National Skills Taxonomy Newsletter

Jobs and Skills Australia
National Skills Taxonomy update
Issue 2 – October 2026

In the previous issue, we explored how 'skill' is defined. By building the National Skills Taxonomy (NST) on a human-centred skill definition, we ensure that the NST captures all the skills that are essential to modern life, not just the skills that are easy to see.

We also invited **Adrienne Nieuwenhuis**, Commissioner at the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) and **Craig Robertson**, CEO of the Victorian Skills Authority to discuss the skill definition and how it might work in practice at a recent webinar. Couldn't make it? Not to worry – you can watch the recording on our website.

This month, let's dive into how we can organise those skills in a meaningful and usable way.

More than one way to find and use a skill

A skill can matter across many jobs, industries and learning pathways. If people can find it in only one place, they may miss where it could take them. Employers may overlook relevant workforce capability, and education providers may find it harder to build on skills people already have.

The latest opinion piece by Deputy Commissioner Megan Lilly explores what this means for the NST project.

The taxonomy will provide a common foundation by giving each skill a consistent name, description and identifier. This will help governments, employers, education and training providers, and digital systems refer to the same skill consistently.

But one hierarchy cannot show every useful connection between skills, capabilities, occupations, industries, learning and different settings. The NST project therefore needs to support more than one way to find and understand a skill.

Think of a library book. The library keeps one catalogue record, but readers can find the book under several subjects. The book is not duplicated. It is simply easier to discover.

Skills can work in a similar way. Risk assessment, for example, may be relevant to cyber security, workplace safety, project management and clinical practice. It remains one skill with one trusted record, while its connections make it easier to find from different starting points.

These connections do not mean the skill is applied in the same way everywhere. Risk assessment in a hospital requires different knowledge, standards and judgement from risk assessment in cyber security. The shared foundation remains, while the context is preserved.

Over time, this approach could help people identify transferable skills, employers look beyond job titles, and education providers create clearer learning pathways.

Importantly, the NST project will not stop at a taxonomy. The taxonomy is the starting point for a common skills language. The next article will explore how connected information, products and services could help people and organisations find, understand and use skills in practice. Qualifications, evidence, assessment and human judgement will remain essential.

Read the full opinion piece and register for our upcoming webinar to learn more.

Join the upcoming webinar

Enjoyed the article? Join us for a follow-up webinar ‘More than one way to find a skill’, where we’ll explore how a polyhierarchy can create a more connected and useful skills taxonomy. Instead of placing a skill in just one category, a polyhierarchical approach allows shared capabilities to be discovered across multiple contexts. It’s a chance to have a conversation about using this structure to reveal transferable skills, support career mobility, improve workforce planning and design more responsive learning pathways.

- **Date and time**: Thursday 22 October 2026, 1:15 – 2:00 pm AEDT
- **REGISTER NOW**

What’s happening

We’re building the foundations of a common language for skills by testing how skills can be identified, described and connected across education, training

and workforce information. Through targeted testing and independent review, we're refining the methods that will underpin the NST. Insights from this work will inform the NST Design Paper, planned for release in March 2027, and help ensure the taxonomy is practical, evidence-based and responsive to user needs.

Stay informed

Know someone who could benefit from a skills-first lens? Forward this newsletter and invite them to subscribe to the NST mailing list.