

**Senate Select Committee on COVID-19**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**Australian Government response to the COVID-19 pandemic - 06 August 2020**

**Outcome: Skills and Training**

**Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000154**

Senator Mehreen Faruqi provided in writing.

***National Skills and Workforce Development Agreement - timeline***

**Question**

What is the timeline for the renegotiation of the National Skills and Workforce Development Agreement? What steps have been taken to date?

**Answer**

The Commonwealth and all states and territories have signed a Heads of Agreement for Skills Reform. The Heads of Agreement is available at <https://www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/heads-of-agreement-skills-reform.pdf>

The Heads of Agreement sets out an approach and priorities for developing a new National Skills Agreement (to replace the National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development), including a commitment to settling a new agreement by August 2021.

On 7 August 2020, the National Cabinet agreed to establish the Skills National Cabinet Reform Committee to support the ongoing reforms to vocational education and training outlined in the Heads of Agreement.

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***Administrative arrangements for the COAG Skills and Education Councils***

**Question**

Have the administrative arrangements in terms of staffing and support for the function of the COAG Skills and Education Councils changed since the announcement COAG will become National Cabinet? If so, how?

When are the skills ministers next scheduled to meet?

**Answer**

No changes have been made to departmental staffing and support for either the Skills Council or the Education Council.

Skills Ministers last met on 31 July 2020. The Skills National Cabinet Reform Committee, established by National Cabinet on 7 August 2020 is expected to hold its inaugural meeting in September 2020.

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**Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000156**

Senator Mehreen Faruqi provided in writing.

***JobTrainer Heads of Agreement***

**Question**

Which states and territories have signed on to JobTrainer Heads of Agreement to date and on which date did they each sign? For those states and/or territories that have not, why not?

**Answer**

All states and territories have signed the Heads of Agreement for Skills Reform, which can be found on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet [website](#).

- Queensland signed on 15 July 2020.
- New South Wales signed on 16 July 2020.
- The Northern Territory signed on 16 July 2020.
- Tasmania signed on 16 July 2020.
- The Australian Capital Territory signed on 17 July 2020.
- South Australia signed on 23 July 2020.
- Victoria signed on 29 July 2020.
- Western Australia signed on 20 August 2020.

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**Department of Education, Skills and Employment Question No. IQ20-000157**

Senator Mehreen Faruqi provided in writing.

***Registered Training Operators ceasing operation***

**Question**

How many RTOs have ceased operation in 2020 to date? How many students were affected? How many of the closures can be attributed to Covid19?

**Answer**

As at 9 August 2020, the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) advise that:

- A total of 94 registered training organisations (RTOs) have closed during 2020, affecting an estimated 4421 students
  - Seven have self-identified as being attributed to COVID-19, affecting an estimated 2266 students
- Causes for RTO closure may be related to regulatory decisions, expiry, voluntary administration, liquidation, or other factors. Data regarding closures attributable to COVID-19, beyond self-identification, is not available.

Before an application for withdrawal of registration is approved by ASQA, the provider must advise that satisfactory arrangements are in place for students to complete the course, transfer to another provider or be refunded pre-paid fee amounts.