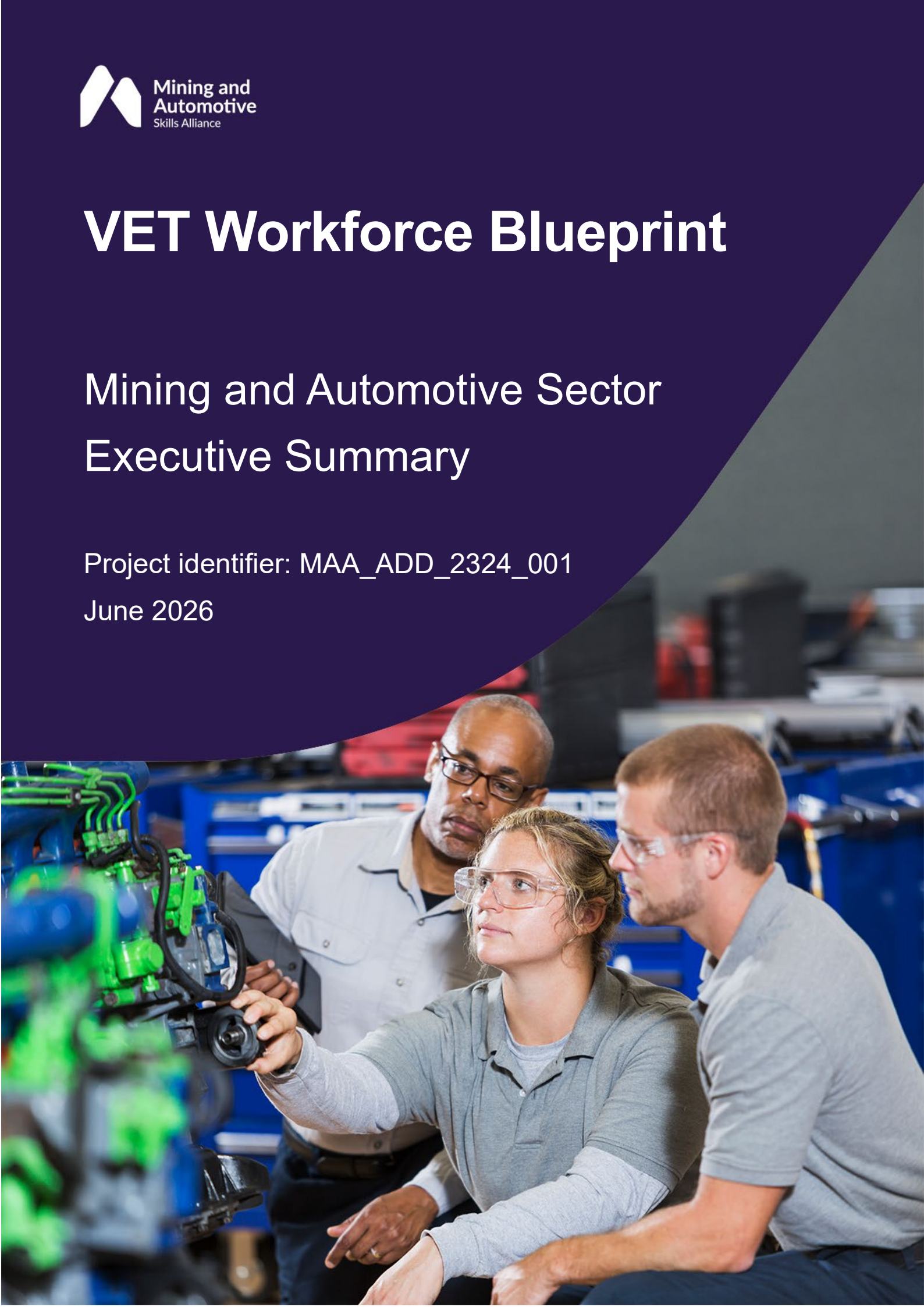
Mining and Automotive Skills Alliance

VET Workforce Blueprint

Mining and Automotive Sector Executive Summary

Project identifier: MAA_ADD_2324_001

June 2026



Acknowledgement of Country

AUSMASA acknowledges 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.



Featured Image: Ptilotus Exaltatus

The Mining and Automotive Skills Alliance (AUSMASA) is a Jobs and Skills Council funded by the Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. ©Mining and Automotive Skills Alliance (AUSMASA)

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Executive summary

The Mining and Automotive Skills Alliance (AUSMASA) is a Jobs and Skills Council funded by the Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR). As the Jobs and Skills Council for the mining and automotive industries, AUSMASA is responsible for 3 national training packages: the Automotive Manufacturing (AUM) training package; the Automotive Retail, Service and Repair (AUR) training package; and the Resources and Infrastructure Industry (RII) training package, covering mining.

In 2024, AUSMASA was funded by DEWR to lead the VET Workforce Blueprint project for the mining and automotive sectors, a 3-stream initiative designed to develop a comprehensive understanding of the vocational education and training (VET) workforce in these industries and to translate that understanding into practical tools and resources for trainers, assessors and the organisations that employ them. This executive summary is an extract from the project's Final Report and summarises the findings, the framework and the resources produced.

Australia's mining and automotive industries are among the country's most significant economic contributors. Mining generates over $400 billion in revenue and employs more than 280,000 people. The automotive industry contributes revenue exceeding $180 billion and employs nearly 318,000 workers. Both sectors are being reshaped by digitisation, electrification and the transition to net zero. At the centre of workforce development in both industries are the trainers and assessors who deliver vocational education and training across public, private and enterprise registered training organisations (RTOs) in every state and territory. Stream 1 consultation conducted across every state and territory found that the challenges facing that workforce consistently stemmed from minimal, fragmented wraparound support throughout the career lifecycle.

The Stream 1 evidence base

Stream 1 of the VET Workforce Blueprint project established the evidence base. AUSMASA undertook a nationwide study of the VET workforce across the mining and automotive sectors, drawing on quantitative analysis of 2021 Census data, VOCSTATS and the Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) VET Workforce Study, combined with extensive qualitative consultation conducted across every state and territory. During Stream 1, 5 national roundtables were attended by 131 stakeholders, supplemented by targeted interviews and open surveys, spanning public, private, and enterprise RTOs, employers, unions, peak bodies, and VET practitioners. The study revealed a workforce under pressure on multiple fronts:

- Many trainers and assessors are in the 50 to 59 age group, creating an urgent need for succession planning and structured knowledge transfer.
- Women represent 27% of the mining VET workforce and 20% in automotive, both well below the 48% national average. Female automotive VET enrolments have increased by 132% since 2016, representing a significant growth opportunity.
- Only 3% of survey respondents speak a language other than English at home, and just 2% identify as First Nations. Research shows that 56% of First Nations high school students are interested in automotive careers, compared to 30% of all students, signalling a strong, largely untapped pipeline.
- Roundtable participants ranked attracting talent as the greatest opportunity to strengthen the workforce.
- Only 38% of leaders felt their VET workforce was well equipped to support learners with diverse and complex needs, despite this being an increasing feature of every delivery context.
- Administrative and compliance burden was the most consistently cited challenge within the role itself.

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The Streams 2 and 3 response

Stream 1 findings were clear, and AUSMASA's response in Streams 2 and 3 was to develop an adaptable lifecycle framework to provide whole-of-career support for trainers and assessors. The framework was designed for practical application across all RTO types and locations, including regional and remote areas. Informed directly by the Stream 1 findings, AUSMASA merged Streams 2 and 3 into an integrated program of national consultation and resource development. This approach was agreed with DEWR through the updated workplan process and produced a more coherent and effective response than keeping the two streams separate.

Effective induction models, structured mentoring programs, industry currency arrangements and career development frameworks already exist across the mining and automotive sectors. Individual organisations demonstrate genuine strength in specific areas. What has been absent is a nationally consistent, evidence-based framework that consolidates these proven practices, targets every stage of a VET career and is accessible to all RTOs regardless of size, type or location. The Trainer and Assessor Career Framework and the guidance suite developed by AUSMASA through Streams 2 and 3 provide that missing national response.

To build that response on genuine evidence, AUSMASA undertook an extensive national consultation program across Streams 2 and 3:

- Five national roundtables held between August and October 2025 in Darwin, Adelaide, Perth, Melbourne and Brisbane, engaging approximately 104 participants from public, private and enterprise RTOs, industry bodies, employers, government and peak bodies.
- Eighteen targeted interviews conducted across multiple states and territories between November 2025 and March 2026, engaging more than 50 individuals and organisations.
- A dedicated consultation program for the Trainer and Assessor Wellbeing and Support focus area, engaging a further 33 participants.
- A structured stakeholder validation process involving 26 stakeholders confirming the accuracy, credibility and practical relevance of the guidance suite before finalisation.

The consistency of what was heard across every roundtable, interview and context gave the project a strong, reliable evidence base from which to build.

The trainer and assessor career framework

At the centre of what was built is the Trainer and Assessor Career Framework. It is the direct answer to what the consultation found and the architecture on which all other outputs in this project are built. The framework organises the full arc of a VET career across 4 themes, 13 topics and 4 career stages. The 4 themes are VET capability, wellbeing and support, industry and career pathways. The 4 career stages are:

- **new entrant** – getting started and finding your feet
- **establishing** – building confidence and consistency
- **advanced** – handling complexity and responsibility
- **expert** – drawing on deep experience and perspective

These stages describe patterns of experience, not job titles, seniority or years worked. A trainer or assessor can sit at different stages across different topics simultaneously. That is expected and by design. The framework is a navigable map of how VET careers in the mining and automotive sectors typically develop, drawn from the experiences of those working in them, not a prescriptive ladder imposed from above.

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Trainer and Assessor Career Framework

		New Entrant	Establishing	Advanced	Expert
VET	Training and assessment	TAE pathways VET induction	Building TAE knowledge	Supporting new trainers	Peer and academic leadership
	Train the trainer	Learning the craft Shadowing	Learner support Varied cohorts	Innovation in the classroom	Designing how others teach
	Professional development	Being mentored	Building specialist skills	Mentoring others	Passing on what you know
	Digital practice	Learning the systems	Confident with the tools	Advancing capability	Influencing system design
Wellbeing & Support	Access to support	Welcomed and supported	Continued support	Supports others Reflective mentoring	Succession planning Knowledge transfer
	Retention and sustainability	Managed exposure	Learning to manage load	Becoming the go-to person	Shaping the role itself
	Staying long term	Inclusive and culturally safe practice	Support services Targeted training	Sustaining under load	Helping others stay
Industry	Maintaining relevance	What is currency	Industry-led PD and placements	Industry trends Adjacent training	Moving between RTO and industry
	Engagement and partnerships	Networks and champions	Employer relationships	Industry mentor Sharing resources	Influencing reform Advisory groups
	Industry in training	Transitioning to the classroom	Contextualising delivery	Co-designing with industry	Evaluation and validation
Career	VET Pathways	Pathways and identity shift	Career planning	Academic progression	Senior VET leadership
	Mobility and progression	Exploring what's possible	Stepping sideways	Acting and project roles	Operational leadership
	Leadership and succession	Watching how leaders work	Stepping up informally	Cross-sector projects	Mentor and successor

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The guidance suite and resources

Each of the 13 framework topics is supported with guidance material and resources. Eleven topics are supported and addressed through a series of consultation and guidance manual documents. The consultation findings document sets out the evidence base for a given topic in full, incorporating the patterns that emerged, the examples described and what the evidence suggests. The guidance manual translates that same evidence into practical, career-stage-specific content for readers who want key findings and practical implications without the full narrative. Both are drawn from the same evidence base and are designed to complement each other. Each suite is accompanied by practitioner resources including guides, templates, checklists and self-assessment tools, available through the AUSMASA resource hub. The suite includes case studies and examples of promising practice drawn directly from consultation, illustrating what effective approaches look like in real delivery contexts and making visible what organisations across the sector are already doing well.

The Train-the-Trainer and Wellbeing and Support topics include additional materials and resources. A dedicated suite of 48 Train-the-Trainer learning assets supports capability development in teaching and assessment practice, covering 24 topics across 6 formats as detailed below. Topics range from managing experienced tradespeople and creating engaging delivery to using artificial intelligence responsibly and improving authenticity in assessment when English is not a student's first language. Each asset is designed to be drawn on selectively rather than worked through in sequence.

- Video.
- Training clip.
- Case study.
- Fact sheet.
- Job aid.
- Podcast.

The Final Report also features a Wellbeing and Support guidance document structured around the 4 career stages. Because early consultation identified that this topic warranted dedicated, specialist treatment, it was developed as a dedicated deep-dive focus area with its own consultation program. It is included in full within Theme 2 of the Final Report as a comprehensive practitioner resource in its own right. It is complemented by a diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) implementation toolkit comprising 12 practical tools, templates and case studies.

In addition, a dedicated mentoring resource suite comprising 15 assets across 9 topics, from an introduction to mentoring through to reflecting on mentoring practice, has been designed to support both mentors and those being mentored.

All resources are freely available through the resource hub located on the AUSMASA website.

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Key findings

The consultation confirmed and strengthened the findings from Stream 1. The most significant findings are as follows:

- The gap between holding the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE) and being an effective classroom practitioner is substantial, consistent and poorly addressed by most induction arrangements. Completing the TAE provides the regulatory foundation but does not develop the practical skills of teaching: managing a room, pacing a session, engaging a mixed cohort and adapting delivery in the moment. This finding directly informed the development of the teaching and assessment practice guidance manual and the Train-the-Trainer learning asset suite.
- Mentoring emerged as a whole-of-career factor with greater consistency and depth than anticipated, rather than functioning solely as an entry-stage support mechanism. Where it is structured, recognised and resourced, outcomes for trainers and assessors are markedly better. This finding shaped the dedicated mentoring resource suite and the decision to embed mentoring throughout the guidance suite.
- Stakeholders described the difficulty of maintaining industry currency as structural rather than motivational. Most trainers and assessors want to stay current and say the barriers are time, cost and access. This finding is addressed directly in the industry engagement guidance manual and associated practitioner resources.
- The low visibility of VET as a career means most trainers and assessors enter the profession informally, without a clear picture of what the work entails or where it could lead. This finding shaped 4 of the 6 guidance pairs covering attraction, transition, professional identity and career pathways.
- Advanced and expert trainers and assessors were found to shoulder disproportionate informal leadership, mentoring and curriculum responsibilities without formal recognition or adjusted workloads. It became apparent that this posed both retention and succession risks. The findings are addressed in the progression, leadership and contribution guidance manual and Recommendation 6.
- The Wellbeing and Support feature confirms the depth of these pressures and identifies the organisational design conditions that enable capable staff to remain. These insights are addressed through the Wellbeing and Support guidance document, supported by the DEI implementation toolkit and associated case studies.

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Recommendations

The following 8 recommendations are grounded in evidence from consultations and focus on the areas where action is most likely to make a sustained difference for the mining and automotive VET workforce. Full recommendations are provided in Section 9 of the Final Report.

1. Embed the Trainer and Assessor Career Framework as the shared reference point for VET workforce development in mining and automotive training organisations.
2. Establish a structured induction for all new trainers and assessors, including Train-the-Trainer skills development, to bridge the gap between teaching practice and the TAE.
3. Formalise and resource mentoring at every career stage.
4. Make career pathways visible before and at the point of entry.
5. Prioritise active, ongoing industry engagement as a workforce development strategy.
6. Deliberately address the development and recognition needs of advanced and expert trainers and assessors.
7. Name and support the transition from industry to VET as a distinct professional shift.
8. Continue to collaborate with other Jobs and Skills Councils on shared workforce challenges.