



Australian Government

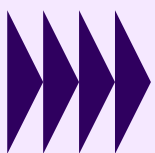


Jobs and Skills Australia

Pathways to Success

Jobs and Skills Report 2026

Skills pathways and enablers



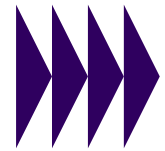
Meeting future workforce needs will require diverse skills pathways

Pathways through tertiary education shape people's movement into, through and between learning and work. Australia's future workforce will depend on diverse and connected pathways across higher education and VET. As technology, net zero, care and construction demand reshape labour market needs, formal qualifications remain critical to providing the foundation to work, further education and lifelong learning.

- Higher education and VET play complementary roles - higher education qualifications can build broad, adaptable capabilities, while VET provides practical, occupation-specific skills that support workforce entry, progression and transition.
- Higher education pathways in business and the humanities are highly exposed to task augmentation by AI technologies such as Generative AI – this increases the importance of lifelong learning and adaptability within these pathways.
- Apprenticeships remain central to housing construction, the build out of AI infrastructure, and Net Zero initiatives.
- Supporting female apprentices in critical trades is a significant opportunity to expand participation in occupations in persistent shortage - female participation in construction and electrotechnology apprenticeships is found to be rising.
- Qualification completion matters as much as commencements – VET qualification completers generally report stronger employment outcomes than part-completers, although partial completion can still report improved labour market outcomes.
- VET and adult community education (ACE) can be an enabler to uplift cohorts who have experienced a history of disadvantage.
- Place-based education and training pathways can help regional communities build and retain skilled workers.



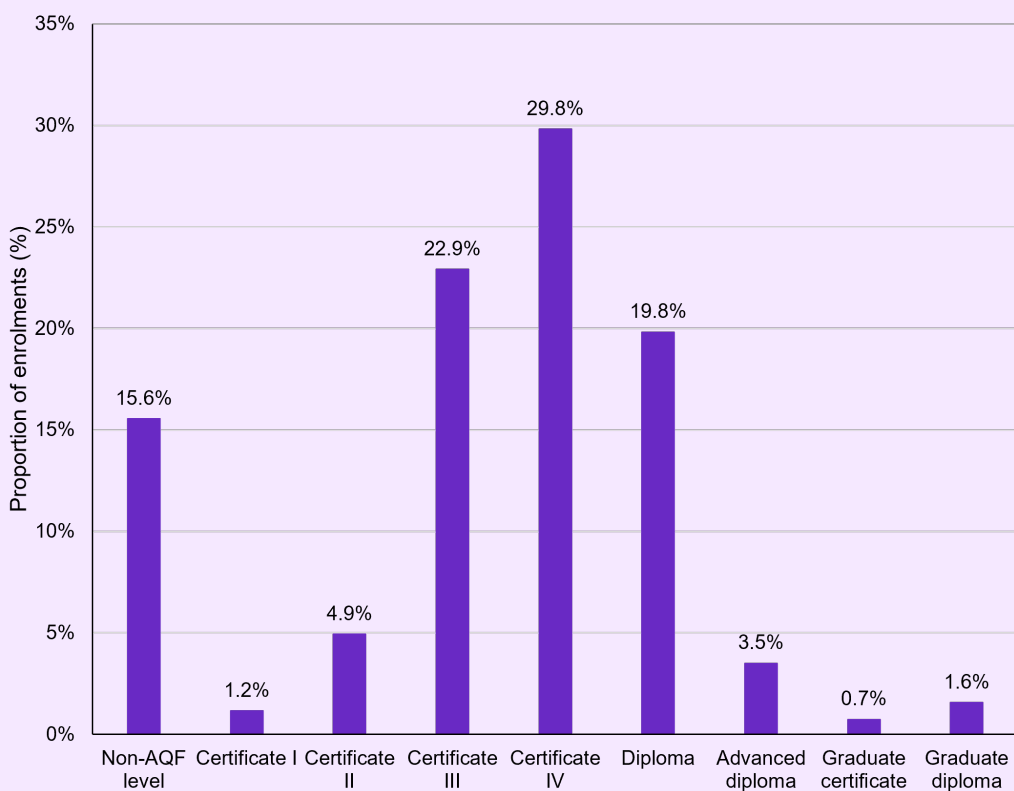
Pathways between higher education and VET can enable learning and skill development at all stages of life



Skills development is a lifelong process rather than a one-off investment made at labour market entry. Pathways between higher education and VET can enable learning and skill development at all stages of life. In this context, VET provides flexible, nationally recognised training that can help workers respond to changing skill requirements, progress their careers and transition into new occupations. In 2025, 11% of all VET enrolments were by students with prior studies in higher education.

Figure 1: More than half of VET students who had prior studies in higher education enrolled in Certificate III or Certificate IV level qualifications

Enrolment distribution of VET students with the highest level of prior education at a bachelor degree or higher, Total, Previous highest education level, Level of education in 2025.



Source: NCVER 2026, Total VET students and courses 2025: program enrolments DataBuilder.

