consultation mechanisms/approaches

The consultation approaches have been designed to be accessible for all stakeholders and provide a variety of ways to interact with and provide input into the development stage.

Consultation type: Interviews with targeted stakeholder groups

To inform the consultation strategy and validate the technical writing of the training products.

1:1 interviews with Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), either online or face to face, as identified in initial consultations.

Consultation type: Public Consultation

- Minimum 4 weeks as per the [Training Package Organising Framework](#) (TPOF)
- Draft training products will be available via the AUSMASA website for stakeholders to review and provide feedback
- Feedback is encouraged from all those with relevant expertise and knowledge from all sectors.

- Feedback will be gathered and documented in the consultation log.

Consultation type: Senior Officials Check

- A minimum of two weeks as per the TPOF.
- Feedback will be gathered and documented in the consultation log.

Consultation type: Technical Committee (TC)

- Set up on commencement of the project with tripartite representation including:
 - Subject Matter Experts with expertise in drilling operations across multiple drilling disciplines (oil and gas, water well, mineral exploration, geotechnical, blast hole, directional, and trenchless drilling)
 - RTOs delivering drilling qualifications
 - Regulatory body or state training authority representatives
 - Union representation
- Will meet via monthly meetings throughout the project to provide technical input and advice.
- Governed by TC Terms of Reference
- Will consider public and government feedback received and provide advice on required revisions to training products.
- Ensure all feedback documented in the project Consultation Log has been considered and a response formed and documented.

Consultation type: Workplace Functional Analyses

- WFAs may be conducted across states and territories to identify and describe the work undertaken by drillers across multiple drilling contexts.

Consultation type: Online Workshop

- Outlining project details
- Inviting broad consultation

Contact

For further details regarding this project:

- Training Product Development Lead, tpi@ausmasa.org.au

Version Control

Version Number	Date	Author	Reviewed By	Approved By	Description of Change
1.0	21/01/2026	Andinet Shiferaw	Annie Barry	Annie Barry	Initial draft

Appendix A

[RIIOGD205E Support blow out prevention operations](#)

[RIIOGD206E Assist and monitor well control operations](#)

[RIIWSV203E Prepare equipment for well servicing air operations](#)

[RIIWSV301F Conduct and maintain well servicing derrick operations](#)

[RIIWSV302E Trip production string for well servicing operations](#)

[RIIWSV303E Operate fluid systems](#)

[RIIWSV304E Prepare well servicing fishing operations](#)

[RIIWSV401E Rig up and rig down for well servicing operations](#)

[RIIWSV402D Conduct well servicing milling operations](#)

[RIIWSV403E Participate in well servicing nipple-up and pressure test](#)

[RIIWSV404D Conduct fishing operations](#)

[RIIWSV501D Manage well servicing induction and orientation](#)

[RIIWSV502E Manage well completion and rig release](#)

[RIIWSV503E Manage and monitor rig-up operations](#)

[RIINHB201E Load, secure and unload drilling equipment and materials](#)

[RIINHB202E Set up and pack up drill sites](#)

[RIINHB203E Support drilling processes](#)

[RIINHB205F Assist continuous flight auger drilling](#)

[RIINHB206E Assist large diameter auger drilling](#)

[RIINHB208E Assist diamond core drilling](#)

[RIINHB210E Assist surface directional drilling](#)

[RIINHB211E Assist mud rotary drilling](#)

[RIINHB217E Assist horizontal direction drilling](#)

[RIINHB218E Assist grouting and cementing operations](#)

[RIINHB219E Assist with reverse circulation drilling](#)

[RIINHB220 Assist coil tube drilling](#)

[RIINHB221 Assist rotary air drilling](#)

[RIINHB222 Assist sonic drilling operations](#)

[RIINHB301E Set up and prepare for drilling operations](#)

[RIINHB302D Conduct reaming](#)

[RIINHB303D Install product pipe](#)

[RIINHB304E Conduct reverse circulation drilling operations](#)

[RIINHB305E Conduct continuous flight auger drilling](#)

[RIINHB306E Conduct large diameter auger drilling](#)

[RIINHB307D Conduct conventional core drilling](#)

[RIINHB308D Conduct wireline core drilling](#)

[RIINHB309E Conduct guided boring](#)

[RIINHB310D Conduct surface directional drilling](#)

[RIINHB311E Conduct mud rotary drilling operations](#)

[RIINHB312D Conduct raise boring](#)

[RIINHB315D Conduct top-hole hammer drilling](#)

[RIINHB316D Conduct underground in-seam directional drilling](#)

[RIINHB317D Install underground in-seam directional drilling standpipes](#)

[RIINHB318D Install and operate water and gas control equipment](#)

[RIINHB320D Construct monitoring bores](#)

[RIINHB322E Construct multiple aquifer production bores](#)

[RIINHB323D Conduct horizontal directional drilling](#)

[RIINHB324E Conduct grouting or cementing operations](#)

[RIINHB325E Construct single aquifer bores](#)

[RIINHB326 Conduct coil tube drilling](#)

[RIINHB327 Conduct cyber chair drilling operations](#)

[RIINHB328 Conduct rotary air drilling](#)

[RIINHB329 Conduct sonic drilling operations](#)

[RIINHB330 Conduct down-hole hammer drilling](#)

[RIIOGD304D Apply effective coal seam gas control practices](#)

[RIIOGD305E Apply blow out prevention operational procedures](#)

[RIIOGD405E Carry out well control and blow out prevention operations](#)

[RIINHB403D Supervise geotechnical drilling operations](#)

[RIIOGD504D Manage drilling operations](#)

[RIICCR601D Manage customer relationships](#)

[RIIENV601D Establish and maintain the environmental management system](#)

[RIIRIS601D Establish and maintain the risk management system](#)

[RIIWHS601D Establish and maintain the WHS management system](#)

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