National Skills Taxonomy Newsletter

Jobs and Skills Australia
National Skills Taxonomy update
Issue 3 – November 2026

In the October issue, we focused on the importance of organising skills into a usable structure. Sorting skills into a hierarchy with broader and narrower categories makes them easier to find.

However, there are many valid ways to group skills. Instead of forcing skills into a single hierarchy, we can assign each skill into multiple groups so that users can find a skill based on the categories that are most meaningful to them. This method of sorting skills is called a **polyhierarchy**.

We explored this further in a recent webinar, where we were joined by **Emma King**, CEO of HumanAbility and **Jodie Trembath**, CEO of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia. Check out the recording to learn more about a polyhierarchy and how it supports career mobility, improve workforce planning and design more responsive learning pathways.

Connecting skills across education and occupation

Where can I develop this skill? Where else could I use it? What could I learn next?

These are simple questions faced by learners and workers across the country, but our skills system does not always make them easy to answer.

Consider Alex, a jobseeker who has spent several years selling building supplies. Through this experience, Alex has developed skills in communication, problem solving, interpreting technical information and understanding requirements. Alex also acquired practical knowledge of construction materials, building methods and project workflows.

Alex wants to move away from sales roles. The skills Alex already uses may provide a foundation, but further learning, evidence or assessment may be needed. By showing the connections between Alex's skills and other jobs or qualifications, the National Skills Taxonomy (NST) can make it easier for Alex to see potential pathways into higher-paying, in-demand jobs. At a system level, helping more people recognise

where their existing skills may be relevant could help employers access a wider pool of skills to fill workforce gaps.

This is the next step beyond making skills discoverable. Jobs and Skills Australia is extending the NST beyond classification through an ontology that can define and govern relationships between skills, learning, occupations and the contexts in which skills are developed and applied.

A taxonomy organises skills. Polyhierarchical relationships provide more than one useful way to find them. An ontology defines and governs the broader relationships between skills and learning, occupations and contexts.

Read the full opinion piece >>

Join the upcoming webinar

We'll dive deeper into the concept of an ontology at our next webinar, 'Connecting skills across education and occupation'. Come along to hear more about what an ontology is; why we need one to understand the relationships between skills, education and work; and how it can help people apply a skills-first approach to their careers and workforce planning, and support lifelong learning.

- **Date and time**: Monday 30 November 2026, 11:45 am – 12:30 pm AEDT
- **REGISTER NOW**

What's happening

We've been touring the country as part of Jobs and Skills Australia's annual Roadshow. A big thank you to everyone who visited our booths to ask about the NST – we were absolutely blown away by your interest! We also received many insightful suggestions, which we'll keep in mind as we continue developing the NST.

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.