



Government of Western Australia
Department of Training
and Workforce Development

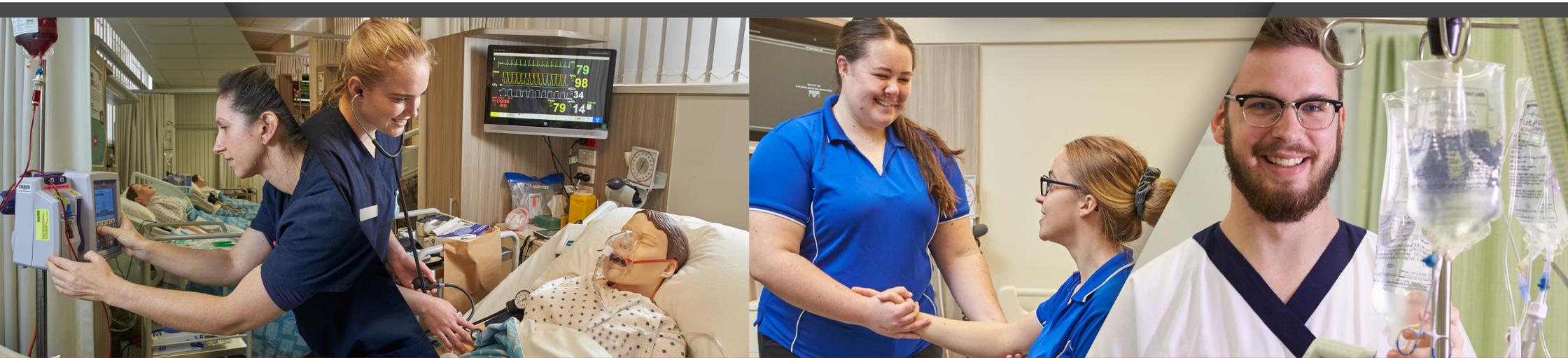


**SKILLS
READY**
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STRATEGIC STATE GOVERNMENT **RESPONSE**

to Social Assistance and Allied Health: Future Workforce Skills Report

March 2022



STRATEGIC STATE GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

to Social Assistance and Allied Health: Future Workforce Skills Report

The State Training Board has produced the *Social Assistance and Allied Health: Future Workforce Skills Report*. This report stems from extensive consultations across Western Australia, and builds on the State Training Board's initial workforce strategy for the sector released in 2019.

This future workforce skills report specifically aims to develop the Aboriginal health and wellbeing, mental health, and alcohol and other drugs support workforces and outlines 25 recommendations under seven themes, listed below, for the consideration of government, industry and the education and training sectors.

- » marketing and promotion
- » traineeships
- » skill sets
- » pre-employment programs
- » employer incentives
- » training provider partnerships
- » other such as, mentoring and screening processes

The State Government has already embarked upon addressing many of the recommendations in the workforce report and will continue to concentrate and focus its efforts on initiatives and programs to further support the sector and increase the pipeline of skilled workers to meet industry's needs.

State Government agencies, including the Department of Training and Workforce Development, Department of Health, WA Country Health Services, the Mental Health Commission, Department of Communities are working collaboratively across portfolios with industry and non-government organisations to undertake many activities, plan initiatives and explore opportunities that specifically targets recommendations in the report, including:

- » promote careers in mental health, alcohol and other drugs and Aboriginal health and wellbeing, and raise awareness of careers and training pathways and provide up-to-date career information and advice;
- » provide pre-employment and employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
- » create pre-vocational programs including career taster programs for secondary students;
- » provide free training or reduced costs of training for a wide range of qualifications and skills sets in the sector;
- » establish skill sets for existing workers and new entrants for skills in demand including, culturally appropriate training;
- » develop curriculum and establish new traineeships as well as actively promote the benefits of traineeships within the sector to encourage and increase take up;
- » expand the enterprise training program to include Aboriginal training organisations and other providers to foster collaborative partnerships and support training of existing workers and respond to skill gaps;
- » foster collaborative partnerships between education sector, higher education sector and training organisations to build capability;
- » ensure there is equitable access for support, development and training for persons in metropolitan, regional and remote areas at all stages of a person's career;
- » ensure staff are trained to deliver age and culturally appropriate services and cater for diversity within the community;
- » develop a framework to expand the lived experience peer workforce; and
- » expand the Job Ready program to connect workers with job opportunities.

STATE GOVERNMENT ACTION PLAN

to the Social Assistance and Allied Health: Future Workforce Skills Report

| Report Recommendation | Actions | Responsible agency |
|---|--|--|
| 1. MARKETING AND PROMOTION | | |
| <p>1.1 Actively promote career and training pathways into roles in Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing to school students, parents and communities to raise awareness of opportunities and increase youth engagement and localised employment. (Support in full)</p> <p>1.2 Actively promote mental health and AOD roles and careers to change public perceptions of the sector and encourage job seekers to consider careers in the mental health and AOD sector. (Support in full)</p> <p>1.3 Actively promote upskilling opportunities and skill sets to develop and broaden the skills of the existing workforce to serve a wider range of community health and wellbeing needs. (Support in full)</p> <p>1.4 Promote traineeships to employers, including developing and distributing an employer's guide which explains the benefits of traineeships and their integration into workplaces from an industry perspective encouraging their use as an employment pathway. (Support in full)</p> | <p>The Department of Training and Workforce Development, together with Mental Health Commission, Department of Health and WA Country Health Service will promote career and training pathways to raise awareness of workforce opportunities. In particular, for Aboriginal Health Workers, Aboriginal Health Practitioners, Nurses, Midwives, Allied Health Workers, Environmental Health Workers and Peer Support Workers within the community and with employers through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 15 WA Jobs and Skills Centres across WA and the Jobs and Skills website, which incorporates the Jobs and Skills Aboriginal Services Jobs Board. » Engagement with the education sector to build awareness of secondary school students in high schools across Western Australia. » Provision of up-to-date career pathways information and career advice. » Engagement with the higher education sector, undergraduate and post graduate students. » Marketing strategies for existing workers with a focus on regional and remote areas. » Development of a strategic framework to promote careers in the sector and attract people to the sector. » Engagement with employers and peak associations to promote and encourage traineeships, skills sets, pre-employment programs and training pathways. » Development of promotional flyers to address misconceptions and knowledge gaps in the community. | <p>Department of Training and Workforce Development (lead)</p> <p>Mental Health Commission</p> <p>Department of Health WA Country Health Services</p> |

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| 2. TRAINEESHIPS | | |
| <p>2.1 Establish and promote Class B Community Connector/Outreach worker qualifications at Certificate II and Certificate III level, including the necessary language and literacy support, to provide accessible entry training and pathways to roles which support community engagement. (Support in principle)</p> <p>2.2 Establish a Class B Certificate III Mental Health to encourage flexible training pathways for entry level workers. (Support in principle)</p> <p>2.3 Establish a Certificate IV Alcohol and Other Drugs Traineeship within both NGO and Government Sector to provide more accessible entry pathways and support skill development at a local level. (Support in principle)</p> <p>2.4 Establish a Training and Assessment Traineeship to enable organisations to develop in-house trainers and assessors and support new and existing staff with upskilling opportunities. (Not supported)</p> <p>2.5 Actively promote the Certificate III and Certificate IV Aboriginal Health Worker Traineeships to increase understanding of the role and clinical capability of Aboriginal Health Workers, provide more accessible entry pathways and support skill development at a local level. (Support in full)</p> <p>2.6 Create and promote Certificate II and Certificate III Indigenous Environmental Health Worker Traineeships within the NGO and Government Sector to provide more accessible entry pathways for Aboriginal people and support skill development at a local level. (Support in principle)</p> | <p>The Department of Training and Workforce Development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Assist Community Skills WA in the development of any new curriculum required to ensure relevant units and skills are targeted to meet industry needs. » Work collaboratively with Community Skills WA to establish traineeships, in accordance with the State Training Board's establishment and variation of apprenticeships process. » Work with group training organisations to promote employment based training pathways for Aboriginal students. » Review the <i>Participation Program</i>, which focuses on the delivery of training for cohorts under-represented in the workforce, to enhance support to students working in Aboriginal health settings and assist with any barriers faced. » Undertake further analysis of clinical placements for Aboriginal Health Workers to ensure that no other barriers exist to take up. » Work with the Department of Health, the Aboriginal Health Council of WA, Community Skills WA and existing WA based training providers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Improve access across Western Australia to the Certificate II level qualification. > Reinstate access to the higher Certificate III qualification. (This will include partnership with Aboriginal community controlled health services, Aboriginal training providers and other services to target placed-based solutions that meet the needs of existing and potential Aboriginal Environmental Health staff). | <p>Department of Training and Workforce Development (lead)</p> <p>Department of Health</p> <p>Mental Health Commission</p> |

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| 3. SKILL SETS | | |
| <p>3.1 Develop and promote a skill set to address the absence of AOD specific knowledge and capability in Tertiary trained students and provide upskilling opportunities for those entering the AOD sector. (Support in full)</p> <p>3.2 Develop and promote skill sets to build the capability of the mental health and AOD peer workforce and provide entry level pathways. (Support in full)</p> <p>3.3 Develop and promote skill sets to build the capability of the broader health and human service workforce to respond appropriately to the growing presentation of clients with complex long-term mental health and alcohol and other drug conditions. (Support in full)</p> <p>3.4 Develop and promote a skill set to build the capability of the community services and health workforces to provide culturally appropriate services. It is critical this skill set reflects the local cultural content. (Support in full)</p> <p>3.5 Develop and promote a skill set to build the capability of the broader mental health and AOD workforces to support diversity in the provision of services. (Support in full)</p> | <p>The Department of Training and Workforce Development and the Mental Health Commission will work collaboratively with Community Skills WA, the Department of Health and the Department of Communities to develop curriculum and establish skill sets to meet industry needs.</p> <p>Skill sets will target existing workers, new entrants and community members, and will be done in consultation with the Western Australian Network for Alcohol and other Drugs Agencies, the WA Association of Mental Health and other relevant non-government agencies.</p> <p>The Department of Training and Workforce Development will work with the sector to expand the Job Ready program to include mental health and alcohol and other drugs workforce skills. The Job Ready program is a free online platform that connects Job Ready workers with job opportunities available with Western Australian employers.</p> <p>Skill sets already identified by the State Training Board committee include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » trauma informed care; » family and domestic violence; » counselling skills; » mental health first aid; » managing aggression and violence; » mental health peer work; » AOD peer work; » working with the homeless; » home and community care; and » promotion of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultural safety and working with diverse people. <p>The Mental Health Commission is currently undertaking a Lived Experience (Peer) Workforce Project which will provide a framework on developing the Lived Experience (Peer) workforce as a whole, including training of clinical and management staff and diversity of peer work roles. Training is also required within clinical development and within workplaces, including industrial relations and human resource practices, to support the diversity of these roles.</p> <p>The Department of Training and Workforce Development has already established the <i>Integrating Mental Health Practice Skill Set</i> (previously known as Introduction to Mental Health) targeting existing workers in the community services sector, in particular those dealing with an increasing prevalence of clients experiencing mental health concerns.</p> <p>The Department of Training and Workforce Development will work with the sector to expand the Enterprise Training Program to build capability in Aboriginal Community Organisations, including providing support for Aboriginal people to become trainers in these organisations to work with clients and provide support. Culturally appropriate training offered for Aboriginal clients will be essential.</p> | <p>Department of Training and Workforce Development (lead)</p> <p>Mental Health Commission</p> |

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| 4. PRE-EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS | | |
| <p>4.1 Establish a school-based Certificate II (Introduction to Community Health and Wellbeing) taster program to articulate to Certificate III qualifications in Health and Community Services. (Support in principle)</p> <p>4.2 Actively promote Certificate III Allied Health Assistant VET for secondary school programs across the state to encourage young people to consider careers in allied health roles. (Support in full)</p> <p>4.3 Actively promote Certificate III Aboriginal Health Worker VET for secondary school programs across the state to encourage young Aboriginal people to consider careers in Aboriginal health. (Support in principle)</p> | <p>The Department of Training and Workforce Development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Develop and promote pre-vocational programs for secondary school students that will provide credit or articulation into Certificate III or above qualifications. » Work with the Department of Education and the sector to develop career opportunities for secondary school students through the Year 9 Career Taster Program. » Actively promote the Certificate III Allied Health Assistant qualification which is currently available for school based delivery in Western Australia. » Work with Community Skills WA to actively promote the Certificate III Aboriginal Health Worker and Certificate III in Aboriginal Environment Health in schools, subject to approval for school based delivery, implementation of recommendation 2.6 and ensuring training providers have capacity to work with young learners. » Work with Community Skills WA to establish a school-based traineeship in accordance with the State Training Board's establishment and variation of apprenticeships process. | <p>Department of Training and Workforce Development (lead)</p> <p>Department of Education WA Country Health Services Department of Health</p> |
| 5. EMPLOYER INCENTIVES | | |
| <p>5.1 Remove barriers to traineeship participation by ensuring that both new entrant and existing worker traineeships are funded equitably. (Support in principle)</p> | <p>The Department of Training and Workforce Development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Explore funding options for upskilling existing workforces in the care industry. In 2018 the Department progressed amendments to Regulation 15 of the <i>Vocational Education and Training (Colleges) Regulations 1996</i>. This amendment now provides flexibility to set affordable course fees for existing worker trainees. | <p>Department of Training and Workforce Development (lead)</p> |

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| 6. TRAINING PROVIDER PARTNERSHIPS | | |
| <p>6.1 Develop regional RTO/TAFE partnerships which support localised delivery in thin markets and the development of a local workforce. (Support in full)</p> <p>6.2 Develop regional industry/RTO partnerships which build local capability and capture expertise of the local workforce. (Support in principle)</p> <p>6.3 Develop regional VET/Higher Education partnerships which support access to tertiary pathways regionally. (Support in principle)</p> | <p>The Department of Training and Workforce Development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Expand the State Government's Enterprise Training Program (ETP) to include Aboriginal training organisations and other providers to foster collaborative partnerships. The consortia approach to the ETP enables smaller providers to partner with other businesses, NGOs and community organisations and work with a local RTO to deliver training for their workers. » Encourage TAFE Colleges and private RTOs in Western Australia to work with the WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) in partnership as part of the State's VET Regional Partnerships program. The WAPHA offers a range of services and undertakes and funds workforce planning and development initiatives, and works with primary health care providers across Western Australia. » Consult with the Geraldton Universities Centre, Great Southern Universities Centre, Pilbara Universities Centre (Karratha and Port Hedland) with the aim of developing partnerships with private RTOs to provide articulation pathways for regional workers to upskill or reskill in areas of need. Collaborative partnerships between VET and higher education providers in regional Western Australia would enable multidisciplinary teams to learn collaboratively, creating a cohesion and support that would benefit clients and communities. | <p>Department of Training and Workforce Development (lead)</p> |

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| 7. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS | | |
| <p>7.1 Establish a workplace mentor pilot to assess the impact of supporting Aboriginal students on placement, undertaking traineeships, or recent graduates on completion and retention. (Support in principle)</p> <p>7.2 Review the Mental Health and AOD applicant screening process to ensure suitability for roles and that information on the realities of working in the sector is provided prior to commencement. (Support in principle)</p> <p>7.3 Establish a funded work placement program pilot which enables organisations to develop their capability to support students on placement. (Support in full)</p> | <p>The Department of Training and Workforce Development is progressing, in consultation with Aboriginal stakeholders, an employment enabling program for Aboriginal youth to include wrap-around support, mentoring, independent living skills such as budgeting and nutrition and obtaining a driver's licence. The program is in response to Recommendation 1.7.1 of the <i>Review of Skills, Training and Workforce Development</i>.</p> <p>Registered training providers who are approved to deliver courses in the Participation-Equity program may offer support and services such as mentoring and counselling, assistance with things like meals, transport and child care, and also language and literacy support. The program also assists with support for job seeking, resumé writing and work experience for eligible students.</p> <p>The Department of Training and Workforce Development has seen recent success with the inclusion of a pre-screening tool for prospective students undertaking Job Ready programs in infrastructure, bricklaying, aged and disability services.</p> <p>Further consultation is required with consumers, families and carers, employers, NGOs, peak bodies and training providers if a similar tool is adopted for the mental health and AOD sectors.</p> <p>The funding may be used to cover the costs an employer incurred with the coordination, monitoring and supervision of work placements, or to offset student travel and accommodation costs where it is necessary for the student to travel to obtain a suitable work placement. The program includes 20 qualifications, all from the CHC and HLT training packages.</p> <p>The Department of Training and Workforce Development will undertake an evaluation of the program to determine how the funding has been distributed, the outcomes for learners and employers.</p> | <p>Department of Training and Workforce Development (lead)</p> <p>Mental Health Commission</p> |