

Submission to the NSW vocational education and training (VET) review



CENTRAL NSW JOINT ORGANISATION

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24 November 2023

Reference: jb:mm 231124
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Dr Michele Bruniges
Chair
NSW VET Review

Email: nswvetreview@det.nsw.edu.au

Dear Dr Bruniges

Re: NSW vocational education and training (VET) review

Joint Organisations (JOs) were proclaimed in May 2018 under the NSW Local Government Act 1993. The Central NSW Joint Organisation (CNSWJO) represents over 177,000 people covering an area of more than 51,000sq kms comprising the eleven Local Government Areas of Bathurst, Blayney, Cabonne, Cowra, Forbes, Lachlan, Lithgow, Oberon, Orange, Parkes and Weddin.

Tasked with intergovernmental cooperation, leadership and prioritisation, JOs have consulted with their stakeholders to identify key strategic regional priorities. The CNSWJO Strategic Plan can be found here: [Strategic Plan & Regional Priorities - Central Joint Organisation \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/strategic-plan)

This response is informed by policy developed in region.

The members of the Central NSW Joint Organisation and Centroc before it have consistently brokered training for water and sewer operators in this region since 2011. From this lived experience we provide the following advice.

In a nutshell, despite the importance of water for human consumption, VET in NSW for water and sewer operators is patchy if it exists at all.

The Central NSW JO Board are staunch supporters of TAFE however the fragmentation of VET and expectations of TAFE to make money while having legacy financial constraints has seen a remarkable decline in their offering in our region, both in quantity and quality of training not just for water but more broadly. A recent example is Project Management Training where the cohort coordinated by CNSWJO gave up on the free program through TAFE as the quality was so poor and instead went to another RTO that was known to deliver results – at substantial expense.

Our members have consistently resolved to pay for quality training rather than wait for the funding framework to offer funding as governments and bureaucracies. Please find a case study on this region's success in navigating a broken system as well as identification of barriers and enablers for vocational education. Arguably the advice in this case study is broader than just for water operators. [CASE STUDY \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/case-study)

CNSWJO staff and Centroc before it have attended meeting after meeting of NSW industry Training Advisory Bodies (ITABs) and other collaborations whose role it is to fix these problems – most recently the Town Water Risk Reduction Program, for 13 years. Little has changed.

At the same time with our deep knowledge of navigating this broken system and the Board's consistent investment in this brokerage, this region has been identified as having the highest percentage of trained operators in regional Australia. As the Mayors of the region so often remind

the CNSWJO staff -*This is about **drinking water**, no matter how great the challenge we must remain tenacious.*

Given the extraordinary success of the brokerage training model adopted by the CNSWJO in getting results there is potential for the NSW Government to consider investing in success and growing the capacity of other JOs in assuring training. Deep and consistent knowledge of the constantly changing workforce training needs across a region enables coordinating training cohorts. By leveraging the JO accountability and governance frameworks, there is the added value of transparent assurance. This region would welcome an opportunity to explore this further with the NSW VET Review Panel.

Responding to the Discussion Paper the following advice is provided in the context of water utilities

Skills shortages and workforce development are critical issues facing the rural and regional water industry for the continued provision of safe, reliable water and sewerage services. There is a shortage of trained water operators and a shortfall of trainers and assessors to deliver training in regional NSW. This poses an unacceptable risk for NSW communities and the NSW Government's \$2.1 billion investment in regional water infrastructure.

In acknowledging this critical skill shortage, in December 2022, NSW Department of Planning and Environment-Water (DPE-Water) in partnership with Training Services NSW (TS NSW) released the [Water operations skills and training action plan \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au). The action plan forms part of Phase 2 of the [Town Water Risk Reduction Program | Water \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au) and highlights areas which the two NSW government departments are working together to alleviate critical skills shortages in the NSW water industry. This program is a priority for DPE-Water in [NSW Water Strategy | Water](https://www.nsw.gov.au) and is a critical project within DPE-Water's business plan. Systems remain non-optimal and the work being undertaken in this region is still experiencing a significant headwind.

Key challenges facing the VET Sector in NSW for the water industry

1. Industry Relevance

Adapting to rapidly changing industry needs and technological advancements is essential. VET programs must align with current and future skills requirements, including emerging fields like recycled water, water circular economy and re-use, digital-IT and cybersecurity.

2. Quality

Training and assessment delivery must be of high quality, fit for purpose and relevant to participant and Local Water Utility (LWU). Low quality training delivery can become a disincentive for future industry participation. Most water industry stakeholders would rather pay fee for service for relevant, high-quality fit for purpose training than low quality VET training that is free. Training for training's sake does not assist the LWU, participant or community.

3. Funding and Sustainability

Securing sustainable and real term growth in funding for VET is a challenge. It's essential to strike a balance between public funding that provides access, learner contributions, and employer contributions, while ensuring affordability and maintaining program viability. NSW public funding for

the delivery of the Water Training Package qualifications and Units of Competency appears to be inadequate.

4. Recognition and Pathways

Recognising national VET qualifications and identifying and offering clear pathways for further education and career progression are critical. There is a need to bridge the gap between VET and higher education and improve articulation and the transferability of knowledge and skills.

Key Opportunities for the VET Sector in NSW for the water industry

1. Enhanced Collaboration

Strengthening partnerships and collaboration between VET providers, industry, community organisations, and government bodies can lead to more tailored and effective training programs. Currently the NSW Department of Planning and Environment in partnership with NSW Department of Education (Training Services NSW) and the NSW regional water utilities are making significant process with VET training and workforce development under the Water Operators Skill and Training Action plan. Continued collaboration will ensure workforce development goals can be met.

2. Recognition of the potential of Joint Organisations in coordination

Given the extraordinary success of the brokerage training model adopted by the CNSWJO in getting results there is potential for the NSW Government to consider investing in success and growing the capacity of other JOs in assuring training. The [CASE STUDY \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/case-study) finds that in the fragmented system there is a growing cadre of “information sharers” and notes that pressing forward on an email does little to coordinate cohorts of local water utility staff. Deep and consistent knowledge of the constantly changing workforce training needs across a region enables coordinating training cohorts. By leveraging the JO accountability and governance frameworks, there is the added value of transparent assurance. This region would welcome an opportunity to explore this further with the NSW VET Review Panel.

3. Flexible Delivery Model

Expanding robust and quality online and blended learning options can increase accessibility and accommodate the diverse needs of learners, including those in remote areas. However, online learning should not be at the expense of quality of delivery. On-line learning may often suit some cohorts in rural and regional NSW. However, many rural and regional participants in the water industry are best suited to face-to-face delivery. Internet connections and access should also be considered when adopting online learning delivery modes.

4. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Promoting and offering RPL opportunities can help learners fast-track their qualifications by recognising their existing skills and experiences. RPL processes need to be streamlined, onerous compliance paperwork is a disincentive for some LWU to undertake RPL. The bulk of the RPL workload required, should be on the RTO not on the LWU or participant.

5. Work-Based Learning

Increasing the integration of work-based learning, such as traineeships, can provide hands-on experience and better align training with industry needs. Ensuring that training delivery is of high quality and engaging to facilitate the completion of the traineeship is critical. Thin markets in geographically spread areas is a barrier for LWU who wish to utilise school-based trainees with access to few RTO's able or willing to deliver it.

6. Lifelong Learning

Promoting a culture of lifelong learning can encourage individuals to continually update their skills throughout their careers, fostering adaptability and resilience.

Boosting Student Success

What does success look like for VET learners, beyond simply completing their qualification?

Success should encompass a range of outcomes that reflect their personal and professional development, as well as their contribution to the workforce and broader community.

Success for VET learners should encompass employability, quality of employment, continuous learning, upskilling career offerings, community impact, and well-being. To achieve this, it's essential to address barriers to completion and enhance existing programs through increased funding, mentorship, flexible learning, financial support, career counselling, industry engagement, monitoring, teacher recruitment and retention, and soft skills development.

By focusing on these areas, VET learners can be better supported to not only complete their qualifications but also to secure suitable and rewarding employment, ultimately contributing to the growth and prosperity of the NSW water industry workforce.

What existing initiatives and programs work well or can be enhanced?

Traineeship Support

Programs that provide support to trainees, both financially and through mentorship and robust supervision can be enhanced. This will assist with improving quality outcomes.

In this region networks of trainees are supported to “work together.” Further, this region is investing in other forms of on job training, at the moment in water loss management, that would lend themselves to alignment with more formal VET. This is part of a leading practice project on a Water Loss Management Center of Excellence.

Career Guidance and Counselling

Improved career guidance services can help learners make informed choices about their VET prospective qualifications, programs, and potential career paths. Ensuring that learners have access to comprehensive information and quality industry-based counselling and careers services is essential. The water industry recently implemented an industry-based hands-on showcase day in the Northwest of NSW. This resulted in greater work experience opportunities for school students, greater school, and industry collaboration as well as school-based trainees and post school water traineeships.

Industry Partnerships

Strengthening partnerships between VET institutions and local industry can provide learners with real-world exposure and experiences. Paid internships, traineeships, paid work placements, and industry-led curriculum development that align the outcomes with WTP Training Package components (e.g., units of competency) can enhance the relevance of VET programs.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Continuously monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of VET programs, quality of outcomes and initiatives is crucial. Regular feedback loops and data analysis can identify areas that need improvement.

What existing initiatives and programs can be enhanced to address barriers to completion?

In the first instance there is an opportunity to codesign change to the existing system with Joint Organisations leveraging the benefit that this mode can deliver. This could bring together the following:

Mentorship and Guidance

Implement mentorship programs that pair learners with industry specialists or professionals, appointed mentors or supervisors who can provide guidance, share experiences, technical and practical know how transfer, and offer career advice. This can help learners stay motivated and navigate challenges. Implement mentorship programs where experienced specialists, professionals or past learners can guide and support VET learners throughout their journey. These mentors can offer advice, share experiences, and help learners navigate challenges. This would work particularly well with traineeships in the water industry.

Flexible Learning Options

Recognise that VET learners often have other commitments, such as work, social or family responsibilities. Expand flexible learning options, including mobile centres, online courses, and part-time study, to accommodate the needs of learners who may have work, social or family commitments. Providing a variety of learning/training modes can improve accessibility and completion rates. However, online learning cannot be routinely adopted to reduce costs at the expense of face-to-face learning where face to face learning is preferred or required.

Industry-Employer Engagement

Foster strong relationships and strengthen partnerships with local employers and industries to ensure that VET program elements are aligned with national standards and local industry needs. Encourage paid work placements and on-the-job training opportunities, internships, cadetships, or traineeships to provide learners with practical experience and potential longer term job opportunities upon completion.

Monitoring and Early Intervention

Implement systems to monitor learner progress and intervene when learners are at risk of not completing their qualifications. Early intervention can help address personal or academic challenges. Implement systems including supervisors and mentors for regular monitoring of learner progress (development activities undertaken in the workplace) and identify those who may be at risk of not completing their qualifications/programs.

Deploy early intervention strategies, such as academic support or counselling, alternative supervision or mentoring, organising alternative work experiences or environments to cover emerging deficits in development activities can help these learners stay on track.

Technology Integration

Invest in modern technology and learning management systems to improve delivery including online learning experiences. Ensure that learners have access to necessary technology and equipment as well as digital resources and technical support.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Streamline the process of recognising robust and quality prior learning practices and experience, allowing learners to fast-track their qualifications/programs and reduce redundancy in their studies. Promote and strengthen RPL processes to acknowledge and credit learners for their existing knowledge, skills and/or experience. This can accelerate the completion of qualifications and reduce the time and cost required to obtain a VET qualification.

Pathway and Further Education Programs

Establish clear pathways for learners to advance from lower-level qualifications to higher-level qualifications. This can motivate learners to continue their education and training.

Career Counselling

Provide comprehensive career counselling services that help learners choose suitable career paths, set goals, and develop a plan for achieving them. Enhance career counselling services to help learners make informed decisions about their VET pathways. Provide clear guidance on the potential job prospects and earning potential associated with different qualifications can motivate learners to complete their programs.

Support Services

Provide comprehensive support services that address the holistic needs of learners, including academic tutoring, counselling, library services, mental health support, career counselling, childcare options, and transportation assistance.

Addressing learners' personal and mental health needs or workplace issues can significantly impact their ability to complete their qualifications/programs and overcome personal challenges that may hinder their progress.

Life Skills Training

Incorporate life skills training into VET programs to help learners develop personal skills, such as time management, financial literacy, and goal setting, which are essential for success both in education and the workplace.

Mental Health and Well-being Support

Recognising the importance of mental health and well-being, programs that provide counselling and support services for learners should be enhanced to address the unique challenges that some learners may face.

VET Trainer Recruitment

Increase teacher/trainer recruitment. Incentivise and provide career pathways and upskilling opportunities within industry to ensure quality of delivery and maintain currency of industry knowledge. Produce teacher/trainer recruitment, retention and reskilling strategies that ensure the maintenance of a pool of qualified industry-based workforce in VET.

Rural and Remote Initiatives

Create special initiatives for learners in regional and remote areas, such as industry-based learning centres, online courses with regional support centres or greater travel subsidies for training. Encourage face to face delivery where required or requested by industry to ensure quality.

How can VET learners be better supported to ensure they gain suitable and rewarding employment?

Supporting VET (Vocational Education and Training) learners to ensure they gain suitable and rewarding employment is crucial for both the individuals and the broader economy. Strategies to better support VET learners in the water industry in achieving this goal are as follows: Improved career guidance and counselling, quality training and assessment, work-based learning opportunities, tailored support for disadvantaged learners, recognition of prior learning (RPL), industry partnerships (including work experience opportunities), monitoring and evaluation of course delivery and assessment.

Maximising learner pathways to success

What barriers exist within the secondary school system which may inhibit the growth of participation in VETS? What solutions are there to these barriers?

How can governments, industry and employers support learner success in apprenticeships and traineeships?

Supporting learner success in traineeships in New South Wales (NSW) requires collaboration between the government, industry, and employers to create a supportive and conducive environment. The following highlights the ways these stakeholders can contribute to learner success in traineeships in the water industry:

NSW Government

Provide financial incentives to employers who hire apprentices and trainees, such as wage subsidies or tax breaks.

- Continue to offer fee free opportunities to trainees to ease financial burdens.
- Monitor and educate employers on their roles and responsibilities under the NSW Apprenticeship and Traineeship Act.

Industry and Employers

- Offer competitive wages and benefits to attract and retain trainees.
- Consider providing performance-based bonuses or rewards to motivate learners.
- Provide quality on-the-job training environment and timely supervision and mentorship to trainees and monitor their performance at off-the-job training with the Registered Training Organisation (RTO).

Quality Training and Mentorship

NSW Government

- Regulate and monitor the quality of training provided by Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and ensure it meets industry standards.
- Promote the availability of high-quality training providers and encourage their use.

Industry and Employers:

- Assign experienced mentors or supervisors to guide trainees.
- Provide access to on-the-job training and opportunities for hands-on experience.

Placing TAFE at the heart of the system

The Central NSW JO Board are staunch supporters of TAFE however the fragmentation of VET and expectations of TAFE to make money while having legacy financial constraints has seen a remarkable decline in their offering in our region, both in quantity and quality of training not just for water but more broadly. A recent example is Project Management Training where the cohort coordinated by CNSWJO gave up on the free program through TAFE as the quality was so poor and instead went to another RTO that was known to deliver results – at substantial expense.

Caution needs to be exercised with any proposed “total RTO” delivery solutions for the current skills and training crisis. The water industry recent experience of RTOs (both public & some Private Sector RTOs) seems to be more driven and focused on profit margins, rather than focusing on the quality of service and longevity of delivery capacity.

For TAFE NSW to be at the heart of the system TAFE needs to have a change of heart

Arguably, TAFE has not adapted well to a quasi-corporate model. In this region the potential for working with the JO has not been embraced and extremely disappointing was that TAFE has not responded well to aggregated procurement processes run through the JO – unlike other RTOs. This has significant implications;

- for TAFE;
- for Council members;
- local communities as TAFE services withdraw; and
- for the JO where aggregation has shown significant cost savings for members.

Quality Assurance

Ensuring the quality and relevance of TAFE NSW programs is critical. There may be a focus on continuous improvement, industry relevance, and maintaining high standards of training and education. Online learning and assessment should not be the default learning mode to save costs.

Equity and Accessibility

Placing TAFE NSW at the heart of the system should also involve efforts to ensure equitable access to VET opportunities for all individuals, including those in regional and remote areas. Online learning and assessment should not be the default learning mode to train and assess candidates in rural and remote NSW. Face to face learning modes should be available to students regardless of their geography. Opportunities to broker industry training and regional collaboration should be further investigated.

Innovation and Adaptation

TAFE NSW may need to innovate and adapt its programs and delivery methods to meet evolving industry needs and changing technologies. This could involve the development of new courses and training methods.

Teacher recruitment, retention, and reskilling

Quality leaders and teachers are the core of VET delivery and streamlined recruitment processes led by technical educational industry-linked discipline or domain faculties can enhance recruitment and retention. Upskilling and providing new recruits with access to educational related qualifications to enhance the quality of delivery is critical to a successful TAFE. Providing professional development opportunities including back to industry programs without loss of entitlements could be implemented.

Funding and Resource Allocation

Adequate funding and resource allocation to TAFE NSW are essential to support its central role in the VET system. Ensuring financial sustainability is crucial for the long-term success of this theme. However, funding needs to be linked to quality outcomes, relevant modes of training delivery, industry, and student satisfaction.

What role should TAFE NSW play in a thriving NSW VET system?

This region would welcome a robust, quality and growing TAFE offering in Central NSW. It should be at the heart of the VET offering and work at the grass roots with industry codesigning aligned training through a variety of mechanisms where TAFE training has National Water Package units on scope.

This region recognises for this to work for TAFE significant coordination with Local Water Utilities will be required.

How should the role of TAFE NSW be defined and communicated to promote its long-term success?

It is the view of the CNSWJO Board that with privatisation of VET, TAFE has been driven into the ground. There is no point in TAFE adopting a new role and communicating it effectively if it will be just another voice in a fragmented and failing framework.

What needs to be done to position TAFE NSW at the heart of the NSW VET system?

See advice above – this is a very big question and looks to significant structural change.

Delivering VET in NSW

VET delivery in NSW faces challenges arising from complicated funding arrangements. As the need for training increases and facilities age, innovative approaches to providing infrastructure are needed to deliver high-quality learning. Overall, VET delivery must be optimised to meet the current and future skills needs of NSW.

How can funding arrangements best meet the NSW VET system's goals around skills and equity?

To ensure that funding arrangements best meet the goals of the NSW VET system around skills and equity, a comprehensive and strategic approach is essential. Suggested below are several considerations and recommendations for optimising funding arrangements:

Transparent Funding Allocations

Ensure transparency in the allocation of funds to different VET providers, including TAFE NSW and Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). Transparency helps stakeholders understand how funding decisions are made and fosters trust in the system. Various types of training and assessment should be funded differently. For example, face to face delivery is funded at a higher rate than online delivery and assessment.

Equity-Focused Funding

Allocate additional funding to areas and communities with higher levels of disadvantage. This could be based on socio-economic factors, regional remoteness, or specific learner needs. Funding for face-to-face delivery should be factored into the funded arrangements according to industry and/or learner need.

Flexible Funding Models

Introduce flexible funding models that allow providers to adapt to changing industry demands and emerging skill needs. Flexibility enables the VET system to respond swiftly to economic shifts and technological advancements. Employer or industry funding contributions for more labour-intensive delivery models. Online only delivery models for industry based technical courses should be funded at a lower rate than face-to-face delivery. Online only delivery for generic skills also should be funded at a lower rate.

Collaborative Funding

Encourage collaboration between providers, industry, and government agencies. Pooling resources and funding across multiple stakeholders can lead to more comprehensive and effective training programs. The success of this approach is demonstrated through the training coordinated across multiple councils by the CNSWJO. See the Case Study link provided elsewhere in this response.

Regular Review and Evaluation

Establish a mechanism for regular review and evaluation of funding arrangements to ensure they remain aligned with the evolving needs of learners and industries. Flexibility to adjust funding models is crucial.

Stakeholder Engagement

Involve all stakeholders, including industry, educators, learners, apprentices, trainees, and community representatives, in the decision-making process related to funding arrangements. This ensures that diverse perspectives are considered.

Needs Assessment

Adjust funding priorities according to need. Conduct regular needs analysis and assessments to identify emerging skills gaps and changing requirements in the job market. Adjust funding priorities accordingly.

Skills Pathways

Develop clear pathways for learners to transition from trainee employment to higher education programs or courses or to new employment or to the workforce. This helps ensure that VET programs align with broader education and employment goals.

How should funding be deployed to support an optimal mix of providers and recognise the different costs of course delivery and learner support needs across providers?

NSW public funding for the delivery of the Water Training Package qualifications and Units of Competency is inadequate. For example, the NWP30222 CIII Water Industry Operations (NWP30222) qualification *Smart and Skilled* agreed price is between 20 percent and 35 percent lower than other states that deliver it (excluding any additional funding). This is a disincentive for interstate RTOs to enter an already thin market. An unrealistic price undermines the quality of training delivery as well as the preferred mode of delivery of many regional LWU.

Table 1 illustrates different funding arrangements between the states.

Table 1

Certificate 3 Water Industry Operations (NWP30222) Govt funded delivery as at Nov 2023						
	Base delivery Price	Rural & Remote Loading	Employer Contribution	Student contribution	Contestable Market	Notes
NSW	\$6440	Yes (additional) \$667 regional to \$1334 remote	n/a (generally)	n/a (generally)	No /S & S only	Additional funding allocated to needs/disadvantage from \$667 to \$1001
QLD	\$ 7,970-\$8020	Yes, Training delivered in country (15%), remote (75%) , Cape York and Torres Strait (150%) regions of the state will attract a location loading in addition to the government contribution	In addition to base price, if they want FTF delivery	\$1.60/nominal training hour that RTO must charge to the learner under user choice approx. \$450-500 (included in base price)	yes	All Qld funding is offered as a subsidy. Not a fixed price for the qualification. Employers can freely pay or be asked to pay a co-contribution for training, so they can have whatever delivery style/type they prefer for their learners. It also causes training delivery to be offered at contestable pricing in the market.
SA	\$9,800	yes	\$2000 (included in base price)	n/a	yes	
TAS	Similar to QLD					
VIC	TBC					Based upon the purchase of individual UOC linked to nominal hours in the Vic Purchasing guide

To support an optimal mix of providers and recognise the different costs of course delivery and learner support needs across providers in the context of vocational education and training (VET) in NSW, the funding arrangements should be guided by the following principles:

Needs-Based Funding

- Allocate funding based on the actual needs of learners and respective industries. Programs or courses with higher equipment or resource requirements should receive additional funding to cover these costs.
- Industries with unique or site-specific training requirements should also receive additional funding to cover these unique complexities.
- Recognise that learners from disadvantaged backgrounds or in regional and remote areas may require more support, including financial assistance, and allocate funding accordingly.

Performance-Based Funding

- Tie a portion of funding to the performance of providers. This can include metrics such as completion rates, employment outcomes, and learner satisfaction.
- Reward providers that demonstrate excellence in delivering quality education and meeting industry demands.

Differentiated Funding Models

- Consider implementing a differentiated funding model that categorises programs or courses into tiers based on factors like demand, cost of delivery, and societal importance. High-demand courses or those with high delivery costs may receive higher funding levels. More labour-intensive delivery models could command more funding allocation.(could be a mix of employer and state contributions).
- Consider funding high-in-demand or critical high priority programs in strategically important jobs / occupations, even if cohort numbers are low.
- Use market intelligence and labour market data to determine which courses are in demand and those that are critical to NSW and adjust funding accordingly.

Competitive Funding for Innovation

- Encourage partnerships between educational institutions and industry to create industry-relevant programs including exchanging or releasing subject matter experts to the provider to deliver latest technology programs and courses.

Transparency and Accountability

- Ensure transparency in how funding decisions are made, including clear criteria for allocation and regular reporting on the use of funds.
- Establish accountability mechanisms to track the performance of providers and the impact of funding investments.

Equity in Regional and Remote Areas

- Recognise the challenges faced by providers in regional and remote areas. Allocate additional funding to these providers to address the unique logistical and infrastructure challenges they encounter.
- Promote online and blended learning options to improve access in remote areas.

Cost-Sharing and Collaboration

- Encourage collaboration among different types of providers, including TAFE NSW and private RTOs, to share resources and expertise.
- Explore cost-sharing arrangements to make the most efficient use of available funds.

- Make available funds for the development of centralised program or course resources such as curriculum that can be shared across RTO's including TAFE NSW, especially in high-in-demand or critical vocations and those that have small cohorts in order to ensure currency of resources for learners.

Infrastructure Investment

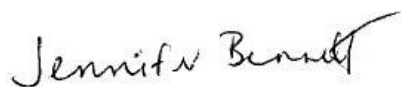
- Invest in modernising and upgrading training facilities and equipment to ensure high-quality learning environments.
- Explore public-private partnerships for infrastructure development to share costs and expand access to state-of-the-art facilities.

In conclusion, we thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on this discussion paper. From this region's experience over the past decade in delivering critical water operator training and in navigating what is a broken system, we strongly support work that will ensure fit-for-purpose quality, affordable training delivered on the ground in regional NSW.

This region is a strong supporter of TAFE and would welcome a robust, quality and growing TAFE offering in Central NSW. It should be at the heart of the VET offering and working at the grass roots with industry in codesigning aligned training through a variety of mechanisms where TAFE training has National Water Package units on scope. Having said this, considerable work is needed and until this has been done, we will continue to source the best on offer through the small number of RTOs in the water operator training area. As we continue to say- *This is about **drinking water**, no matter how great the challenge we must remain tenacious* and seek the best outcomes for the communities of central NSW.

If you require further information or clarification on comments in this submission, please do not hesitate to contact me on 0428 690 935.

Yours sincerely,



Jenny Bennett
Executive Officer
Central NSW Joint Organisation (CNSWJO)