



**Mining and
Automotive**
Skills Alliance

VET Workforce Blueprint

Stream 1 June 2025





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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live and work. We acknowledge Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We honour and respect their Elders, past and present, and extend that respect to all First Nations people.



Introduction

The Mining and Automotive Skills Alliance (AUSMASA) is one of 10 Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs) established by the Australian Government to provide industry with a stronger, more strategic voice in ensuring Australia's vocational education and training (VET) sector delivers better outcomes for learners and employers.

We are strengthening the role of the mining and automotive industries, empowering them to drive reforms to Australia's VET system, to ensure employers and individuals can access the right skills at the right time.



Overview of our industries

AUSMASA is responsible for training packages for the automotive and mining industries, as detailed below:

- RII – Resources and Infrastructure Industry (RII) Training Package (Mining)
- AUR – Automotive Retail, Service and Repair (AUR) Training Package
- AUM – Automotive Manufacturing (AUM) Training Package.

Australia's mining industry is a key economic driver, generating over \$400 billion in revenue and employing more than 280,000 people¹. The mining and automotive industries are undergoing significant changes in workforce requirements in response to industries' changing needs, such as ongoing digitisation, electrification, net zero and skills shortages².

The automotive industry in Australia employs nearly 318,000 workers and has 21 million registered vehicles.^{3,4} With revenue exceeding \$180 billion in 2024–25, the industry remains a major economic contributor to the economy.⁵ In 2024, a record 1,237,287 new vehicles were sold, around

9% (or 114,455) of total new light vehicle sales are derived from plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) and electric vehicles (EVs), reflecting a growing shift towards more sustainable transportation.⁶

Future skills shortages informing training needs in the mining industry were identified in the areas of hydrogen safety, critical minerals, technology and electrics during recent Roundtable Consultations conducted by AUSMASA.

Similarly, the automotive industry focused on skills shortages related to EVs. Skills in autonomous operations, systems administration, data analytics, and cybersecurity were also highlighted as areas of future need⁷. Additionally, the ageing workforce, recruitment challenges, and global political factors were raised as potential disruptors in the sector.

¹ IBISWorld, and Ryan Tan. "Mining." November 2024.

² AUSMASA 2025 Workforce Plan Consultation Paper

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics(ABS), Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, Oct 2024, Data Trended by AUSMASA.

⁴ Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts, "Road Vehicles, Australia, January 2024", 23 July 2024.

⁵ IBISWorld, and Misaki Lishi. "Automotive Industry in Australia," August 2024.

⁶ RACV. "Australia's Best-Selling Cars, Utes and SUVs for 2024 | RACV." RACV, 2024.

⁷ AUSMASA 2025 February Roundtables - Summary

Scope and methodology

This project aims to develop a comprehensive understanding of the VET workforce in the mining and automotive industries, focusing on industry-specific roles, challenges, opportunities, pathways and emerging workforce issues.

To meet the project's scope, a nationwide VET workforce study for the mining and automotive industries, including sub-sectors such as coal mining, metal ore mining, automotive retail, and automotive manufacturing, was undertaken.

Milestones and deliverables

The stages of the project, as identified in the initial Workplan Guidance in July 2024, are as follows:



Step 1

Quantitative analysis

October 2024 – February 2025



Step 2

Qualitative data collection

March 2025 – April 2025



Step 3

Draft report

April 2025 – May 2025



Step 4

Final report and updated workplan

June 2025

A breakdown of activities and timeline is available on the AUSMASA website.

[Go to VET Workforce Blueprint page](#)

Consultation and analysis

Who did we talk to?

Research and consultation was conducted across all states and territories with key stakeholders, including:

- public and private Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)
- Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs)
- trainers and VET practitioners – in accordance with Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) taxonomy
- employee representatives
- employers in the mining and automotive industries
- government, industry associations and peak bodies.

A structured approach to data collection through analysis and consultation was adopted, using a range of methods (Figure 1a) to capture diverse insights and validate findings.

For a detailed Stakeholder Consultation Strategy outlining the engagement plan, see the [AUSMASA website](#).

Figure 1a: Data collection and consultation methods

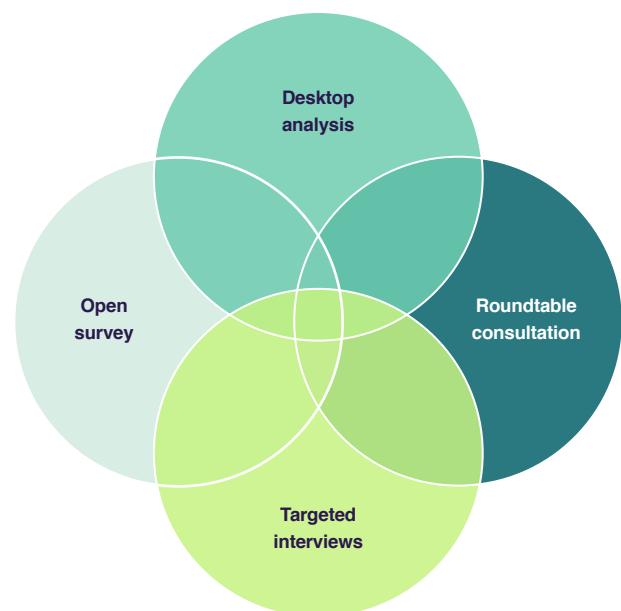


Figure 1a showcases the balanced consultation conducted throughout the project, including a breakdown of stakeholders consulted at the AUSMASA Roundtables⁷. The cross-section of attendees ensured that quality data was collected from a range of viewpoints.



**Figure 1b: Stakeholder consultation groups
AUSMASA Roundtable 2025**

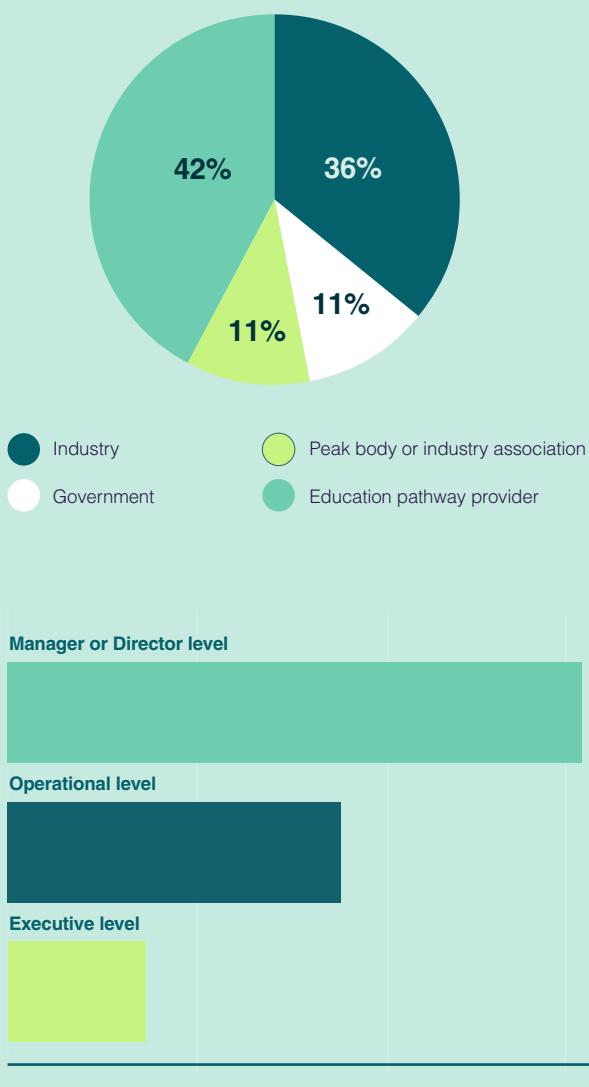


Figure 1b illustrates the depth of stakeholder organisations and range of organisational employment levels consulted throughout the process.

Working together – Jobs and Skills Councils

Collaboration across JSCs through weekly virtual and in-person events throughout the project ensured a unified approach, along with the sharing and optimal use of expertise. These continuous and open discussions highlighted both the commonalities and unique characteristics of each industry.

An example of the unique aspects of industry areas is salary parity and its impact on attracting workers to the VET sector. In the mining industry, salaries typically exceed those in the VET sector, posing a barrier. Conversely, in many other industry areas, salary is a major draw.

Collecting the data – quantitative analysis

Desktop analysis included examination of relevant data from JSA VET Workforce Study, Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations – ANZSCO (242211), Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification – ANZSIC (8101), including the following sources:

- Census of Population and Housing, 2021
- VOCSTATS, total VET students and courses.

Sourcing data on the VET workforce in the mining and automotive industries is challenging, particularly when trying to isolate information for ANZSCO 242211 within ANZSIC 8101.

The quantitative analysis was also completed using the following data collected online and throughout the AUSMASA Roundtable Consultation:

- Survey – open website
- Menti
 - Public and private RTOs
 - Trainers and VET practitioners – in accordance with JSA taxonomy
 - Employee representatives
 - Employers in the mining and automotive industries
 - Government, industry associations and peak bodies.

Qualitative – analysis

Feedback was sought from key stakeholders using a range of methods.

- Roundtables: national consultation was undertaken, providing stakeholders with the opportunity to engage and share insights and initiatives. Table 1 outlines attendance numbers.

Table 1: AUSMASA Roundtable attendee numbers

Location	Attendees
Melbourne	22
Brisbane	31
Sydney	13
Adelaide	25
Perth	40
Total	131

- Targeted interviews: direct feedback was sought from a range of stakeholders to extend the consultation process across all states and territories. Methodology was both virtual and face-to-face.
- This included the following locations:
 - Hobart
 - Darwin
 - Canberra.





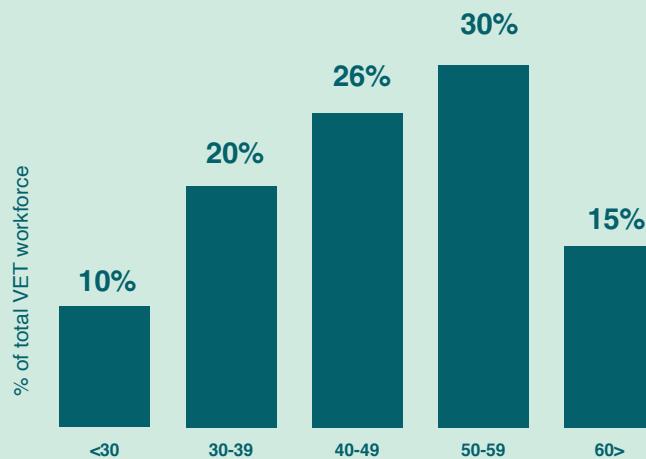
Understanding our VET Workforce

Data collected through both qualitative and quantitative methods has confirmed the following characteristics of the VET workforce in the mining and automotive industries.

An ageing workforce

Consultation across AUSMASA roundtable stakeholder groups indicated that the automotive and mining VET workforce is ageing, with the majority of the workforce in the 50–59 age group (Figure 2). The section on [VET Workforce Segmentation](#) includes a further breakdown of age distribution.

Figure 2: Average age distribution of the mining and automotive VET workforce



Source: AUSMASA Roundtable Consultation 2025 – Menti



Case studies

Recognising the challenges posed by an ageing workforce, a public RTO has implemented a transition to retirement initiative. A gradual reduction of weekly working hours and teaching load were among the initiatives implemented to address this issue.

This approach enabled the experienced staff member to move away from day-to-day tasks and make a positive contribution to creating support networks and pathways for new staff, facilitating mentoring and transferring their valuable knowledge and skills.

Throughout the consultation, the presence of an ageing workforce was generally considered a challenge. However, this is not the case with an Indigenous-owned RTO. They emphasised that the benefit of additional years and experience of a trainer was highly revered and respected by the students. Current trainers reaching 70 years of age were greatly valued and played a crucial role in mentoring new entrants. The growth mindset of this RTO demonstrated that the ageing characteristic of the workforce presents an opportunity for the sector to reframe its perspective and maximise the benefits.



Education levels

While limited data was available for the qualification levels of the broader VET workforce in the mining and automotive industries, the data sourced from the 2021 Census in Figure 3 shows that the majority of VET teachers (self-nominated in this role) in industry enterprises (VET teachers employed in a mining or automotive business) hold a Certificate III and Certificate IV.

Figure 3a: Education levels of VET teachers in mining enterprises

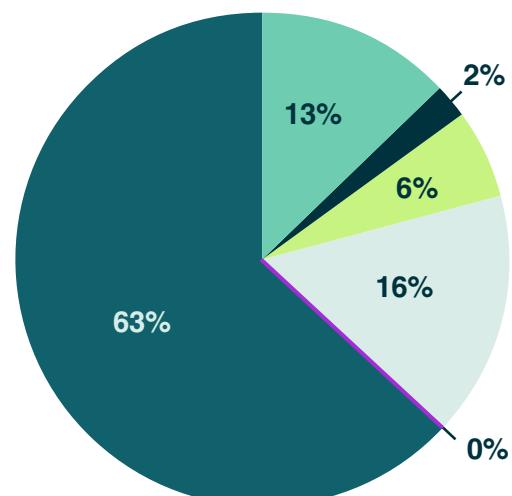
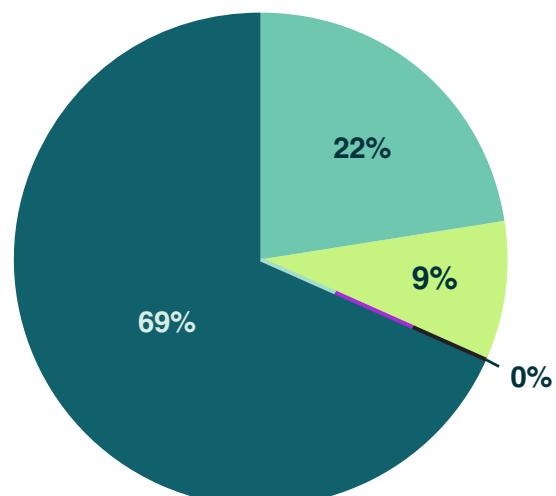


Figure 3b: Education levels of VET teachers in automotive enterprises



Source: 2021 Census – counting persons, 15 years and over. 3-digit level INDP Industry of Employment and 1-digit level HEAP Level of Highest Educational Attainment by 6-digit level OCCP Occupation

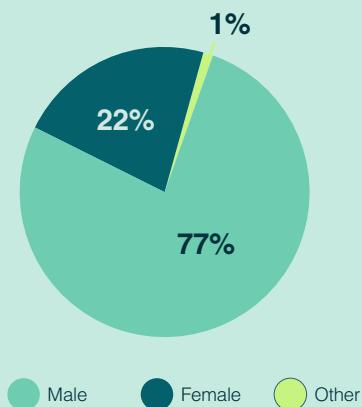
Gender diversity

A common theme was the lack of gender diversity in the mining and automotive VET workforce, as evidenced by the results of the open survey conducted by AUSMASA in 2025⁸ (Figure 4). Targeted interviews reinforced this finding, with all participants discussing the workforce's lack of gender diversity. The heavy automotive VET trainer and assessor career specialisation was notably characterised by strong male representation. A further breakdown of gender distribution is included in the section on VET Workforce Segmentation.

An indicator and driver of change in the VET workforce ecosystem is the student and workforce profile:

- The female workforce makes up 27% of the overall mining industry. However, this is still below the national average of 48%. Female enrolments in VET (RII) mining qualifications have increased by 29% from 2016 to 2023, making up 15% of all (RII) mining enrolments in 2023.¹⁰
- Female participation is comparatively low in the automotive sector, with women only representing 20% of the workforce. Female enrolments in VET AUM (Automotive Industry Manufacturing) and AUR (Automotive Industry Retail, Service and Repair) qualifications have increased by 132% from 2016 to 2023, making up 7% of all AUR and AUM enrolments in 2023.¹²

**Figure 4: VET Workforce – gender diversity
mining and automotive**



Source: Open survey – leadership respondents – AUSMASA March Feb – April 2025

9 Australian Bureau of Statistics(ABS), Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, Oct 2024, Data Trended by AUSMASA.

10 VOCSTATS, 'Total VET students and courses 2023', 2024

11 ABS, "Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, Oct 2024", 2025. Data Trended by AUSMASA.

12 VOCSTATS, 'Total VET students and courses 2023', 2024

Cultural diversity

The survey data underscored the lack of diversity in the mining and automotive VET workforce, with only 3% of individual respondents indicating they speak a language other than English at home⁸. This finding was reinforced by the data shown in Table 2, with the majority of VET teachers being born in Australia, particularly in the mining industry. VET trainers are typically required to hold a vocational qualification or its equivalent along with industry experience in addition to the Certificate IV Training and Assessment (TAE), all of which may create barriers to entry for people who have not been born or lived in Australia for a significant period of time.

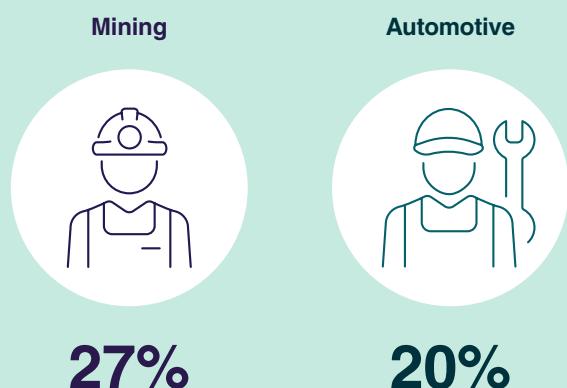
Table 2: VET teachers' country of birth

Industry	% Born in Australia
Automotive	60%
Mining	81%

Source: Census of Population and Housing, 2021, TableBuilder.

Notably, a public RTO in a regional area is the only stakeholder to report a culturally diverse VET workforce during targeted interviews. The RTO predominantly delivers VET Certificate I and II vocational preparation and automotive-related qualifications to high school cohorts, with a small number of trainers and assessors.

**Figure 5: VET Workforce – female representation
in the workforce**





First Nations representation

First Nations representation in the VET workforce is a significant growth opportunity, as only 2% of individuals undertaking the automotive and mining VET workforce survey⁸ identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin.

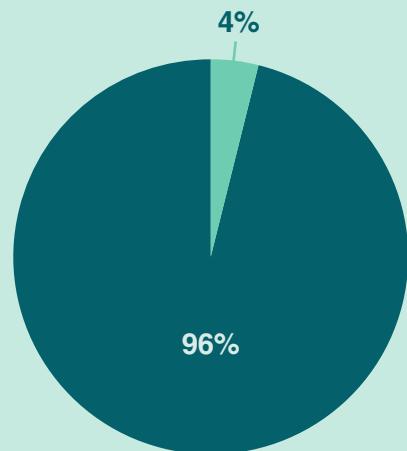
Regional consultations with an Indigenous-owned RTO highlighted the difficulty of sourcing trainers and assessors with the necessary vocational currency, training and assessment qualifications and ability to work with Community. An essential aspect of addressing the issue of attracting suitably skilled staff was to ensure the advertising contained clear and explicit wording, targeting the appropriate skills, along with the ability to work with diverse cohorts and provide the necessary culturally sensitive pastoral care.

Desktop analysis also showed that the automotive industry is lagging in Indigenous VET teacher representation in industry enterprises, as can be seen in Figure 6. While the data is sourced from the 2021 Census, indicators from current consultation suggest that this has remained stagnant.

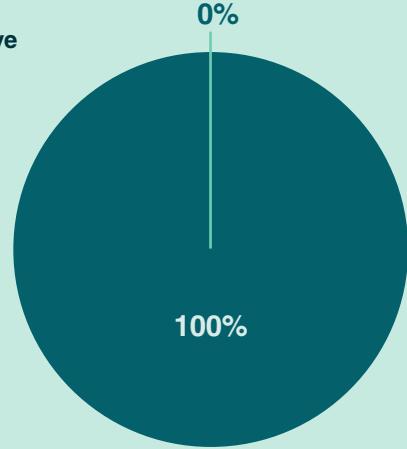
The Perceptions of Automotive Careers Research Project, conducted throughout 2024 by AUSMASA in partnership with Fifth Quadrant¹³, found 56% of First Nations high school students were interested in pursuing a career in the automotive industry. This was significantly higher than the 30% of all high school students who shared this interest. Research also revealed that a proactive approach needs to be taken to ensure that career guidance and support are provided to enable students to progress this interest.

Figure 6: Indigenous status of VET teachers in enterprise RTO

Mining



Automotive



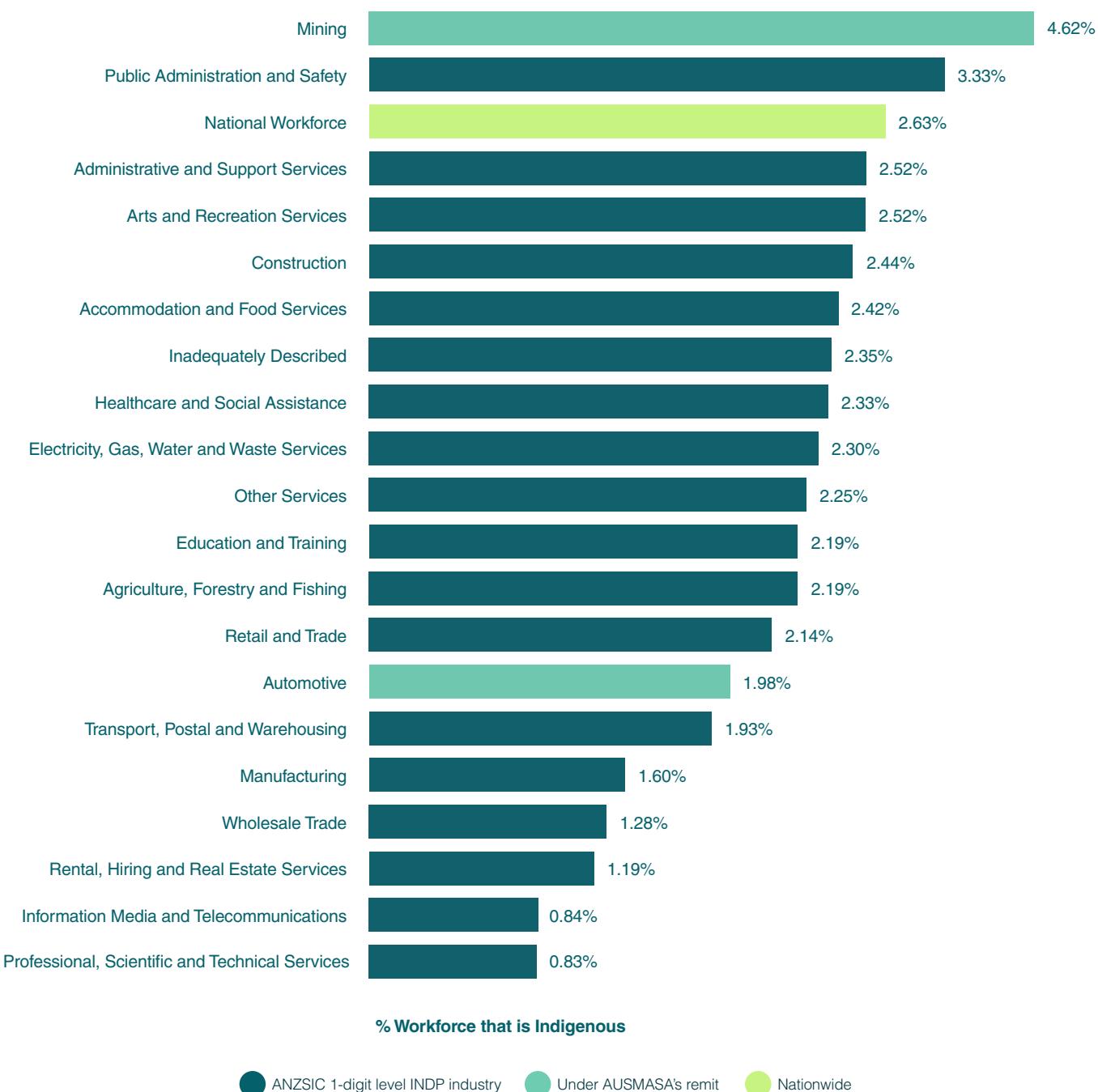
● Non-Indigenous

● Indigenous

¹³ AUSMASA, Perceptions of Automotive Careers, 2025

Advancing the exploration of a VET career pathway for trainers and assessors is rooted in industry experience and influenced by the current workforce environment. Figure 7 illustrates that Indigenous representation in the mining workforce exceeds the national average, while automotive representation falls below, highlighting the need for additional focus in this area. Taking a holistic approach to increasing numbers in the broader workforce is essential to building Indigenous representation, not just as a trainer and assessor but across all aspects of the VET workforce career taxonomy.

Figure 7: Proportion of Indigenous workforce by industry



Source: ABS Table Builder 2021 Census – employment, income, and education. AUSMASA.

VET workforce roles and needs

How are our VET workforces employed?

RTO types and sizes

Sourcing data relating to RTO types and sizes to provide a clear picture of the employment context for the VET workforce proved challenging.

Across the 3 training packages, a variety of leading RTO types provided the majority of training (Figure 8–10), as detailed below:

- RII (mining) – private training providers with the majority of training (91%)
- AUR – private training providers (49%, closely followed by TAFE's 45%)
- AUM – solely delivered by TAFE (100%)

Figure 9: AUR enrolments by provider type

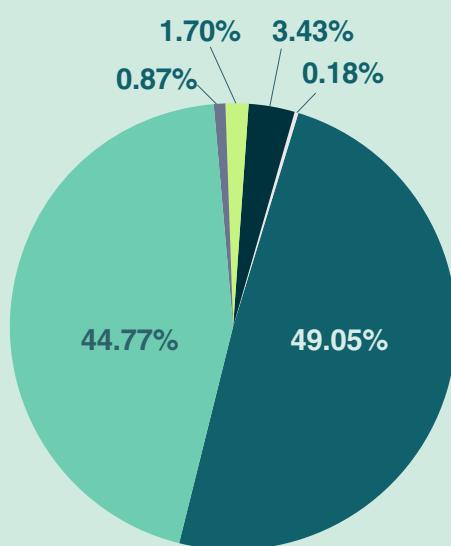


Figure 8: RII mining enrolments by provider type

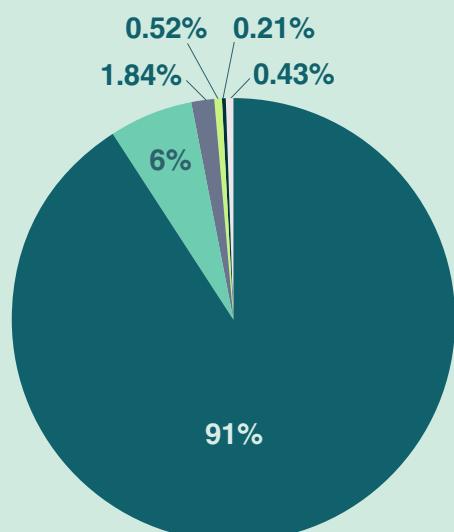
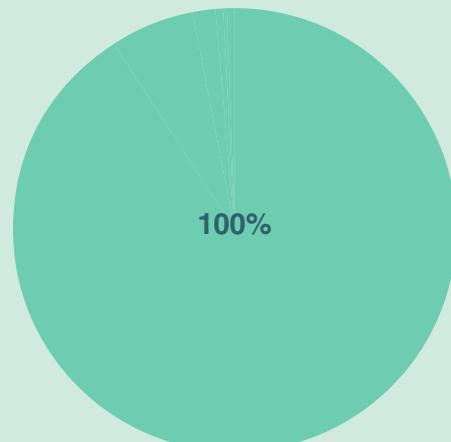


Figure 10: AUM enrolments by provider type



● Private Training Providers
● TAFE Institutes

● Enterprise Providers
● Universities

● Schools
● Community Education Providers



VET workforce roles

Occupations within VET

Adopting the workforce taxonomy and occupational framework developed by JSA,¹⁴ the 6 key workforce segments were used to classify respondents of the mining and automotive VET workforce survey⁸.

Initial indications from the survey shown in Table 3 imply that the mining and automotive workforce segments differ from those shown in the broader VET Workforce Blueprint. The findings detailed below demonstrate that the mining and automotive industries more regularly perform roles that overlap multiple segments, are more mature, and have increased male representation compared to the average VET workforce. The previous section, 'Understanding our VET workforce', explores further detail and investigates initiatives adopted to address these characteristics of the current workforce.

Table 3: VET workforce occupational segments

Workforce segments	Automotive and mining	VET Workforce Blueprint ¹⁵	Variation (- below avg.)
Teach, train and assess	41%	48.5%	-7.5%
Curriculum dev and learning design	22%	3.6%	+18.4%
Learning support	7%	4.3%	+2.7
Quality assurance and compliance	19.5%	0.4%	+19.1%
Administration and operations	27%	30.3%	-3.3%
Leadership	27%	12.8%	+14.2%
Other ¹⁶	29%		

Source: Open survey – leadership respondents – AUSMASA March Feb – April 2025

14 Jobs and Skills Australia, VET Workforce Study, 2024

15 Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council, (Oct 2024) VET Workforce Blueprint, © Commonwealth of Australia 2024

16 Response includes: Employment sector, End-user, Human Resources, Industry Advocacy, Industry advocate, Industry research, Previous VET and Tafe Teacher, Research, Training Product Management, Training superintendent - oversee trainers, delivery, support

VET workforce segments – age

The profile of the VET workforce explored in the previous section ([age](#)) details the higher-than-average age found in the mining and automotive industries. The figures shown below (Table 4) reinforce this finding, noting that every segment is significantly above the average recorded in the VET Workforce Blueprint.⁸

Table 4: Average age of the VET workforce (years) – individual survey

Workforce segments	Automotive and mining	VET Workforce Blueprint ¹⁵	Variation (+ above avg.)
Total	50	47	+3
Teach, train and assess	55	48	+7
Curriculum dev and learning design	55	45	+9
Learning support	51	42	+9
Quality assurance and compliance	47	39	+8
Administration and operations	49	36	+13
Leadership	49	46	+3
Other ¹⁶	49		

VET workforce segments – gender

Understanding the VET workforce – gender highlights the male saturation in the mining and automotive industries. This is reinforced in the figures shown below in Table 5.⁸ Consistent with the findings in age data, female representation is consistently lower across every category.

Table 5: Female VET workforce by segment (% female) – individual survey

Workforce segments	Automotive and mining	VET Workforce Blueprint ¹⁵	Variation (- below avg.)
Total	31.7%	57.2%	-25.5%
Teach, train and assess	17.6%	51.1%	-33.5%
Curriculum dev and learning design	44.4%	61.7%	-17.3%
Learning support	33.3%	76.4%	-43.1%
Quality assurance and compliance	62.5%	70.4%	-7.9%
Administration and operations	36.4%	64.6%	-28.2%
Leadership	18.2%	56.6%	-38.4%
Other ¹⁶	41.7%		

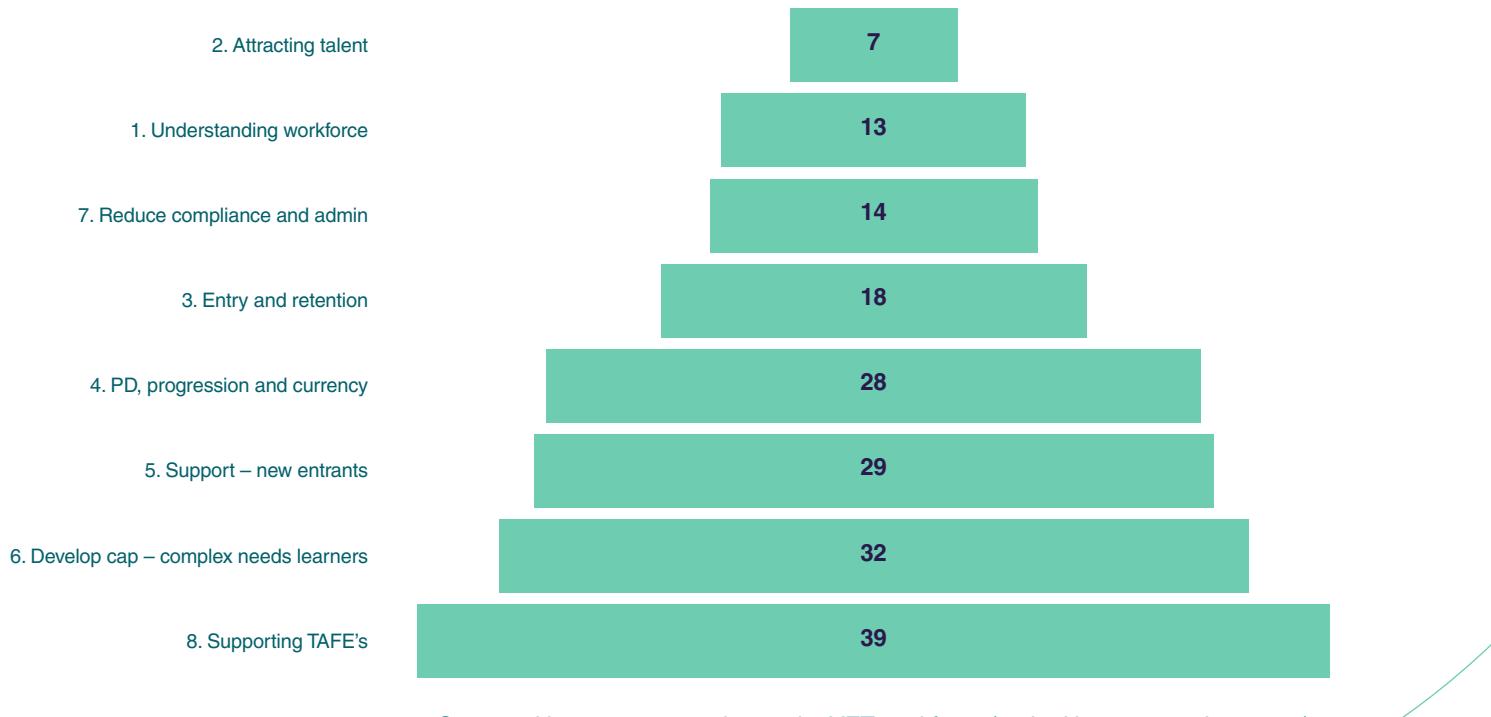


Current and future mining and automotive VET workforce needs

Throughout the consultation process for Stream 1 of the VET Workforce Blueprint project, AUSMASA focused primarily on the teach, train and assess segment to provide an overview of the needs in the mining and automotive VET workforce.

Participants at the AUSMASA Roundtable ranked the 8 opportunities identified by the Blueprint to establish an indication of priorities perceived by stakeholders across Australia (1 most important).^{7,15} As can be seen in Figure 11, Opportunity No.2 'Attracting people into the VET workforce, particularly teachers, trainers and assessors' was front of mind with the lowest score, indicating that this was a shared view across states and territories.

Figure 11: Ranking of opportunities to support and grow the VET workforce



Diverse and complex learner needs

The targeted interviews identified a significant increase in the representation of learners with diverse and complex needs. Anecdotally, stakeholders found a noticeable increase in diverse and complex learner needs following the return to face-to-face classes after the COVID-19 pandemic, including a negative impact on language, literacy, numeracy and digital skills along with a deficit of social skills. The tight labour market conditions were also thought to influence and broaden the intake parameters for apprentices, trainees and students with a range of foundational skill and learning needs. Remote communities in the Northern Territory were also noted as requiring significant support in this area. Data gathered to support the feedback can be seen in Table 6, showing the largest percentage of mining and automotive training being offered to students from regional, remote and low socio-economic areas.¹⁷

Only 38% of the leadership segment of the AUSMASA survey⁸ felt that their VET workforce was well-equipped to support learners with diverse and complex needs (Figure 12). The results were relatively consistent with individual responses, which self-appraised at 42.8%. Surprisingly, the opportunity 'Developing and resourcing staff to support learners with diverse and complex needs' was not seen as a high priority at the AUSMASA Roundtable Consultation, ranking second last on the list. This contrasts sharply with the discussions and initiatives shared to build capability, such as mental health first aid and accidental counsellor training.

Figure 12: Leadership survey – supporting learners with diverse and complex needs

How well-equipped do your staff feel to support learners with diverse and complex needs?

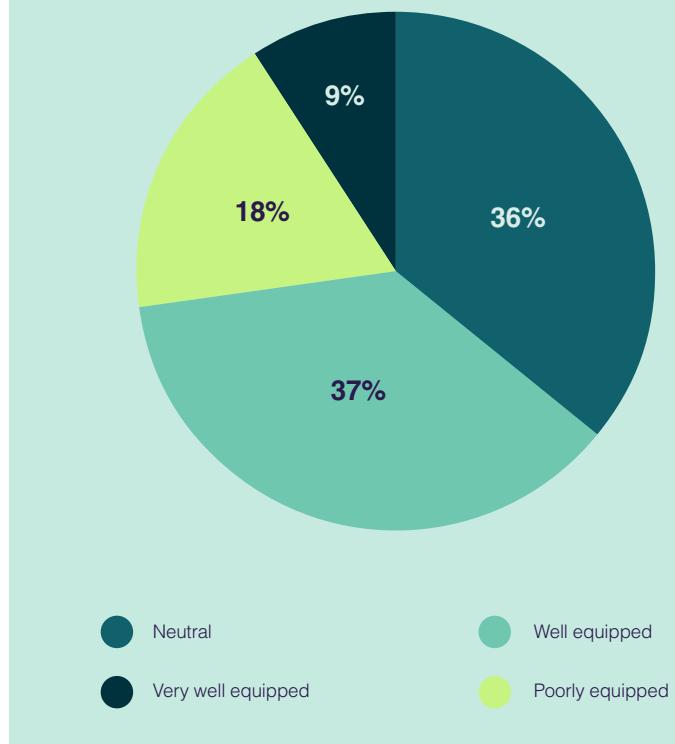


Table 6: Diverse and complex learners in 2022¹⁷



Mining training products (RII mining qualifications) learners:

- 17.8%** were from the lowest socio-economic status area
- 62.9%** were from outer regional and remote areas
- 7.6%** identified as being from First Nations communities
- 2.3%** identified as having disability
- 3%** spoke a language other than English
- 0.1%** were international students.



Automotive training products (AUR, AUM qualifications) learners:

- 14%** were from the lowest socio-economic status area
- 37.6%** were from outer regional and remote areas
- 4.7%** identified as being from First Nations communities
- 4.6%** identified as having disability
- 17%** spoke a language other than English
- 17%** were international students.

¹⁷ VOCSTATS, 'Total VET students and courses 2022', 2024.



A range of strategies introduced to support trainers and assessors in this area took the form of increased training, accessible personnel in student support services and increased student pastoral care. Further approaches included the following:

- Training and assessing – adopting a flexible assessment approach while maintaining the rigour, for example additional time allocation.
- Learning resources – developing contextualised resources for different cultures and languages.
- Work placement – essential to giving learners a ‘taster’ of the workplace and preparing them for future learning expectations. This will potentially provide the learner with a scaffolded pathway and the opportunity to practice and consolidate knowledge and skills. It also allowed for self-seeding and the exploration of alternative career paths.
- Communication – open communication channels between the learner support networks and the RTO are crucial. This was found to be most applicable in the case of apprenticeships and the tripartite relationship between the apprentice, RTO and the workplace which involves sharing knowledge of any challenges that should arise over the 3 to 4 year learning journey.

It was also noted that funding and support programs do not often apply to VET in Secondary Schools delivery programs, as it is assumed that the school will offer support. This typically created a learning environment that was challenging to manage and deliver positive learning outcomes.



Case studies

An apprenticeship support organisation has experienced success in addressing this area adopting a suite of actions including the following:

- regular wellness check-in with the apprentice
- pastoral care offered by those with lived experience
- mentoring and support services
- mental health first aid training for the workforce
- ongoing professional development for the workforce.

A model used by TAFE adopting a proactive approach to support staff in managing the growing issue of diverse and complex learner needs offers Accidental Counsellor training, along with Mental First Aid to all staff.

The centrepiece of their model is the appointment of an apprentice mentor as a part of the Student Support Team. The apprentice mentor provides additional student pastoral support and is:

- introduced to students at induction to gain awareness and trust
- completes a daily walk-through of classes to maintain presence
- attends staff meetings to ensure staff feel supported.

The initiative has proven successful in supporting students and staff, with the appointment of a second apprentice mentor being investigated.

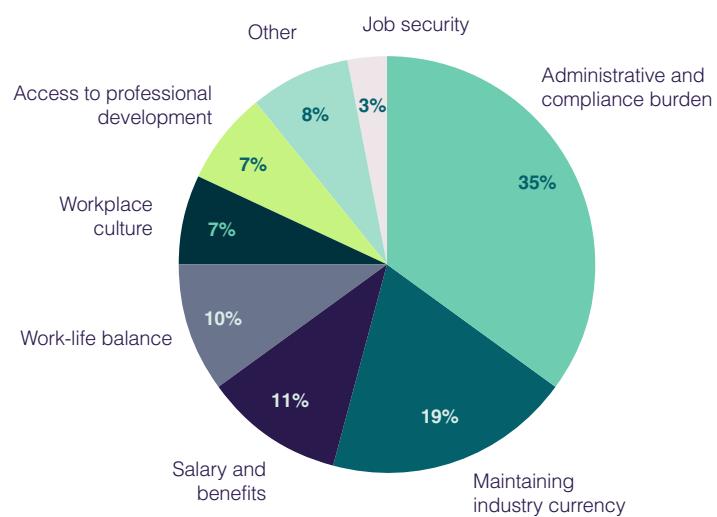
Administration and compliance burden

Insights gained through the open survey (Figure 13) showed the administrative and compliance burden was the overriding barrier experienced as part of the role within the VET workforce, with 38% of individuals and 44% of leaders selecting this as the main challenge.

Addressing the administration and compliance burden was prioritised third as a key growth and support opportunity for the mining and automotive VET workforce by Roundtable participants, closely behind gaining a greater understanding of our workforce. This was a common theme, as the administrative workload was also selected as the third most significant recruitment challenge, after salary disparity and the requirement to obtain the Certificate IV TAE.

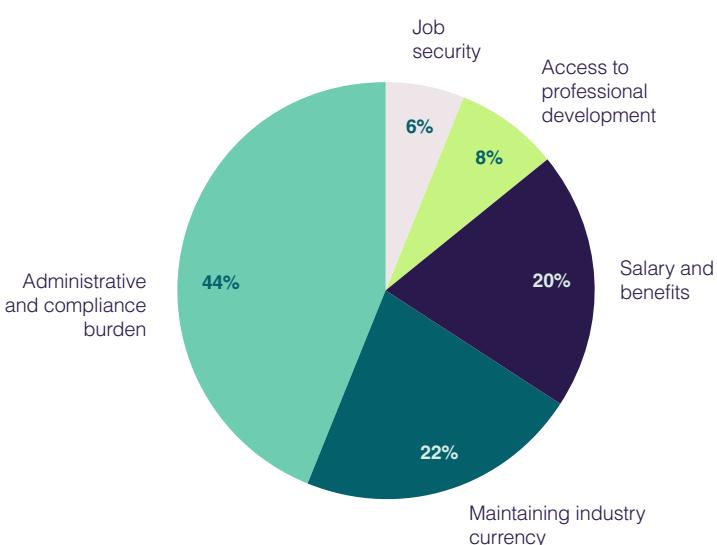
Figure 13: Survey – challenges experienced within the role

Individual



Leadership

What are the main challenges experienced by your staff?



Individual 'Other' responses include (edited for readability):

- ensuring training needs are adequately met
- acknowledgment that recognition of prior learning (RPL) assessing is a specialist skill and the TAE has failed in this regard in the past 2 versions. There is a chronic shortage of RPL assessors who know what they are doing
- insufficient lecturers who are industry current/subject matter experts (SMEs)
- support from management with industry interest and training currency
- trying to support our employees and the business regarding future industry requirements (for example, high-voltage electric mining equipment). However, legislation does not entirely support it. There are currently limited options to upskill/provide training for currency.

Leadership 'Additional challenges' responses include (edited for readability):

- housing availability in regional communities.

RTOs found that during the recruitment process for a training and assessment position, vocationally skilled applicants were often unaware of the administrative and compliance responsibilities involved in the dual aspect of the role. Feedback highlighted this as an opportunity to provide support, ensuring that trainers and assessors understand the context for the requirement (such as its connection to the Standards for RTOs 2015) and have the necessary skills to meet these obligations. The lack of digital skills was identified as a significant barrier contributing to resistance in completing these tasks.

The ongoing load associated with administration and compliance was addressed with a variety of approaches, which typically varied according to the RTO's size.

A range of initiatives is detailed below:

Larger public RTOs

- Ensuring the applicants were briefed on the commitments related to the dual professional aspect of the role during the recruitment process.
- Allocation of a dedicated member to the training area from the quality and compliance department.

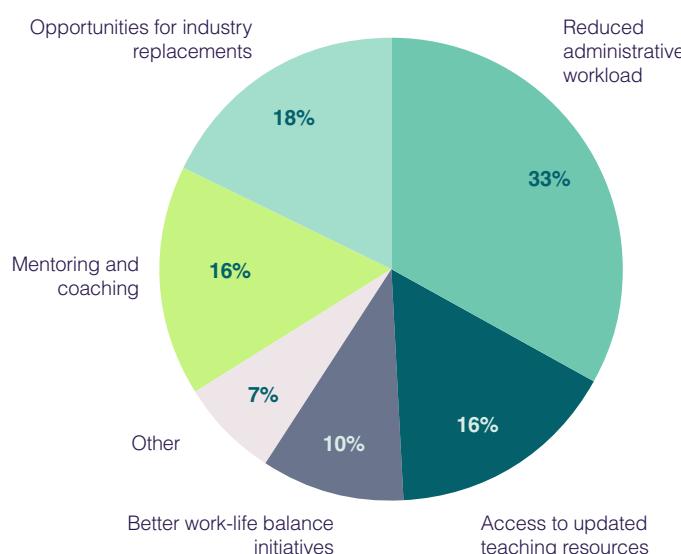
Smaller regional RTO

- Contracting with a third party to manage the compliance and regulatory responsibilities.

The AUSMASA individual open survey results highlighted the need for additional support in current trainer and assessor roles, particularly the administrative workload. To gain a broader perspective on critical issues, applicants were asked to select at least 2 areas of concern. 'Reduced administrative workload' was identified as the top priority by 33% of respondents, followed by 'opportunities for industry placement' (18%), 'mentoring and coaching' and 'access to updated teaching resources', both rated third at 16%⁸.

Throughout the consultative process, the requirement to reduce the administrative workload and provide more opportunities for trainers to upskill and maintain industry currency was commonly raised. Private RTOs generally requested a funding mechanism to compensate for the loss of training time while staff were undertaking industry placements.

Figure 14: Survey – additional support in your current role



'Other' responses from the survey include (edited for readability):

- Allowing/recognition of specialist skills in assessment and/or micro-credentialing (stackable qualifications).
- Career professional development pathways.
- Access to cheaper training aids.
- Large financial burden to RTOs.
- Write all units of competency (UOCs) in a consistent manner. For example, MEM (fixed and mobile plant) is written very differently from AUR, with some of the outcomes being the same.
- More trade industry professional development.
- Assistance/time for development of resources and maintaining compliance. It would be good to have a national set of training and assessment materials for RTOs.
- Bigger team.



VET workforce pathways and pipelines

Career pathways

According to feedback throughout the consultation process, developing a visible and informative VET workforce career pathway was essential. Targeted interviews cited a general lack of awareness of a VET workforce career pathway, particularly when recruiting trainers and assessors in the mining and automotive industries. Many applications were received by word of mouth from colleagues who had successfully transitioned from industry to a VET career rather than a recognised career pathway choice.

It was also noted that the VET career path could be unintentionally obscured due to the prevailing labour shortage in industry. The AUSMASA Workforce Consultation Paper cites several indicators of a labour shortage² which were regularly discussed throughout all forms of consultation as influencing the promotion of VET career opportunities within industry.

Figure 15 illustrates the self-perpetuating career cycle, demonstrating how a labour shortage directly impacts the supply of trainers and assessors, thereby limiting the ability to provide quality training for students entering the workforce. Feedback from targeted interviews also touched on the competing interests of industry along with a direct quote from the Roundtable Consultation.

Figure 15: VET workforce career cycle



‘ Lack of trainers, reduces (the) amount of upskilling available to industry – continues to feed a skills-short market over time. **’**



Case studies

VET workforce career perceptions were also regularly identified as a critical consideration during this process. Targeted interview feedback from a large public RTO revealed that the role of a trainer and assessor had been perceived as a retirement plan within the automotive industry. This culture, however, has been identified as improving, with the recent recruitment of younger trainers and assessors providing a refresh of the portfolio, resulting in a change of perception and a positive view of the career opportunity.

Additionally, the potential for negative stigma surrounding the resource sector to deter entrants from pursuing it as a career pathway was highlighted as a major factor influencing VET workforce career perceptions in the mining industry. During the Roundtable Consultation process, a peak body was cited for its initiative to address this issue by promoting and 'demystifying' the use and essential nature of our resource industry.

Entry pathways and recruitment

As highlighted throughout the AUSMASA survey (Figure 16), the primary motivation for joining the VET workforce in both the mining and automotive industries was a strong passion for teaching and training (26%)⁸. This was followed by opportunities for professional growth (15%) and work-life balance (14%).

These categories provide insight into the aspects of value to the workforce, informing strategies for attraction, retention, and development.

Attraction

The VET Workforce Blueprint's 8 opportunities for supporting and growing the workforce were tested among Roundtable participants (refer Figure 11) with attracting talent ranked as the most critical.

To better understand how to attract more people to careers in the VET workforce, AUSMASA conducted an open survey. Consistent with the Roundtable Consultation findings, participants ranked increased financial incentives as the top priority. Figure 17 also highlights better career progression pathways and improved professional development as important factors.

'Other' response include (edited for readability):

- allowing/recognition of specialist skills in assessment and/or micro-credentialling (stackable qualifications)
- VET salaries must compete with higher paying trades
- highlight the benefits to apprentices from the beginning, including the possibility of one day being a VET teacher down the track
- improve the standard of incoming staff by advertising/marketing better to create a suitable pool of applicants. Have staff trained and properly prepared before having a large workload and responsibility
- TAE focus only on training delivery and assessment, not so much on course development or validation.

Figure 16: Leadership survey – what motivated you to join the VET workforce?

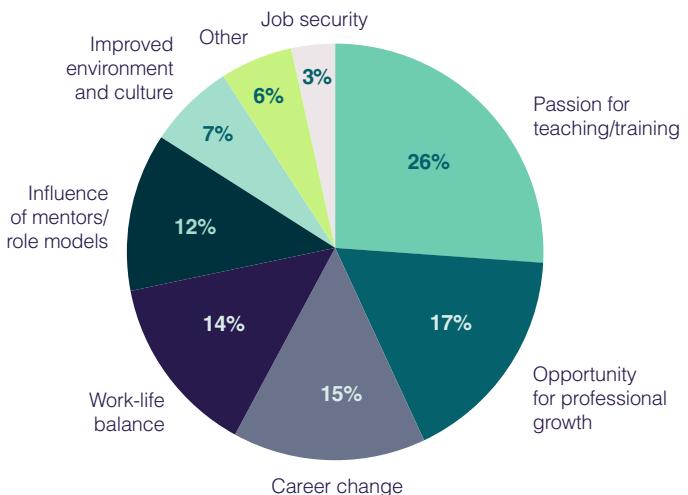
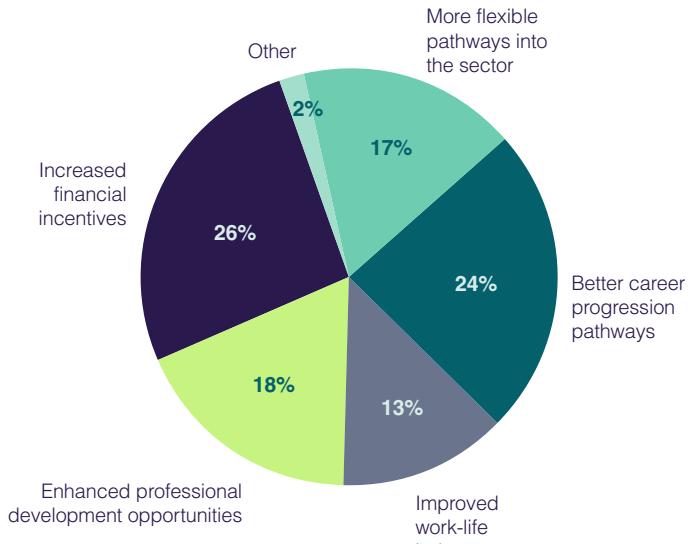


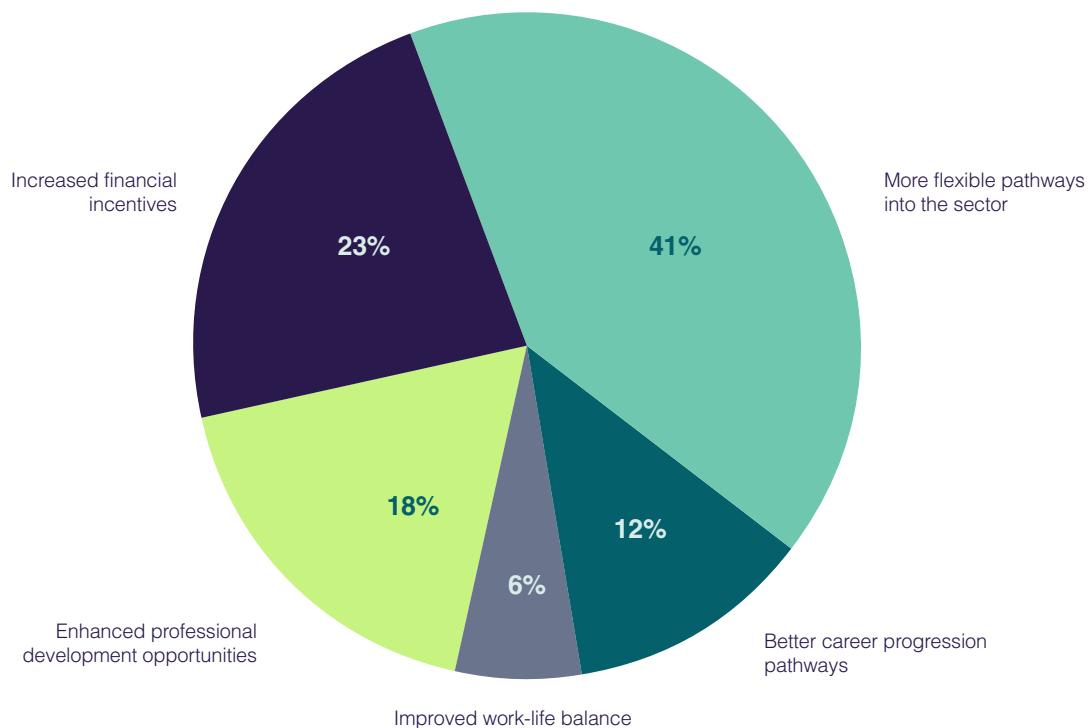
Figure 17: Individual survey – attracting more people into the VET workforce



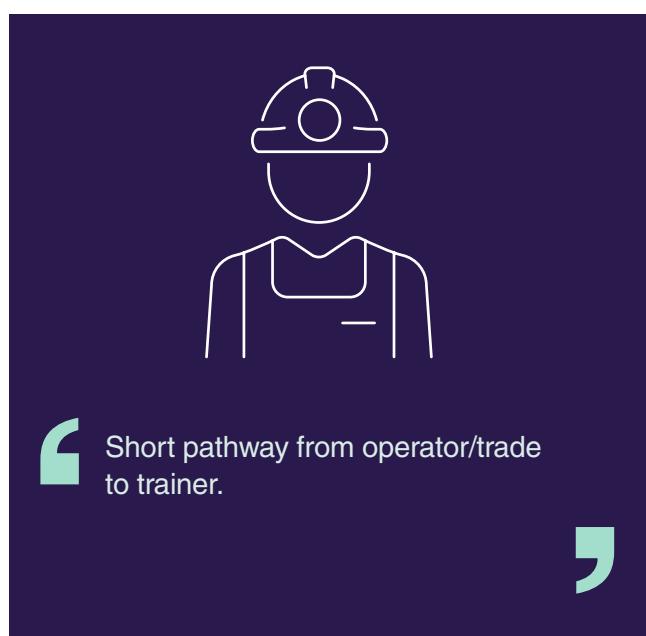
Viewing the issue through a leadership lens, the survey revealed a critical requirement for a more flexible pathway into the sector (as seen in Figure 18). Increased financial incentives were selected as a secondary factor, followed by enhanced professional development. The leadership participants did not offer further insights into what the flexible pathways might entail.

Figure 18: Leadership survey – attract more people into the VET workforce

What improvements would you suggest to attract more people into the VET workforce?



Feedback from the Roundtable Consultation process cited the following as burning issues in the sector:



Recruitment

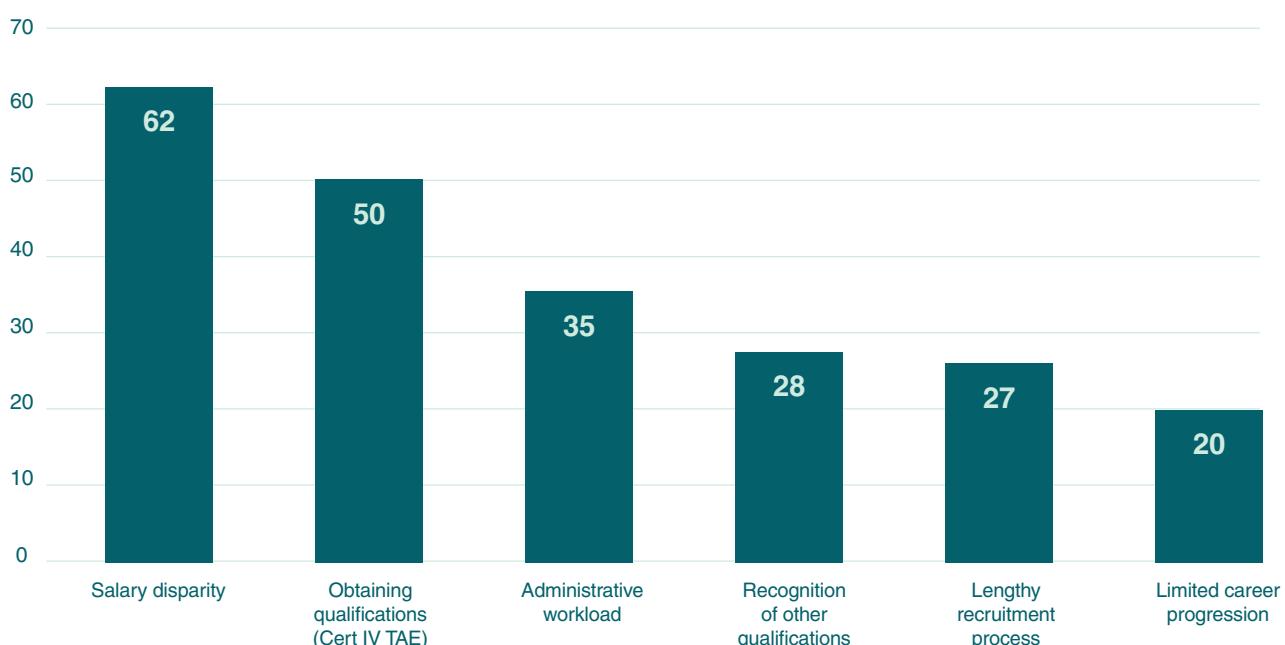
Salary disparity

Recruitment in the VET workforce faces several barriers, with salary disparity being the most significant (Figures 19 and 20). Illustrating the disconnect, a VET trainer (including mining and automotive) on the top grade (9) of a TAFE lecturer's salary in Western Australia is advertised to earn \$120,651. In comparison, an underground heavy diesel mechanic has the capacity to earn up to \$250,000 per year, according to recent job advertisements.^{18,19} The Australian Minerals Council of Australia, Careers Guide 2022, details consistent findings, stating that the average weekly full-time adult wage in mining in 2021 was 52% above average.²⁰

Discussions highlighted the challenge of competing with higher-paying industries, particularly in mining. This is supported by data from the AUSMASA Roundtable Consultation (Figure 19), where salary disparity was identified as the top recruitment challenge nationwide.



Figure 19: AUSMASA Roundtable – recruitment challenges



¹⁸ WA Government, 2024, TAFE lecturers accept State Government wage offer | Western Australian Government

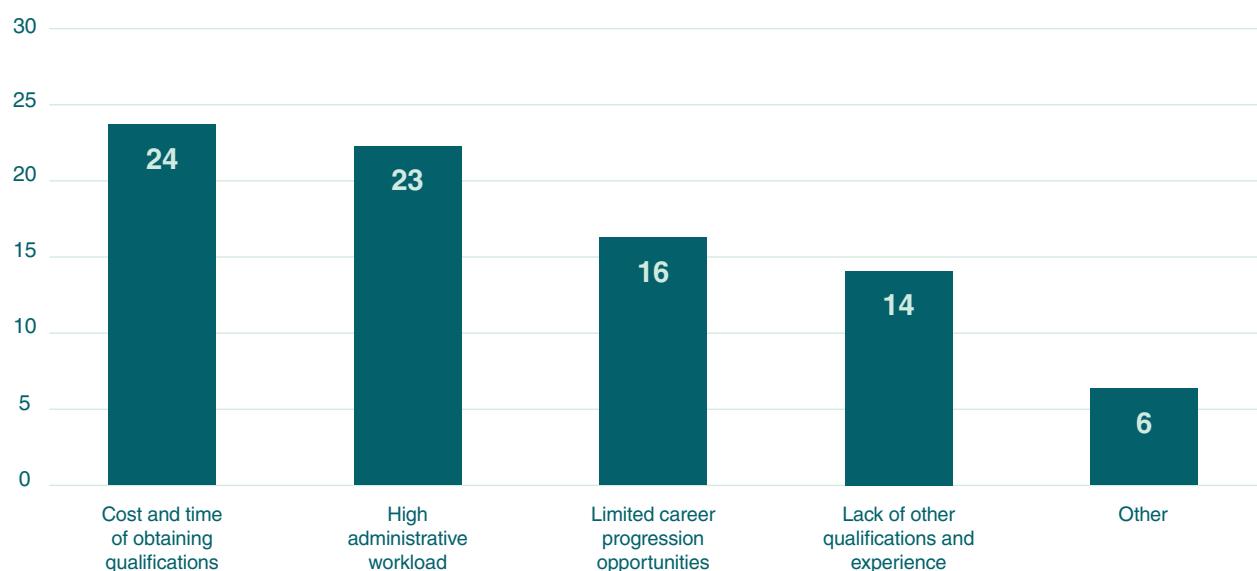
¹⁹ Seek, 2025, Heavy Diesel Mechanic Job in Perth – SEEK

²⁰ Minerals Council of Australia from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2022, Make Your Career in Mining Careers Guide, Make-your-Career-in-Mining_2022.pdf

Certificate IV in Training and Assessment

The AUSMASA Roundtable Consultation identified the requirement for a Certificate IV in TAE as the second biggest recruitment challenge across Australia, following salary disparity. However, in Sydney, it was ranked as the top challenge. Survey respondents also highlighted the cost and time commitment needed to obtain the required qualifications as significant barriers to entering and staying in the VET workforce (see Figures 19 and 20).

Figure 20: Individual survey – barriers for entering and staying in the VET workforce



'Other' responses include (edited for readability):

- government agendas that do not support recognition initiatives
- the stark contrast from working in a fast-paced trade that requires physical skills and technical understanding to a workplace that requires moderate IT skill level, understanding of RTO compliance and processes
- the person cannot see themselves as a trainer or gets put off with paperwork
- understanding the role and the expectations of dealing with disruptive students
- carrying out assessment that is not real world.
For example, the function and limitation of a screwdriver.
Function is fine. Limitation is the point just before it breaks.
This is far from real world to ask such questions
- for entering, TAE needs overhaul, more user-friendly for new teachers in training. Staying in VET, teachers need more power to correct poor student behaviour
- the workload of lecturers is high, which is leading to burnout and substandard delivery of training.
Experienced staff have left and new lecturers are given too much work/responsibility without mentoring and return to industry before gaining VET qualifications
- remuneration
- lack of support.



Case study

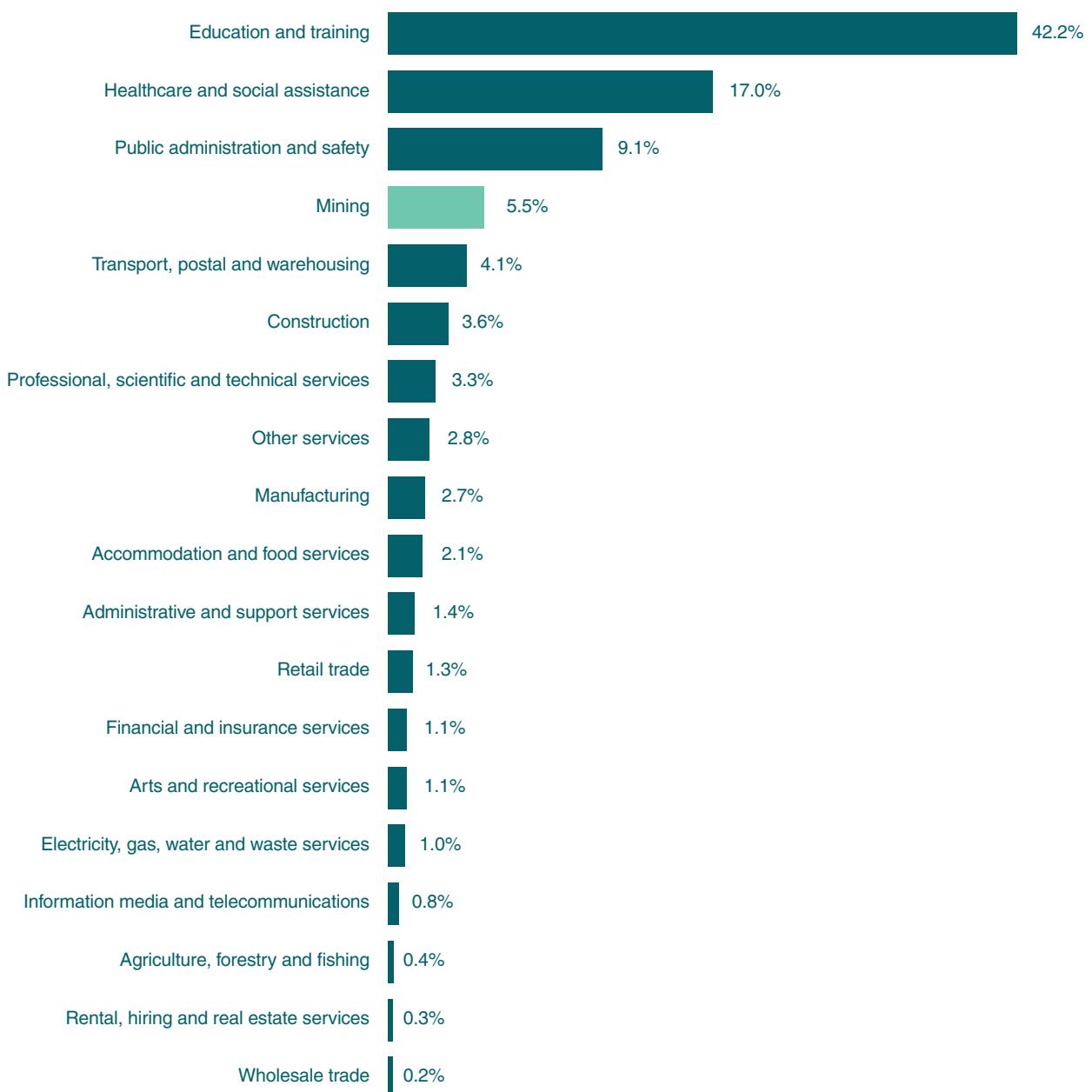
Different strategies have been used to help trainers and assessors overcome this barrier, with varying degrees of success. The most effective programs combined 2 key elements: completing the Certificate IV TAE through the RTO during the early stages of employment and providing a robust support system through a mentoring and buddy program.

A notable example is a program run by a large public TAFE, which supported new entrants through the TAE over 12 to 18 months. This program included a centralised mentorship initiative and additional assistance from the Educator Capability Team. Feedback from a participant highlighted the program's value, noting that it provided deeper insights into the VET sector and helped contextualise the TAE. They also emphasised feeling valued and supported throughout the process.



The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) gathered data from nationally recognised training organisations on students who completed the Certificate IV TAE in 2021 (see Figure 21)²¹. Of these students, 5.5% were employed in the mining industry. Interestingly, the automotive industry did not record significant results to be listed individually.

Figure 21: Certificate IV TAE graduates – industry of employment (of those employed) 2022



²¹ National Centre for Vocational Education Research, JSA 2022, VET student outcomes 2022

Work-life balance

To address the barrier of salary disparity, survey results, targeted interviews, and Roundtable Consultations highlighted work-life balance as a key incentive for transitioning to a role in the VET workforce.

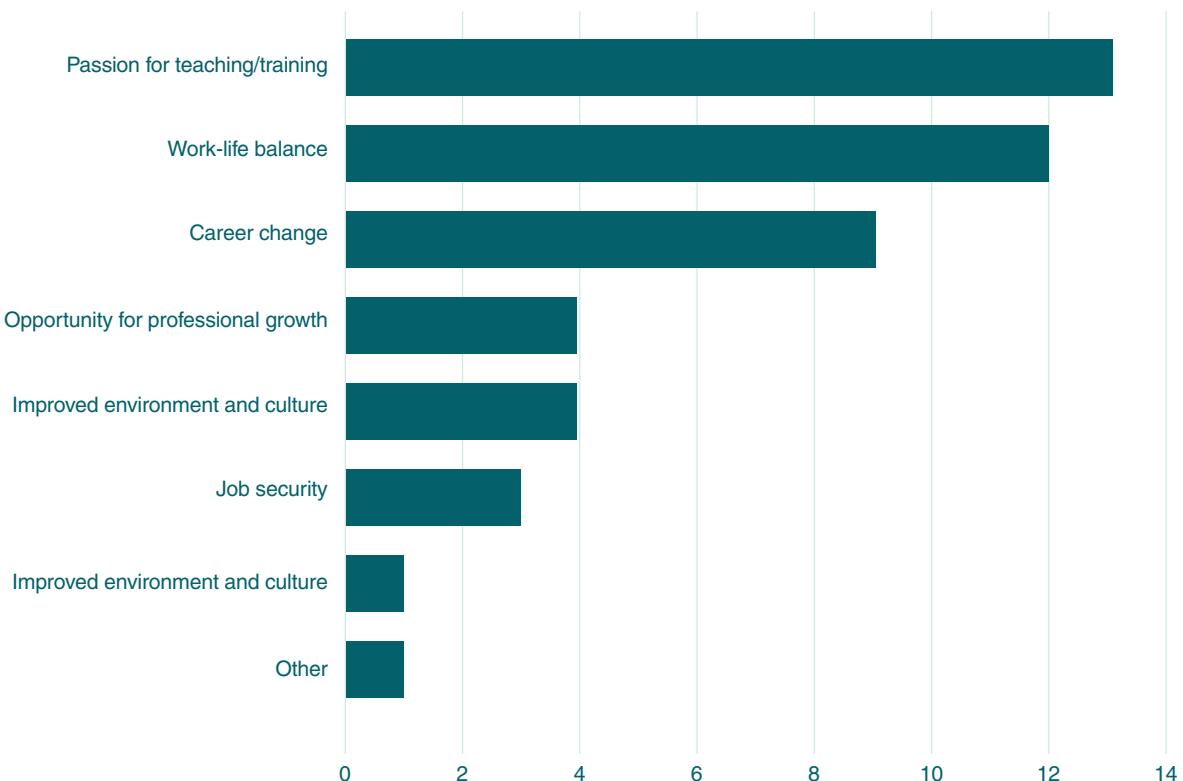
Feedback from remote and regional areas also indicated that applicants viewed this positively. Potential applicants currently employed in fly-in fly-out positions cited adverse seasonal aspects (weather in remote areas) and lifestyle considerations as additional and significant motivational factors to join the VET workforce. RTOs offering generous leave allocations also shared this as a positive and influencing factor.

Other

Targeted interviews highlighted the need for additional support services throughout new entrants' careers, starting from their initial recruitment and continuing along their career pathways. Recruitment challenges also included short contract lengths, which affected job security, and the importance of setting clear role expectations during the hiring process.

Figure 22: Leadership survey – motivation to join the VET workforce

How well-equipped do your staff feel to support learners with diverse and complex needs?



'Other' responses include:

- Passion for the industry
- Address and support regional challenges.



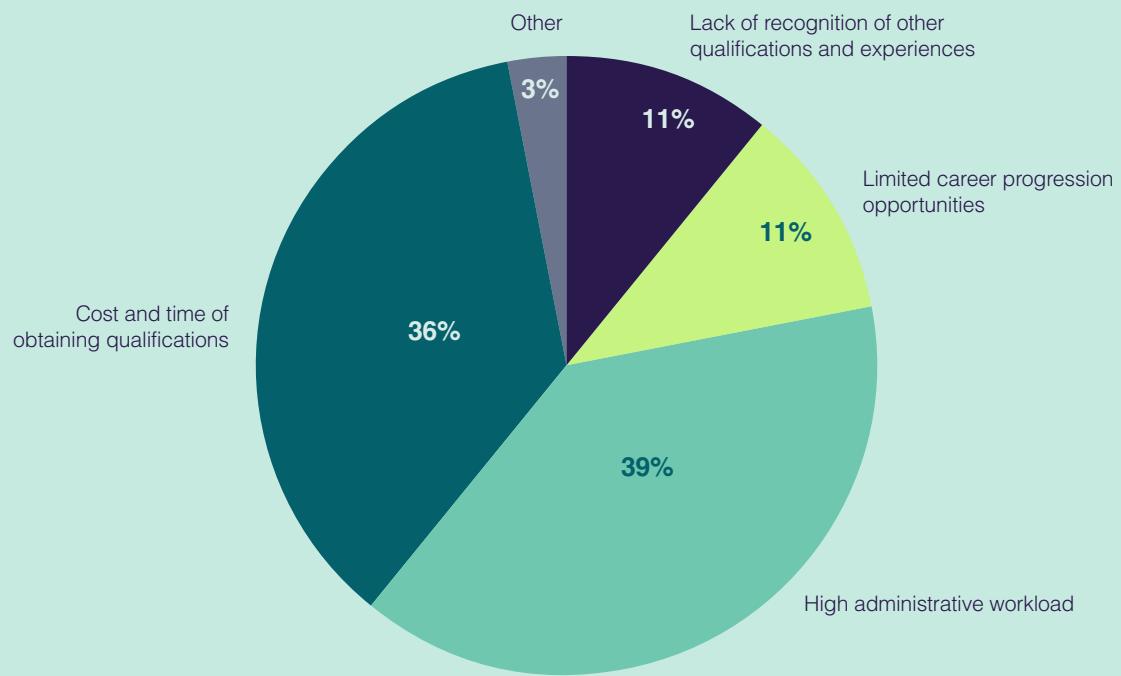
Career progression and retention

Retention

The AUSMASA open survey asked the mining and automotive leadership respondents to share their views on barriers to entering and staying in the VET workforce (Figure 23).⁸ The most significant barrier was the high administrative workload (39%), followed by the cost and time required to obtain the training and assessment qualifications (36%).

Figure 23: Leadership survey – barriers for entering and staying in the VET workforce

What barriers do you think exist for entering and staying in the VET workforce?



'Other' reasons above include remuneration.

A number of key issues throughout the consultation process were highlighted as contributing to the ability to retain VET workforce staff in the mining and automotive industries. The detail provided below is extracted and summarised from feedback received during the AUSMASA Roundtable Consultation and targeted interviews.



Lack of ongoing support

- Length of career support required to navigate a changing and complex environment.
- Guidance through the dual role, particularly VET regulation.
- Currency and professional development
 - training to be aligned with the evolving nature of the role
 - reskilling to new and emerging teaching practices
 - covering the costs of industry currency.
- Continuing engagement.
- ‘No judgement’ mentors required from outside the subject matter area.

Increasing level of digital literacy and capability

- Building foundation capability required in a practical skill-based workforce.
- Deterrent for mature applicants within the role.
- Reskilling is required in new technologies.
- Support to navigate a complex digital environment.
- Consideration of online versus face-to-face delivery methods.
- Fatigue with overuse of digital resources.

Administration and compliance burden

- Process is prioritised over agility.
- Burden does not allow teachers to teach.
- Common assessment materials to limit the development requirement by RTOs.
- For further detail, see ‘Administration and Compliance Burden’ above.

Training and assessment pressures – resources and time allocation

- Funding models drive budgetary requirements that reduce training and assessment time allocation.
- Time restrictions limit the ability to effectively train and assess cohorts with a diverse range of learning needs.
- Request for use of different technologies to conduct assessment (virtual reality, simulation). The nature of this comment may be perceived as training product in nature, but the restrictions do add to the burden of the assessor.

Certificate IV in TAE requirement

For further detail, see ‘Recruitment’ section above.

Salary parity with industry

For further detail, see ‘Recruitment’ section above.

Career pathway

Feedback indicated that career progression for a trainer and assessor was dependent on the size and type of the RTO. Typically, it followed 2 main pathways:

Option 1 – VET pathway

Advanced lecturing role traditionally requiring a higher-level VET qualification. This criterion was reported to provide challenges for those without an academic background and from a practical skills environment.

or

Option 2 – Operational/leadership pathway

Head of programs, training lead, and portfolio/training manager-type roles were presented to those keen to pursue operational pathway options.



Case study

The advanced industry lecturing role was implemented to address the barriers presented by the requirement for a higher-level VET qualification and provide a career pathway for dedicated subject matter experts with valuable industry experience. It does not typically require a higher-level VET qualification. This pathway is not available in all states and territories.

Exit pathways

Investigation revealed that there was no data available on the movement, enablers and barriers for professionals out of mining and automotive VET workforce roles and into other occupations.





Regional and remote trainers and assessors

Consultation with trainers and assessors to explore critical differences experienced in regional and remote parts of Australia compared to densely populated areas revealed several key findings.

Lag – emerging skills requirements

Future-ready skills of trainers and assessors in regional areas was reported as being significantly behind those of their metropolitan counterparts. Consultation revealed that in various regional areas, including Western Australia and Tasmania, training in emerging skills was not always sought by local industry. This was evident in the technical skills related to EVs, which at that time, were not in local demand, with vehicles being transported to the major capital cities and central areas beyond their jurisdiction. This resulted in RTOs delaying the scheduling of training in related areas, along with challenges in upskilling and currency for trainers. The outcome is a workforce (both VET and automotive) that is lagging in emerging skills requirements.

Acknowledging the heightened labour market challenges in remote and regional areas, trainers and assessors can leverage programs like this to gain skills in emerging fields. Investment in skills uplift for the regional workforce has the potential to empower employees, enhance retention, encourage career progression, and enable the delivery of quality training for a future-fit workforce.

Training and ongoing currency

The requirement to build capability and the ongoing maintenance of currency were raised as pain points for regional areas. Trainers were often required to travel significant distances intra and interstate to undertake the training, which was challenging financially and from a time perspective.



Case studies

While EV technology was only one example shared, the Electric Vehicle TAFE Centre of Excellence has developed an initiative to address this challenge. The EV Training Roadshow Project will provide training across Australia to close the skills gap²².

The EV Training Roadshow will travel to regional and remote areas, bringing cutting-edge EV training directly to students, educators and industry professionals.²²

To address the issue of maintaining a VET workforce with current industry skills, an RTO in regional Northern Territory implemented an annual 'Return to Industry' program. This initiative allows trainers and assessors to immerse themselves in industry for up to 2 weeks.

Time is scheduled during non-attendance periods throughout the year between block delivery sessions. The program not only builds capability in new and emerging skill areas, but also regains trust and strengthens relationships with the local industries.

Additional challenges and focus areas

- **Isolation:** trainers and assessors are often required to deliver training on their own in isolated (remote) conditions.
- **Job outcomes:** the lack of job outcomes challenges the ability to deliver training in remote areas.
- **Learning difficulties:** remote cohorts were reported to have increased learning difficulties such as extreme language, literacy and numeracy deficiency. This was prevalent in the Certificate I and Certificate II qualification delivery.
- **Equipment:** generally reported as lacking in regional areas.
- **Staff shortages:** increased barriers to recruitment outside the scope of the RTO's control, such as a transient population increasing staff turnover, high rental costs and housing shortages.
- **Environmental stress:** the harsh climate of northern Australia (such as heat, humidity and tropical rain) has a positive effect on recruitment for skilled workers seeking respite from the conditions. However, this has a negative impact in areas such as training conditions (outdoor training grounds, for example) and also adds to the transient nature of the VET workforce.
- **Population:** a thin population is a barrier to recruitment. Remote areas of the Northern Territory reported not being able to recruit trainers and assessors for several years.
- **Representation:** there is a lack of representation during the decision-making process for RTOs that have centres of management in larger states and territories.
- **Technical services:** a lack of network connectivity is a challenge in remote areas, forcing trainers and assessors to use traditional (paper-based) learning methods. This can create challenges when materials are developed electronically.
- **Work placement:** regional areas reported challenges securing industry work placements that are required in lower-level qualifications.



Case studies

Industry instability: Delivering training in remote areas has been challenging due to a shortage of trainers and assessors. Efforts to address this, such as collaborating with local industries and supporting TAE training for their staff, were unsuccessful. Workforce shortages and industry instability made it difficult for businesses to support training or release staff.

Multifaceted role: Regional trainers and assessors were reported to have a broader task profile. One private RTO reported staff undertaking equipment maintenance in addition to their traditional commitments in training downtime. In another example where staff had previously been involved in the enrolment processes (particularly trainees and apprentices), measures have been taken to decrease the diverse range of responsibilities and reallocate these tasks to operational areas.



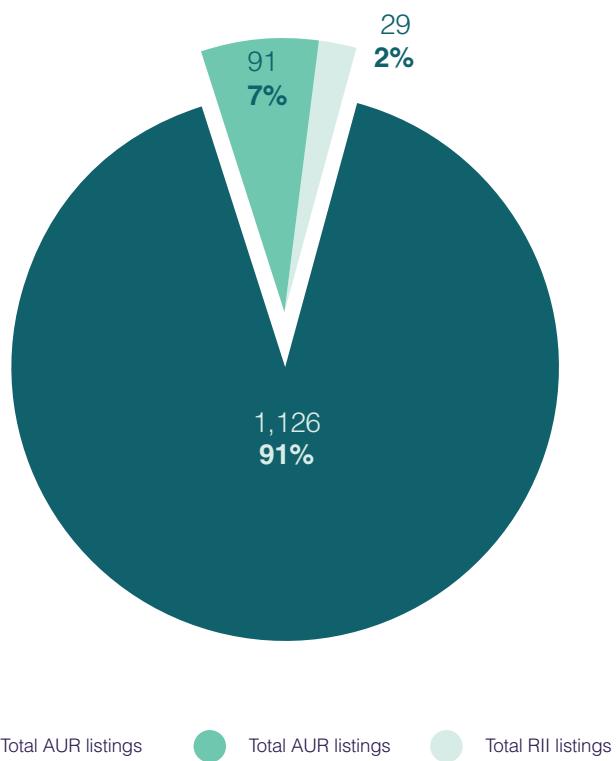
Licensing – trainers and assessors

An occupational license is not generally required to obtain employment throughout the mining and automotive (AUR, AUM and RII) industries, which informs the lack of requirement for the VET workforce. Consideration must be given, however, to the significant number of occupations that necessitate an apprenticeship and/or trade certification in both areas. Trade certifications are required in a range of careers across several states in the automotive industry, such as the NSW Motor Vehicle Tradesperson Certificate, requiring the holder to have the prescribed Certificate III qualification.²⁴

The requirement to complete an apprentice pathway for a number of occupations in the mining and automotive industries has the potential to impact the recruitment process and eligibility for a training and assessor role in related areas. As an apprenticeship reportedly takes up to 4 years to complete, this can impact the length of the career pathway to become a VET trainer and assessor.²⁵ Feedback also indicated that this requirement, combined with the need for industry experience prior to becoming a trainer and assessor, contributed to the aged workforce.

Supporting data released on the Australian Apprenticeships Priority List shows that just under 10% of all occupation listings require completion of an AUR or RII (mining) qualification (figure 24).²⁶

Figure 24: AUR and RII occupational listings on the Australian Apprenticeships Priority List



24 NSW Government Fair Trading, n.d., Motor vehicle tradesperson certificate, Available at Motor vehicle tradesperson certificate | NSW Fair Trading

25 Fair Work Ombudsman, 2025, Guide to starting an apprenticeship, Available at Guide to starting an apprenticeship

26 Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, 2025, Australian Apprenticeships Priority List – 10 April 2025, Available at <https://www.dewr.gov.au/skills-support-individuals/resources/australian-apprenticeships-priority-list-10-april-2025>



Industry-led responses

Investigation into industry partnerships to support and grow the VET workforce highlighted the importance of industry consultation regarding resources, expertise, and elective selection. Both the individual (Figure 25a) and leadership (Figure 25b) aspects of the survey found this to be the most critical and positive aspect of their current relationship with industry.

Feedback during the AUSMASA Roundtable Consultation process encompassed the following themes (Table 7). These themes, combined with the stakeholder discussion, could be best summarised as indicating that trust, open dialogue, and collaboration are the top priorities for successful partnerships between RTOs and industries.

Table 7: Industry partnership – most frequently used words

- Listening (most mentioned)
- Partnership
- Transparency
- Mutual goals
- Communication
- Engagement
- Collaboration
- Expertise



Case study

Targeted interviews provided further insight into the valuable opportunities provided by a strong partnership with industry. Identifying a workforce skills gap in their automotive department, a public TAFE undertook an initiative to build capability in the emerging area of EVs. This resulted in an agreement with industry to have subject matter experts attend TAFE and upskill VET trainers and assessors. The progressive approach has built the skills and knowledge within the staff to be able to confidently conduct training in the growth area of EVs.

The partnership has grown, with industry experts now attending classes in accompaniment with qualified trainers and assessors to share with staff and students the latest practices, intellectual property and insights into future trends. The RTO stated that the industry-led training embedded industry into TAFE and played an important role in validating the training. The EV training has now been taking place for over 4 years.

Figure 25a: Individual survey – industry-led initiatives benefit you most in your work

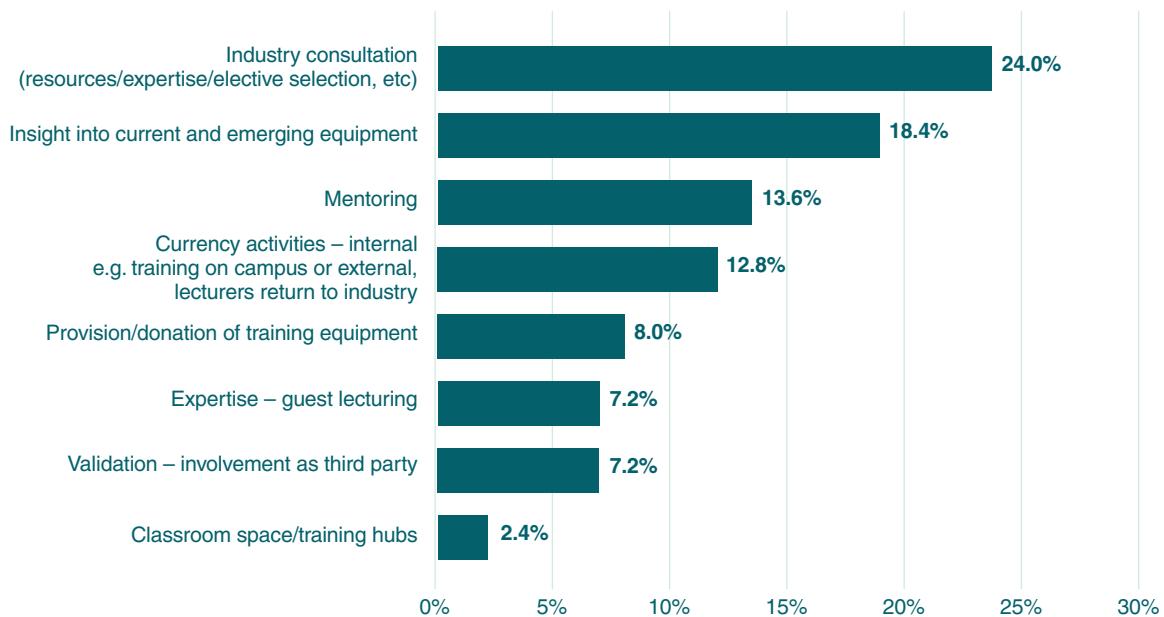
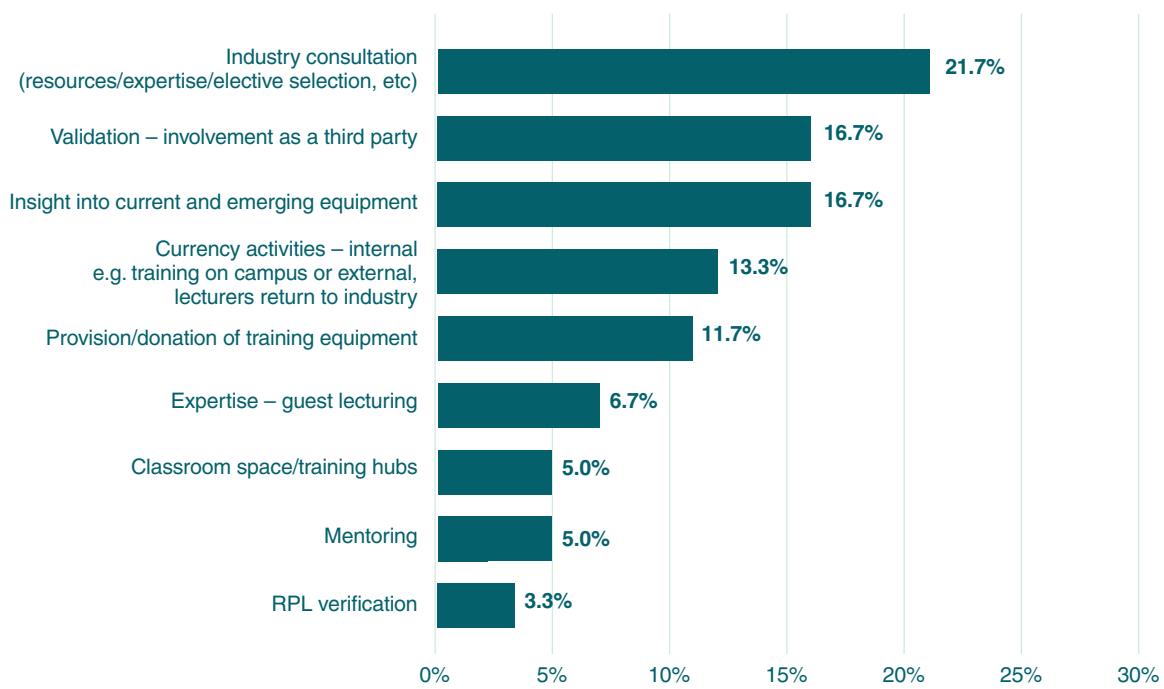


Figure 25b: Leadership survey – industry-led initiatives benefit your business area





Key findings

Future and emerging issues

The future focus for the VET workforce, and in particular trainers and assessors emerges through the key areas detailed in this report. These have been highlighted in a summary of the findings below.

Understanding the VET workforce

Ageing workforce

- Requires an active approach to succession planning and progressive transfer of knowledge and skills.
- Provides an opportunity to be viewed through the valuable and respected perspective of experience.

Gender diversity

- Potential to address and increase gender diversity, particularly in the automotive sector.
- Rebranding is required to address negative perceptions.

First Nations representation and cultural diversity

- Lacking diversity with the potential to expand recruitment in both areas.
- Above-average proportion of Indigenous workforce in mining presents an opportunity for career progression into the VET workforce.
- The percentage of high school students interested in pursuing a career in the automotive industry has increased.

VET workforce roles and needs

JSA taxonomy

- There is considerable overlap between segments, indicating segments are not discrete, particularly curriculum development and learning design, quality assurance and compliance and leadership.
- There is a higher-than-average age and lower-than-average female representation across segments.

Current and future needs

- Attracting talent is ranked as the greatest opportunity to support the workforce.
- Diverse and complex learner needs are increasing, requiring an additional skill set for the trainers and assessors, particularly with the largest percentage of students coming from regional, remote and low socio-economic areas.
- Administration and compliance were a burden and addressed through initiatives such as additional support from quality-trained staff and external parties.



VET workforce pathways and pipelines

Career pathways

- There is strong demand to increase the visibility of a VET workforce career pathway.
- Workforce shortages are restricting the supply-side of a VET career.

Entry and recruitment

- Increased financial incentives (salary parity) and more flexible pathways into the sector were identified as areas of improvement to increase attraction.
- Provide a process and support to undertake the Certificate IV TAE, coupled with a mentor and buddy program.
- Lack of ongoing support and the increased requirement for digital literacy were identified as barriers to retention and requiring immediate focus.
- Administration and compliance raised again as an area to address in relation to retention.

Regional and remote issues and challenges

- Lag in emerging skills.
- Heightened labour market issues.
- Training and ongoing currency challenges.
- Environmental stress (due to harsh conditions).
- Lack of equipment and services.
- Roles are often multifaceted.

Licensing requirements

- Apprenticeships are required for a large number of occupations.
- Trade certifications are also required (depending on the state).

Industry-led responses

- Industry consultation an ongoing need in relation to resources, expertise and curriculum development. Resources including the following:
 - equipment – sourcing assistance or donations
 - expertise – master classes, guest speakers
 - expertise – training the VET workforce in current and emerging technologies
 - insights into emerging trends – guides curriculum development
 - currency – supports return to industry programs
 - training hubs
 - career pathway promotion.
- Collaboration with industry is essential to address skills gaps in emerging areas of need.



Recommendations

The findings from Stream 1 revealed that the majority of challenges and issues for the teacher, trainer, and assessor segment were anchored in the provision of minimal and fragmented wrap-around support and development opportunities. AUSMASA is responding to the need for ongoing support and its critical role in addressing the barriers and challenges faced by the VET workforce in order to positively impact its growth, retention, and development.

In light of the findings, we recommend that Streams 2 and 3 of the project develop a comprehensive lifecycle framework to provide whole-of-career support for trainers and assessors. The concept suggests that the framework is two-dimensional and serves as a reference point for a) trainers and assessors, and b) the RTO as a guide for best practices. It adopts a holistic approach, focusing not only on the day-to-day elements of VET and vocation, but also on wellbeing and career development.

The design of an adaptable model will ensure that it has practical application across the vast range of RTOs, including public, private and enterprise, particularly those located within regional and remote areas.

Stream 1 consultation identified critical areas of concern that directly shaped the formulation of the conceptual framework. These key areas have been grouped into themes, as detailed below:

- Early success transitioning into the VET workforce with individualised support options, increasing inclusive practices and encouraging diversity.
- Building VET capability, mindful that the TAE does not cover all aspects of the dual profession and developing instructional techniques.

- Maximising industry skills and relationships.
- Visible career pathway with flexible options.

Identifying the requirement for end-to-end career support, the framework is based on 4 progressive levels of maturity in a VET career: new entrant, establishing, advanced and experienced. The model defines the characteristics of each level, aligning them with tailored support and opportunities appropriate to the stage of maturity. The framework delivers scaffolded touchpoints throughout a VET career, ensuring that VET trainers and assessors are not at risk of a set-and-forget approach.

This structured approach aims to sustain and strengthen the passion for training and industry expertise that new entrants bring to the profession by providing a framework that promotes support and growth throughout a VET workforce career. It also ensures they are well-equipped and empowered to deliver high-quality, future-fit training that meets the evolving needs of the automotive and mining industries.

An extensive consultation process will be undertaken throughout Streams 2 and 3 to gather valuable feedback from stakeholders, including industry, RTOs, government organisations and peak bodies. These insights will be instrumental in shaping the development of the framework and its related resources. The exchange of case studies will also be a key aspect of the consultation to enable the sharing of initiatives and experiences supporting the framework implementation.



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