

## Organisation details

Industry Skills Australia (ISA) is the Jobs and Skills Council for the nation's Transport and Logistics, Rail, Aviation and Maritime industries and the emerging sectors of Omnichannel Logistics and Distribution, and Air and Space Transport and Logistics. Jobs and Skills Councils are tripartite and bring together employers, unions and governments in recognition that no single party can deliver the necessary solutions to skills and workforce challenges facing the nation – these challenges must be tackled through collaboration.

Jobs and Skills Councils have four (4) broad roles:

1. Industry Stewardship which involves gathering industry intelligence to reliably represent the views and needs of industry back to the VET system and its decision-makers;
2. Workforce Planning which enables industry to identify its workforce development and skills issues and design high-impact solutions which are captured in the national Workforce Plan for the industry;
3. Training Product Development which focusses on improving the quality, speed to market and responsiveness of training products to employer and workforce needs;
4. Implementation, promotion and monitoring which involves supporting training providers, promoting careers and monitoring how well the system is meeting the needs of industry and learners.

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## Topics covered

This submission responds to the following topics:

- 1. Collaboration and advocacy to address workforce challenges**
- 2. Developing training and career pathways**
- 3. Aligning Training with regulatory and licencing requirements**

The submission response takes into consideration feedback from Industry Skills Australia's stakeholders, it also considers the role Jobs and Skills Council have in the Aviation Industry.

### Collaboration and advocacy to address workforce challenges

Addressing the workforce challenges in the aviation industry requires a whole-of-industry approach. Collaboration among industry, training providers, and government is paramount for the sustainable development of the aviation sector in Australia. As the new Jobs and Skills Council for the Aviation Sector, Industry Skills Australia has recently established the Aviation Strategic Workforce Planning Committee with members comprising of Australian Federation of Air Pilots (AFAP), Australian and International Pilot Association (AIPA), Defence, Regional Aviation Association of Australia (RAAA), Australian Airport Association (AAA), Transport Workers Unions (TWU) and Virgin Australia. The committee has oversight of the national Aviation workforce plan and is well placed to identify and prioritise the responses needed from industry, governments and the training system to address the identified workforce development needs of industry.

The Aviation Strategic Workforce Planning will be directing a program of work which will include:

- collaborating with other Strategic Workforce Planning Committees or Jobs and Skills Councils on joint priorities;
- promoting the Workforce Plan and agreed priorities to key stakeholders;
- continually gathering industry intelligence on workforce development and skills needs to inform and update the Workforce Plan as required.

As global, demographic and technological forces continue to reshape how we live and work, deep insight and strategic thinking will be instrumental in shaping a Plan that is future-focussed and at the same time, addresses current and emerging skills and workforce challenges. The Workforce Plan needs to not only identify the issues and shape the solutions, but must also serve as a blueprint for collaboration, one that brings together employers, industry bodies, unions and educators, Commonwealth, State and Territory governments. Industry Skills Australia will work with the Aviation Strategic Workforce Planning Committee and industry stakeholders to collaborate in identifying and prioritising these solutions to address the workforce challenges of industry.

The aviation industry is dynamic and relies on a skilled workforce to ensure safety, efficiency, and innovation. Through close collaboration, industry leaders can provide valuable insights into the specific skills and competencies required in the rapidly evolving aviation landscape. Training providers can then tailor their programs to meet these needs, ensuring that the workforce is equipped with the latest knowledge and expertise. Government involvement is crucial for setting regulatory standards, incentivising training initiatives, and aligning industry needs with broader economic and educational goals. This collaborative approach fosters a comprehensive and responsive training ecosystem that benefits all stakeholders. Through the ten Jobs and Skills Councils, training initiatives are designed and overseen by industry to ensure their quality and relevance to market needs. The added benefit is the opportunity to monitor these initiatives and create an active feedback mechanism where industry partners can provide insights on the effectiveness of training products, leading to continuous improvement.

In the rapidly evolving landscape of advanced air mobility (AAM), Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF), electric aircraft, and Electric Vertical Take-Off and Landing (eVTOL) technologies, the specific skill

sets required for future workforce are yet to be known. The dynamic nature of these industries demands a proactive and collaborative approach to skill development. Embracing a collaborative approach, holds the key to identifying and responding to the evolving skill needs. This collaborative synergy enables a more comprehensive understanding of the emerging technologies, ensuring that educational programs and training products are not only forward-looking but also adaptable to the fast-paced changes in the field. Another benefit of Jobs and Skills Councils is that we act as a conduit among industry, training providers, and government to better help identify and respond to emerging technologies. Industry Skills Australia is establishing a Technology Futures Taskforce. The taskforce will drive increased speed-to-market of training products through the early identification of new and emerging technologies, and the likely impact on skills and jobs.

The aviation sector is facing a challenge to continually attract enough workers to meet the growing job demand. The advent of new technologies, such as drones, AAM, electric aircraft, etc presents a unique opportunity to attract workers from under-represented cohorts, including women, first nations peoples and those with disabilities. These cutting-edge technologies open up avenues for a broader and more inclusive workforce by offering roles that go beyond traditional aviation positions. With Jobs and Skills Councils proactively promoting and highlighting the diverse career possibilities within the aviation sector, particularly those associated with emerging technologies, we can attract a more diverse talent pool. Advocacy for awareness about the aviation industry is crucial to dispelling misconceptions and highlighting the myriad job opportunities beyond traditional roles. This advocacy not only addresses the industry's talent shortage but also ensures that individuals, regardless of background, are well-informed and encouraged to explore the diverse and rewarding careers within the aviation sector.

Closer involvement and collaboration with industry should also entail a co-investment model for training which can optimise access to funding in the aviation industry. Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs) are well placed to play an active role in assisting with workforce analysis and planning to help industry navigate the VET system and ensure training /assessment delivery is based on industry's workforce development needs rather than 'off-the-shelf' courses. Jobs and Skills Councils' connectedness to the industry can help identify funding priorities through programs similar to the ones that existed earlier such as Enterprise Based Productivity Places Program (EBPPP) and the National Workforce Development Fund (NWDF).

By sharing the financial responsibility among industry, training providers, and government, a co-investment model ensures that resources are allocated efficiently and sustainably. Industry stakeholders, who directly benefit from a skilled workforce, contribute their industry-specific knowledge and financial resources. Training providers, in turn, leverage these contributions to design and deliver high-quality training programs in line with industry needs. Government involvement provides a strategic framework, financial support, and oversight, ensuring that training initiatives align with national priorities. This not only ensures the availability of a skilled workforce but also promotes innovation, as the collaborative effort fosters an environment where industry skill demands, training programs, and government policies are seamlessly integrated for the benefit of the aviation sector and the broader economy.

## Developing training and career pathways

Establishing clear training and career pathways plays a pivotal role in enticing more individuals to pursue careers in the aviation industry. These pathways serve as transparent roadmaps, guiding individuals on how to progress within the industry, outlining the qualifications and skills required for each career step. By presenting potential future roles within aviation, these pathways need to outline training and professional development opportunities, fostering collaboration with industry and training organisations to expose candidates to real-life industry situations and experience. This approach allows trainees to 'learn on the job' with access to experienced teachers and mentors. The integration of flexible pathways, credit transfer, industry collaboration, and career counselling seamlessly connect vocational and higher education sectors, effectively addressing aviation workforce challenges. This will make it easier for new recruits to navigate their way through the training environment and the industry.

This approach also ensures that industry involvement in pathway development aligns students' skills and knowledge with industry needs, offering an opportunity for a more diverse workforce, including women and First Nations peoples. Well-defined career pathways not only boost industry attractiveness but also portray it as a sector that offers growth, development, and long-term career opportunities.

Career pathways can pave the way for a more joined-up education system where school, VET, and the tertiary sector are connected. Training pathways, designed in collaboration with industry, that align to entry level jobs, can also encourage students from year 11 and 12 to undertake a qualification, gain experience and knowledge about the aviation industry and support more people to join the industry. With a proactive partnership between industry and training providers, this can provide direct career pathways from flight schools to small charter or regional airline to major airline.

The Aviation industry's involvement in developing career pathways will ensure training products are closely tied with occupational outcomes and students are job-ready upon graduation. This can also boost speed to market as the vocational sector is well positioned to deliver hands-on training in a substantially shorter period as opposed to the higher education sector. This flexibility can be particularly beneficial for those who start with hands-on roles and later move into managerial or specialised senior positions. According to ABS Census data in 2021, about 42% of Australian pilots hold a vocational qualification as opposed to 38% with a higher education qualification. This indicates the suitability of the vocational sector to supply the much-needed skills and occupations in the aviation sector.

Establishing pathways and connections between the vocational sector and higher education through initiatives such as higher or advanced apprenticeships is equally important as highlighted by The Australian Universities Accord: Interim Report. The aviation industry requires many hands-on practical skills which can be supplied via the vocational sector and can be further expanded by theoretical knowledge via the higher education system. The pathways should include a complete cycle from schools to the vocational sector and followed up by higher education courses. These pathways would allow learners to move seamlessly from schools to vocational training and then to higher education.

## Aligning Training with regulatory and licencing requirements

Enhancing alignment between vocational qualifications and the CASA Manual of Standards and/or Licensing Manual is pivotal for elevating the quality and relevance of education and employment in the aviation industry. Aligning licensing with vocational qualifications streamlines the curriculum, meeting industry needs efficiently, and enabling quicker entry into the workforce with targeted skills at a lower cost and higher standards. The standardised alignment establishes a clear benchmark for skills and knowledge required in aviation, ensuring licensed professionals meet industry and regulatory expectations. Moreover, alignment can foster increased workforce mobility and provide opportunities for mandatory place-based learning. This will enhance practical experience and connect learners with employers for improved employment prospects. Currently, students undertake CASA licensing examinations which adds significant time and cost to training, undermining the industry's attractiveness to prospective recruits.