

Budget 2019 – Vocational education and training

Vocational Education and Training Budget Overview

Measured against the vocational education and training priorities for women that we have identified, the 2019/2020 Budget includes no new or additional funding for skills development. Money is simply transferred from some programs to create new programs. A number of the budget initiatives are based on review recommendations from the report released this week: ‘Strengthening Skills: Expert Review of Australia’s VET system’, which includes significant changes to the architecture of the sector, but pays little attention to strategies to restore quality teaching and learning as cornerstones of an effective VET system. It also fails to acknowledge the importance of TAFE as the anchor for the system. There are no initiatives targeted to address NFAW priorities in the Budget. **Individual Budget measures are examined in the Budget Measures table below**, but overall the government has missed an opportunity to demonstrate that it understands the links between vocational education and training and satisfying and rewarding employment into ever-changing industrial and commercial sectors. The challenges for women to secure an apprenticeship are not addressed by any targeted programs. The additional apprenticeship incentive payments are welcome, but the eligible occupations are in the main male dominated trade areas. Redirected funds to a new Foundational skills program are also welcome, but totally inadequate to meet the needs for language, literacy, numeracy and digital skills needs of disadvantaged people of all backgrounds, particularly women, who require the basics to enter further education or training.

The National Careers Institute to be established has potential, but unless it has adequate mechanisms at state and local levels to gather information on best practice career guidance and develops its VET Information Strategy from current and emerging sectors of employment opportunity, in consultation with community and educational practitioners, it will not succeed in its ambitious goals.

The National Skills Commission is a recommendation from the expert review, in an attempt to bring some cohesion to the sector and give industry further say over all educational processes.

WHY IS THIS AN ISSUE FOR WOMEN?

- Women earn less than men. The full-time total remuneration gender pay gap based on WGEA data is 22.4 %, meaning men working full-time earn nearly \$26,527 a year more than women working full-time.
- Increased access and support for women and girls in post-school education is critical to ensuring a diverse range of career choices and opportunities for decent work. OECD figures (March 2018) show: *Education correlates with wages, and less-educated women generally earn less than both highly-educated women and less-educated men. Childcare fees further reduce the attractiveness of labour*

force participation, and for many less-educated women with low wages it does not always pay (or pay much) to be in work.

- Vocational education and training plays an important role in building skills and capabilities for the workforce and in driving economic productivity. A comprehensive and coherent workforce framework -- underpinned by a full assessment of Australia’s long-term labour market needs—is required to assist VET in meeting industry and community requirements.
- The importance of VET educational qualifications and opportunities needs to be better understood by school leavers in assessing career progression. The sex stereotyped nature of girls’ and women’s VET participation is not leading to improved labour market outcomes and thus to enhanced future economic security with adequate superannuation. It is also important to take account of the fact that women from specific (and often overlapping) sub-groups do not participate in VET in the same way as women generally. Indigenous women, women with a disability and women from language backgrounds other than English (LBOTE) experience VET differently; they do not achieve higher award level training at the same rate and do not attain program completion at the same level as women generally.
- Research ([Simon and Clarke, 2016](#)) has identified the need for a range of support mechanisms to ensure successful take-up of careers through apprenticeships for women and girls. This support includes career advice and development whilst at school, and mentoring, role models and network organisations in relevant industry areas. The specific needs of women and girls in undertaking apprenticeships and other training in rural and remote communities should also be taken into account through appropriate curriculum, funding and support mechanisms. Governments need to make these opportunities available and sustainable.

BUDGET MEASURES

The following table sets out the priorities identified by NFAW and the relevant 2019/2020 budget commitments.

NFAW priorities	In 2019/2020 budget	Comment (if any)
Budget allocations to support vocational and training opportunities for women and girls, particularly in skills shortage areas.	No	There are a number of new programs in the Budget arising from the expert review that may have some benefit to women and girls, including the new foundation skills package, a National Careers Institute and Commonwealth Scholarships Program for Young Australians. There is a strong focus on supporting training in skills shortage areas but not specifically for women and girls.
Increased funding for VET overall.	No	The Budget contained a \$525m investment in vocational education and training. Only \$54.2m of this allocation is new money over five years and the majority (\$463m) in part from reallocating Skilling Australians Fund money unspent because Queensland and Victoria did not sign up to the scheme.
Funding for and recognition of TAFE as public provider with primary responsibility for a range of programs for women and girls. Women’s and girls’ diverse needs should be explicit in all VET policy, with all VET related legislation being	No	TAFE is not specifically recognised in the budget papers, and there is no consideration of a women’s impact statement.

accompanied by a women's impact statement to ensure that the rights of women are adequately addressed

A federal unit focused on access and social inclusion in vocational and adult education.	No	\$48.3m has been allocated to set up a National Skills Commission, but if the recommendations of the expert review are to be followed, then the role of the new Commission will focus on forecasting labour market demands for skills and allocating funding to the states and territories. There is no indication that there will be any focus on access and social inclusion.
---	----	---

Other budget measures

Measure	Comment
Foundational skills program to include foundational language, literacy, numeracy and digital skills. \$7.1m in this budget with \$1.6m for 4 delivery pilots of LLND programs in remote Indigenous communities	Given the recent cut to the Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) program, this new program appears to be a recognition of the Government's need for funding in this area.
Commonwealth Scholarships Program for Young Australians - \$2.8m	Scholarships in regions
National Careers Institute headed by National Careers Ambassador - \$1.4m, to develop VET Information Strategy - \$1.6m	Improved career advice has been required for some time. An independent body will need to take into account research undertaken on needs of women and girls, and work with groups currently supporting women and girls in non-traditional trades.
National Skills Commission - \$4m	It is worth noting that along with the National Skills Commission, funding is continued for the Australian Industry Skills Committee (AISC) - \$1.5m, although the expert review recommended that the new Commission replace the AISC. Considerable funding is now being allocated to a range of structures in VET.
Skills Organisation Pilots - \$11.9m	According to the expert review these would replace current Industry Reference Committees (IRCs) in terms of developing and maintaining Training Packages. They would be industry run.
Industry Training Hubs - \$1.2m	These 10 Training Hubs will support industry pathways in areas of local skills shortages targeting youth unemployment in regional areas.
Australian Apprenticeship Support Network -\$189.4m	Considerable funding is still allocated to support apprentices and trainees, including through employer incentives.
Incentives for Australian Apprentices - \$393.2m	As noted before there has been a cut to the Skilling Australians Fund (partly funded by a levy) from projected creation of 300,000 apprenticeships and traineeships to 80,000. Much of the support for additional apprenticeship incentive payments will apply to male dominated

occupations, with only hairdressing as a primarily female occupation

**Skills Checkpoint for Older Workers
Program - \$3.9m**

Election 2019 – Vocational education and training

WHY IS THIS AN ISSUE FOR WOMEN?

- Women earn less than men. The full-time total remuneration gender pay gap based on WGEA data is 22.4 %, meaning men working full-time earn nearly \$26,527 a year more than women working full-time.
- Increased access and support for women and girls in post-school education is critical to ensuring a diverse range of career choices and opportunities for decent work. OECD figures (March 2018) show: *Education correlates with wages, and less-educated women generally earn less than both highly-educated women and less-educated men. Childcare fees further reduce the attractiveness of labour force participation, and for many less-educated women with low wages it does not always pay (or pay much) to be in work.*
- Vocational education and training plays an important role in building skills and capabilities for the workforce and in driving economic productivity. A comprehensive and coherent workforce framework -- underpinned by a full assessment of Australia's long-term labour market needs—is required to assist VET in meeting industry and community requirements.
- The importance of VET educational qualifications and opportunities needs to be better understood by school leavers in assessing career progression. The sex stereotyped nature of girls' and women's VET participation is not leading to improved labour market outcomes and thus to enhanced future economic security with adequate superannuation. It is also important to take account of the fact that women from specific (and often overlapping) sub-groups do not participate in VET in the same way as women generally. Indigenous women, women with a disability and women from language backgrounds other than English (LBOTE) experience VET differently; they do not achieve higher award level training at the same rate and do not attain program completion at the same level as women generally.
- Research (Simon and Clarke, 2016) has identified the need for a range of support mechanisms to ensure successful take-up of careers through apprenticeships for women and girls. This support includes career advice and development whilst at school, and mentoring, role models and network organisations in relevant industry areas. The specific needs of women and girls in undertaking apprenticeships and other training in rural and remote communities should also be taken into account through appropriate curriculum, funding and support mechanisms. Governments need to make these opportunities available and sustainable.

ELECTION COMMITMENTS

The table below sets out how fully parties' current election commitments address NFAW recommendations: Full implementation Partial implementation No or negative response

NFAW RECOMMENDATION		
Budget allocations to support vocational and training opportunities for women and girls, particularly in skills shortage areas.		
PARTY COMMITMENTS		
ALP	LNP	GREENS
<p>In his Budget reply speech, Bill Shorten made a \$1 billion commitment to TAFE, including waiving upfront fees for 100,000 TAFE students and supporting a 150,000 growth in apprenticeships. An Apprentice Advocate will be established and one of the roles will be to close the apprentice gender gap.</p> <p>As part of this, \$12m. will be allocated to recruit women in traditionally male-dominated occupations. The funds will be used for mentoring, peer support and to address employer bias. More inclusive workplaces is an aim.</p> <p>Labor's plan for equality states that half of Labor's 100,000 fee-free TAFE places will be reserved for women.</p>	<p>There are a number of new programs in the Budget arising from the expert review that may have some benefit to women and girls, including the new foundation skills package, a National Careers Institute and Commonwealth Scholarships Program for Young Australians. There is a strong focus on supporting training in skills shortage areas but not specifically for women and girls.</p>	<p>Provision of life-long education opportunities that are responsive to women's particular circumstances, including caring responsibilities and late entry to study.</p> <p>Provision of specific initiatives that increase female participation and success in non-traditional career options in schools, VET, and in universities.</p> <p>Provision of centres for continuing education and training for women, including training to facilitate promotion opportunities for part-time and temporary workers and return to work of women who were outside the workforce for extended periods.</p>
NFAW RECOMMENDATION		
Increased funding for VET overall.		
PARTY COMMITMENTS		
ALP	LNP	GREENS
<p>The ALP has a \$1 billion commitment to TAFE, including \$200 million in a Building TAFE for the Future fund, waiving the 100,000 upfront student fees, guaranteeing at least two out of every three dollars of government funding for VET goes to public TAFE, providing as additional \$334m. for creation of apprenticeships, and supporting pre-apprenticeships and adult apprenticeships.</p>	<p>The Budget contained a \$525m investment in vocational education and training. Only \$54.2m of this allocation is new money over five years and the majority (\$463m) in part from reallocating Skilling Australians Fund money unspent because Queensland and Victoria did not sign up to the scheme.</p>	

NFAW RECOMMENDATION

Funding for and recognition of TAFE as public provider with primary responsibility for a range of programs for women and girls. Women’s and girls’ diverse needs should be explicit in all VET policy, with all VET related legislation being accompanied by a women’s impact statement to ensure that the rights of women are adequately addressed

PARTY COMMITMENTS

ALP	LNP	GREENS
<p>ALP National Platform states that Labor will deliver a high quality and responsive vocational education and training system to meet national skills needs, ensure students receive the knowledge and skills they are training for, and contribute to social well-being and economic growth.</p> <p>Labor will restore public TAFEs as the major provider in the vocational education and training system. Labor will allocate at least two out of every three dollars of public vocational education funding to public TAFE.</p> <p>The ALP has specifically addressed gender in relation to apprenticeships and traineeships. In their National Platform the ALP states that apprentice and traineeship pathways should be open to people from diverse backgrounds and promote opportunities for broader representation of both genders in traditional and non-traditional trades and occupations.</p> <p>Labor will expand trades and traineeship opportunities for Indigenous Australians. Labor will also work to challenge gender stereotypes in trades and occupations. Women should be encouraged to enter into male-dominated trades, including but not limited to construction and manufacturing and engineering, and men should be encouraged to enter into traditionally female-dominated occupations such as early childhood education and nursing.</p>	<p>TAFE is not specifically recognised in the budget papers, and there is no consideration of a women’s impact statement.</p>	<p>The Greens believe that TAFE should be the first priority for all federal funding for Vocational Education and Training should go to TAFE. There should be no government funding for providers that operate for private profit.</p> <p>Free TAFE courses.</p>

NFAW RECOMMENDATION		
A federal unit focused on access and social inclusion in vocational and adult education.		
PARTY COMMITMENTS		
ALP	LNP	GREENS
<p>Labor will establish a National Commission of Review which will examine all aspects of Australia’s post-secondary education system. It will examine and make recommendations about how vocational and higher education systems address the country’s economic and societal needs. The Review will commence with an inquiry into the structure of the vocational education and training system, including qualifications, curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, funding, regulation and quality assurance. This review will consider access and social inclusion. The National Platform states that “No one should be excluded from access to vocational education and training as a result of financial disadvantage, course costs, fear of debt or regional disadvantage. Vulnerable individuals should not lose access to vocational and further training because courses are not available or affordable. Labor will ensure the vocational education system does not shift costs onto individual students, resulting in a significant disincentive for low-income families and students to engage in lifelong learning to access skilled and well-paid jobs.”</p>	<p>\$48.3m has been allocated to set up a National Skills Commission, but if the recommendations of the expert review are to be followed, then the role of the new Commission will focus on forecasting labour market demands for skills and allocating funding to the states and territories. There is no indication that there will be any focus on access and social inclusion.</p>	

OTHER ELECTION COMMITMENTS		
Commitment	Party	Comments
	Choose an item.	
	Choose an item.	

	Choose an item.
	Choose an item.

Authorised by Kate Gunn, Sydney.