



Member Driven Policy Leadership
Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia

ITECA Submission

Parliamentary Inquiry Into The Free TAFE Bill 2024 (Cth)

Parliament Of Australia ■ Senate
Senate Standing Committee On Education & Employment

January 2025

Submission Index

Parliamentary Inquiry Into The Free TAFE Bill 2024

Part i	Executive summary	Page: 3
Part ii	Key issues summary	Page: 4
Part iii	Recommendations to government	Page: 6
Section 1	Government funded skills training	
1.1	Introduction to independent skills training.....	Page: 9
1.2	Empowering student choice	Page: 11
1.3	Outcomes for students	Page: 13
1.4	Outcomes for employers	Page: 15
1.5	Outcomes for taxpayers	Page: 17
Section 2	Challenges with the Bill	
2.1	Is there a legitimate need for the legislation	Page: 19
2.2	Determination of costing	Page: 21
2.3	Redefining the proper role of government.....	Page: 22
Appendix A	ITECA Introduction	Page: 25
Appendix B	National skills training snapshot	Page: 26
Appendix C	Understanding data referenced in this submission	Page: 27
Appendix D	Key abbreviations common in tertiary education	Page: 28



Available For Use Under A Creative Commons
Attribution NonCommercial NoDerivatives
4.0 International License (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)

Unrestricted license is provided to Australian,
state and territory governments.

Part i ■ Executive Summary

Parliamentary Inquiry Into The Free TAFE Bill 2024

The Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia (ITECA) is pleased to take this opportunity to review the *Free TAFE Bill 2024 (Cth)*. The proposed legislation proposes ongoing financial support to states and territories for delivering free skills training places. While this initiative may appear to promote accessibility and affordability, its necessity is questionable given the existing comprehensive skills funding measures under the five-year National Skills Agreement. The legislation seems redundant, duplicative, and misaligned with the current inter-governmental arrangements for funding skills training in Australia.

“Students need to be at the heart of skills funding policy, empowering them to make informed decisions to study with the provider of their choice, whether this is an independent RTO or public TAFE college.”

Australia's independent skills training sector plays a critical role in workforce skilling, reskilling, and upskilling, supporting approximately 91% of student enrolments in skills training, including those in complex and higher-level qualifications. Independent Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) achieve superior outcomes, reflected in their high levels of student and employer satisfaction. These results are driven by strong regulatory oversight and competition that fosters quality and innovation. By contrast, public TAFE colleges often struggle to deliver comparable outcomes, constrained by bureaucratic management structures that limit flexibility and responsiveness to industry needs.

Central to the effectiveness of Australia's skills training system is the empowerment of students to make informed choices about their education. Students have unique career goals and require the ability to select training providers that align with their aspirations. Policies that prioritise government-driven initiatives like Free TAFE risk undermining this principle by limiting choice and potentially favouring less effective public providers over high-performing independent RTOs.

Government-funded students consistently report high satisfaction with training delivered by independent RTOs. These providers excel due to their close relationships with local employers, flexibility in adapting to changing industry demands, and focus on delivering relevant and cost-effective training. These attributes are critical to ensuring that skills training meets both student needs and the broader workforce demands of a rapidly evolving economy.

The introduction of the *Free TAFE Bill 2024 (Cth)* also raises concerns about its financial implications. While its stated purpose is to support at least 100,000 Free TAFE places annually from 2027, the Explanatory Memorandum claims there is no financial impact from the legislation. This contradiction highlights a lack of clarity and transparency in the government's approach to funding and accountability. Without a clear and robust financial framework, the Bill risks diverting resources from proven high-performing providers to a less effective public system.

The Free TAFE Bill is unnecessary and risks undermining the existing skills training ecosystem, locking in funding for underperforming public TAFE colleges. There is no rationale for this as, given the underachievement in outcomes of the public provider. Students need to be at the heart of skills funding policy, empowering them to make informed decisions to study with the provider of their choice, whether this is an independent RTO or public TAFE college.

Troy Williams
ITECA Chief Executive
Canberra, January 2025

Part ii ■ Key issues summary

Parliamentary Inquiry Into The Free TAFE Bill 2024

Part 1.1 ■ An introduction to the independent skills sector.

Australia can be proud of its independent skills training sector, which does the heavy lifting in workforce skilling, reskilling, and upskilling. Independent Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) support approximately 91% of student enrolments in skills training, including the vast majority of students in complex and higher-level qualifications. Significantly, independent RTOs achieve some of the highest level of student and employer satisfaction.

Part 1.2 ■ Empowering student choice.

Australia's skills training system is vital in preparing individuals for meaningful careers and equipping the workforce to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving economy. Central to the success of this system is the empowerment of students to make informed decisions about their education and training providers. Students, not governments, should be at the forefront of these decisions. Each student's life and career goals are unique, and they deserve the ability to choose the skills training provider that best aligns with their aspirations.

Part 1.3 ■ Government funded student satisfaction.

The data is clear; students in government-funded skills training have very high levels of satisfaction with the training provided by independent RTOs. To a significant degree, this is due to the fact that high-quality competition within the sector drives provider excellence. It is this competition to excel and support the best outcomes for students and employers in the skills training sector that drives independent providers to lead on most measures of student satisfaction.

Part 1.4 ■ Government funded student employer outcomes.

Independent RTOs consistently outperform public TAFE colleges when it comes to key employer satisfaction metrics due to their strong connections with local employers and their ability to adapt flexibly to evolving industry needs. These attributes and connections, often lacking in public TAFE colleges, are hindered by bureaucratic management structures, which limiting capacity to deliver tailored and responsive training outcomes.

Part 1.5 ■ Government funded student taxpayer outcomes.

When government allocates skills funding, assessing the financial return and in particular the value for money from the perspective of taxpayers is essential. Historically, this hasn't been a focus of Australian Government policy, leading to inefficient use of what is an investment on behalf of the taxpayer. Official data highlights that independent RTOs consistently deliver superior outcomes, including higher student and employer satisfaction, completions and employment rates. Prioritising government investment based on measurable returns to the taxpayer ensures that investment is used to support high-quality training, foster economic growth, and address workforce needs, maximising benefits for both students and the broader economy.

Part 2.1 ■ Is there a legitimate need for the legislation?

The Free TAFE Bill seeks to provide ongoing financial support to the states and territories for the delivery of free TAFE and vocational education and training (VET) places. While this initiative may appear to advance accessibility and affordability in skills training, the necessity of the legislation is questionable when considering the existing frameworks and agreements already in place. The Bill is arguably redundant and duplicative, given the capacity for comprehensive measures to be established under the current five-year National Skills Agreement.

Part 2.2 ■ Determination of costings.

The introduction of the Free TAFE Bill raises significant concerns about the Australian Government's sincerity in addressing the implications of investing effectively and successfully in the skills training sector. Ostensibly, the Bill's purpose is to provide ongoing financial support to states and territories for delivering at least 100,000 Free TAFE places annually, ensuring Australians have access to critical vocational education and training opportunities. However, the explanatory memorandum accompanying the Bill introduces a perplexing contradiction by stating that "there is no financial impact" resulting from the measures outlined in the Bill.

Part 2.3 ■ A proper role for government.

The introduction of the *Free TAFE Bill 2024 (Cth)* raises significant concerns about the Australian Government's sincerity in addressing the implications of investing effectively and successfully in the skills training sector. Ostensibly, the Bill's purpose is to provide ongoing financial support to states and territories for delivering at least 100,000 Free TAFE places annually, ensuring Australians have access to critical vocational education and training opportunities. However, the explanatory memorandum accompanying the Bill introduces a perplexing contradiction by stating that "there is no financial impact" resulting from the measures outlined in the Bill.

Part iii ■ Recommendations to government

Parliamentary Inquiry Into The Free TAFE Bill 2024

Part 1.1 ■ An introduction to the independent skills sector recommendations.

Recommendation 1.1a: The policy settings of the Australian, state and territory governments recognise that the positive perception of the nation's skills training system is dependent upon the complementarity of independent RTOs with a commitment to quality and public TAFE colleges.

Part 1.2 ■ Empowering student choice.

Recommendation 1.2a: Australia's skills training system must prioritise student choice, supported by transparent information and equitable investment that supports students in an environment where the Australian Government recognises the complementary roles of independent RTOs and public TAFE colleges.

Recommendation 1.2b That policy settings recognise that independent RTOs offer a service for students and for employers that public RTOs do not and are not well positioned to deliver, and as a consequence, government policies must be rebalanced to ensure a student's decision to study with the RTO of their choice is equitably supported by government

Part 1.3 ■ Government funded student satisfaction.

Recommendation 1.3a: The Australian Government should foster equitable policies for investment in skills training that are designed to support competition, ensuring both independent RTOs and public TAFEs maintain high-quality, student-centric training aligned with industry needs and workforce development.

Recommendation 1.3b: Encourage greater innovation in the sector by reducing barriers for students to be able to undertake government-subsidised skills training with quality independent RTOs, leveraging their proven flexibility and specialisation to deliver customised, high-quality skills training that meets diverse student and employer expectations.

Part 1.4 ■ Government funded student satisfaction.

Recommendation 1.4a: That NCVER measures of employer satisfaction be a substantial part of a sophisticated matrix under which the performance of a skills funding agreement between the Australian Government, state and territory governments can be assessed.

Part 1.5 ■ Government funded student satisfaction.

Recommendation 1.5a: The Australian Government should support independent RTOs' proven ability to deliver cost-effective, high-quality outcomes by fostering competitive funding models. By prioritising completion rates and workforce alignment, policymakers can enhance the efficiency of the skills training system, maximising value for taxpayers and benefits for students and employers alike.

Recommendation 1.5a: The Australian Government, through the National Skills Agreement, should use a determining factor that incorporates a number of elements including cost per student completion, in determining skills funding allocations, recognising that independent RTOs consistently achieve better taxpayer returns. Policies promoting equitable funding for high-performing providers will ensure taxpayer investments deliver qualifications aligned with workforce needs and national economic prosperity.

Part 2.1 ■ Is there a legitimate need for the legislation?

Recommendation 2.1a: Given that the National Skills Agreement already provides a mechanism for the Australian Government to support state and territory government in skills delivery, the Bill is both redundant and duplicative and, therefore should be set aside and not progressed.

Part 2.2 ■ Determination of costing.

Recommendation 2.2a: The Australian Government should clarify the Free TAFE Bill's funding sources to ensure transparency and demonstrate genuine commitment, avoiding duplicative legislation or resource reallocation that risks undermining existing programs and compromising the integrity of vocational education initiatives.

Part 2.2 ■ A proper role for government.

Recommendation 2.3a: The Australian Government should adopt a genuinely student-centered approach by supporting all training providers, ensuring equitable funding for independent RTOs and public TAFE colleges to reflect their contributions to the skills training sector.

Recommendation 2.3a: The Australian Government must shift its focus from privileging TAFE to fostering a competitive, fair, and innovative skills training environment, empowering students to choose the provider that best meets their individual and career needs.

Recommendation 2.3c: To fulfill its custodial responsibilities, the government should implement policies that support the entire skills training sector, promoting accountability and efficient resource allocation across all providers, not just public TAFE colleges.

Part 2.3 ■ Redefining the role of government.

Recommendation 2.3a: The Australian Government should adopt a genuinely student-centered approach by supporting all training providers, ensuring equitable funding for independent RTOs and public TAFEs to reflect their contributions to the skills training sector.

Recommendation 2.3b: The government must shift its focus from preferencing public TAFE to fostering a competitive, fair, and innovative skills training environment, empowering students to choose the provider that best meets their individual and career needs.

Recommendation 2.3c: To fulfill its responsibilities as custodian of the skills training sector, the government should develop and implement policies that support the entire skills training sector, promoting accountability and efficient resource allocation across all providers, not just public TAFE.

Part 1.1 ■ An introduction to the independent skills sector

Parliamentary Inquiry Into The Free TAFE Bill 2024

Issues Summary —

Australia can be proud of its independent skills training sector, which does the heavy lifting in workforce skilling, reskilling, and upskilling. Independent Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) support approximately 91% of student enrolments in skills training, including the vast majority of students with complex and higher-level qualifications. Significantly, independent RTOs achieve the highest level of student and employer satisfaction.

“ When it comes to providing Australian with the skills needed to support a growing economy, it is independent RTOs that are clearly the provider of choice by students and employers. ”

Key Points For Consideration —

As noted in the *Expert Review of Australia's Vocational Education and Training Sector* presented to the Australian Government in 2019, the skills training sector has been one of the key pillars of Australia's economic success story. Generations of tradespeople and skilled workers have successfully developed their skills and knowledge in the practical work-based learning environment that skills training offers.

The Australian skills training sector is a diverse and vibrant mix of regulated entities across all states and territories and provider types. Although TAFE is synonymous with skills training, registration data from the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) notes that around 90% of RTOs are in the independent sector.

Independent Registered Training Organisations

Associations & Professional Bodies: Typically a not-for-profit body that represents the interests of its members that may be companies (industry associations) or individuals (professionals).

Community-Based Education: A not-for-profit, community-based organisation with a primary focus on adult education. Community-based adult education delivers courses relating to leisure, personal and community development, employment skills, preparation for skills training and nationally recognised programs of study.

Private: A privately owned training organisation (e.g. a company).

Enterprise: The training operations of a company, government department or government business enterprise that is registered to provide nationally accredited training

Independent Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) often specialise in delivering industry-specific training programs generally unavailable through government-owned and funded training institutions. As a result, these providers can play a crucial role in meeting the skill demands of various industries, which helps to ensure that the Australian workforce has the skills needed to remain competitive and productive.

Competition between independent RTOs can help improve the quality of skills training, leading to better outcomes for students and employers. This competition can also help keep the cost of training affordable, making it more accessible to a broader range of individuals and businesses. In the context of government-subsidised training, this competition ensures that taxpayers can get value for money in an environment where quality, student satisfaction

and completion rates are not compromised. This is demonstrated in data published by the National Centre for Vocational Education and Research (NCVER).

While large public TAFE colleges undoubtedly strive to provide a good student experience, their size and bureaucratic processes can sometimes make it more challenging to be as responsive to students and employer needs when compared to high-quality independent RTOs across the nation.

In considering the contribution of independent RTOs to the positive perceptions in the skills training sector, it is important to note that independent providers are typically smaller and more agile than large public TAFE colleges. These independent RTOs can make decisions and implement changes quickly in response to student feedback and needs without navigating complex bureaucratic processes that the public skills training sector is faced with.

“ In considering the contribution of independent RTOs to the positive perceptions in the skills training sector, it is important to note that independent providers are typically smaller and more agile than large public TAFE colleges. ”

Recommendation/s —

- 1.1 That policy settings of the Australian, state and territory governments recognise that the positive perception of the nation's skills training system is dependent upon the complementarity of independent RTOs with a commitment to quality and public TAFE colleges.

Part 1.2 ■ Empowering Student Choice

Parliamentary Inquiry Into The Free TAFE Bill 2024

Issues Summary —

Australia's skills training system is vital in preparing individuals for meaningful careers and equipping the workforce to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving economy. Central to the success of this system is empowering students to make informed decisions about their education and training options. Students, not governments, should be at the forefront of these decisions. Each student's life and career goals are unique, and they deserve the ability to choose the skills training provider that best aligns with their aspirations.

Key Points For Consideration —

A student-centered approach to skills funding requires a robust framework where individuals have access to clear and transparent information about training providers, course outcomes, and employment opportunities. Governments play an important role in ensuring this information is readily available and accessible, but they must resist the urge to dictate or limit student choices by favouring one type of provider over another. The goal of government policy should be to create a fair and equitable system that prioritises outcomes for students, employers and the broader economy, rather one that simply seeks to meet the goal of preferencing underperforming public TAFE colleges.

Australian Government policy must acknowledge the complementary roles of independent RTOs and public TAFE colleges. While TAFE plays a legitimate and important role in the skills training sector, it cannot meet the needs of all students, industries, and regions. A diverse and complex economy like Australia's requires a collaborative approach that leverages the strengths of both public and independent providers.

TAFE colleges sometimes excel in delivering foundational skills, some traditional trades, and providing training in areas where public investment is essential. However, the scope and scale of workforce training demand in all parts of Australia cannot be met by TAFE alone. Independent RTOs significantly expand the sector's capacity, offering specialised and flexible training options that address industry-specific needs. These organisations often serve niche industries, plus regional and remote areas where TAFE has no footprint, providing tailored solutions for employers and delivering innovative training methods, including quality online and blended learning models.

Critics of the so-called "marketisation" of skills training frequently overlook the substantial contributions independent RTOs have made to the system. Far from undermining the sector, independent RTOs have strengthened it by fostering competition, driving innovation, and delivering superior outcomes for students, employers, and taxpayers. Data consistently shows that students who train with independent RTOs achieve high satisfaction rates, better employment outcomes, and greater alignment with industry requirements – generally outperforming public TAFE colleges. Employers value the practical skills and job-readiness that graduates from independent RTOs bring to the workplace. Additionally, independent providers operate efficiently, offering high-quality training at lower costs, thereby delivering excellent value to taxpayers.

“ Australian Government policy must acknowledge the complementary roles of independent RTOs and public TAFE colleges. While TAFE plays a legitimate and important role in the skills training sector, it cannot meet the needs of all students, industries, and regions. ”

A strong skills training system requires both public and independent providers to work collaboratively, each fulfilling roles that other providers (including public TAFE colleges) cannot. Governments must recognise this complementary relationship and adopt policies that support both sectors – and their students – equitably. This includes ensuring fair funding models to improve student access to skills training, fostering collaboration between providers and industries, and encouraging innovation that benefits students. Transparency and accountability are also critical, as they empower students to make informed choices and drive continuous improvement across the sector.

The ultimate goal of Australia's skills training system should be to prepare students for success and to meet the diverse needs of the workforce. Empowering students to choose their own pathways ensures that the system remains responsive, adaptable, and focused on outcomes. By valuing the complementary contributions of public TAFE colleges and independent RTOs, governments can support a sustainable and effective training system that benefits students, employers, and the broader economy. The evidence is clear: a system that prioritises student choice and collaboration among providers is key to meeting Australia's current and future workforce challenges.

Recommendation/s –

- 1.2a Australia's skills training system must prioritise student choice, supported by transparent information and equitable funding in an environment where the Australian Government recognises the complementary roles of independent RTOs and public TAFE colleges.
- 1.2b That policy settings recognise that independent RTOs offer a service for students and for employers that public RTOs do not and are not well positioned to deliver, and as a consequence, government policies must be rebalanced to ensure a student's decision to study with the RTO of their choice is equitably supported by the Australian Government.

Part 1.3 ■ Government funded student satisfaction

Parliamentary Inquiry Into The Free TAFE Bill 2024

Issues Summary —

The data is clear, this being that students are immensely satisfied with the skills training provided by providers of all types, something due to strong regulatory oversight and the competition that drives quality. It is this competition to excel that drives excellence in the skills training sector, and this is why independent providers lead most measures of student satisfaction.

“ The NCVER data demonstrates that private RTOs offer a higher level of student service and support than larger public institutions. ”

Key Points For Consideration —

Independent RTOs often offer higher quality training than public institutions, as they frequently specialise in specific industries and have more flexibility to design and deliver customised training programs. This isn't to diminish the meaningful contributions made by public TAFE colleges, but to highlight that independent RTOs, freed from the shackles that sadly bind large public bureaucratic institutions like public TAFE colleges, provide the innovation and quality students prefer.

The NCVER data demonstrates that private RTOs offer a higher level of student service and support than larger public institutions. As a result, they achieve levels of student satisfaction commensurate with, or higher than, their better-resourced public sector counterparts.

Student Satisfaction – Government funded students	TAFE	Private RTOs
Achieved main reason for doing training	84.8%	88.6%
Improved employment status after training	61.9%	67.7%
Improved writing skills	53.9%	54.1%
Satisfied with the support services	77.9%	81.6%
Satisfied with the teaching	87.7%	88.5%
Satisfied with the learning resources	82.4%	85.2%
Satisfied with the training overall	89.1%	90.3%

SOURCE: NCVER 2024 VET STUDENT OUTCOMES (REFER APPENDIX C)

As is self-evident from the NCVER data referenced above, students have very high levels of satisfaction with both private RTOs and public TAFE colleges, something that is not necessarily recognised by government policy measures. It is significant that when it comes to government investment in skills training, student satisfaction with the relevant RTO is broadly comparable, albeit with students at independent providers demonstrating slightly higher levels of satisfaction than those who attend public sector providers.

Although some stakeholders are critical of for-profit providers, their position overlooks both the great outcomes these providers achieve for their students and the drivers of these organisations. Private RTOs appreciate that meeting the needs of their customers is essential to long-term commercial sustainability. In this context, it is crucial to recognise that the customer relationship is twofold: embracing both employers and students.

These independent RTOs understand that students are more likely to return when they have had a high-quality experience, and to recommend their products or services to others, which in turn is a driver of business sustainability and potential growth. As evidenced in the NCVER student satisfaction data referred to above, these RTOs have a strong positive influence on public perceptions of the skills training system.

Student choice has been critical to supporting quality in the skills training system. Independent RTOs face competition from other providers in the same market and, therefore, need to be responsive to their student's needs in order to remain competitive.

Suppose a student were unhappy with the service or products provided by an RTO. In that case, they may switch to a competitor, so independent RTOs are motivated to provide excellent customer service and to meet the needs of their students – which includes in relation to employment outcomes – in order to retain them. It's in this context that there are strong arguments as to why public TAFE colleges should be exposed to greater competition from independent skills training providers. This is most relevant in the context of government investment and support mechanisms for training delivery that overtly preferences underperforming public TAFE colleges, yet in doing so has a perverse effect on students at public TAFE and the economies in which those TAFEs operate.

When policy makers consider the public perceptions, and more precisely student perceptions, of skills training it is clear that the work of independent RTOs and public TAFE colleges can be viewed as both enjoying high levels of confidence and satisfaction. There is no sound, evidence-based, reason to differentiate one from the other purely on the basis of provider type.

As the metrics of student satisfaction show, independent skills training is great for students and great for Australia.

“ Student choice has been critical to supporting quality in the skills training system. Independent RTOs that face competition from other providers in the same market and therefore need to be responsive to their student's needs in order to remain competitive. ”

Recommendation/s —

- 1.3a The Australian Government should foster equitable funding policies to support competition, ensuring both independent RTOs and public TAFEs maintain high-quality, student-centric training aligned with industry needs and workforce development.
- 1.3b Encourage greater innovation by reducing barriers for independent RTOs to access government funding to support students, leveraging their proven flexibility and specialisation to deliver customised, high-quality skills training that meets diverse student and employer expectations.

Part 1.4 ■ Government funded student employer satisfaction

Parliamentary Inquiry Into The Free TAFE Bill 2024

Issues Summary —

Employer satisfaction with skills training is crucial as it demonstrates the system's ability to meet workforce needs, addressing skill shortages. This ensures businesses have access to a capable workforce, driving growth and sustainability. A responsive training system fosters innovation, strengthens industries, and boosts confidence in economic resilience, benefiting both employers and the broader community.

Key Points For Consideration —

When it comes to supporting employers in accessing the next generation of skilled and educated employees, it's clear that independent RTOs deliver the best outcomes. A major contributing factor in this is the ability of independent RTOs to be flexible in meeting the changing industry-driven needs of employers and this is reflected in government data..

“ Government can develop more effective skills training policies when viewed through the prism of employer satisfaction. In doing so there is a greater capacity to embrace the needs of both students and employers ... ”

Employer Satisfaction – All funding sources	TAFE	Private	Ind. Assoc.
Relevance of skills taught	80.1%	85.7%	95.0%
Condition of equipment and facilities	74.1%	84.9%	85.2%
Cost effectiveness of training	72.8%	80.6%	76.4%
Flexibility of the provider in meeting your needs	66.9%	86.8%	84.9%
Trainers' knowledge and experience of your industry	76.8%	86.3%	91.5%
Standard of assessment	72.9%	87.8%	89.7%
Overall satisfaction with training	76.6%	85.9%	88.8%

SOURCE: NCVER 2022 EMPLOYERS USE AND VIEWS OF THE VET SYSTEM (REFER APPENDIX C)

Given the significant investment by taxpayers in skills training programs and having regard for employer satisfaction outcomes, the Australian Government, state and territory governments must , ensure that these resources are used effectively. By funding training delivered by quality providers that meet both student and employer needs, governments can maximise the return on investment in training programs.

Government can develop more effective skills training policies when viewed through the prism of employer satisfaction. In doing so there is a greater capacity to embrace the needs of both students and employers and support the long-term growth and competitiveness of the Australian economy.

Recommendation/s —

- 1.3a That NCVER measures of employer satisfaction be a substantial part of a sophisticated matrix under which the performance of a skills funding agreement between the Australian Government, state and territory governments can be assessed.

Part 1.5 ■ Government funded student taxpayer outcomes

Parliamentary Inquiry Into The Free TAFE Bill 2024

Issues Summary —

When government allocates skills funding, assessing the financial return and value for money for taxpayers is essential. Historically, this hasn't been a focus of Australian Government policy, leading to inefficient use of taxpayer funds. The official data highlights that independent RTOs consistently deliver superior outcomes, including higher student satisfaction and employment rates. Prioritising funding based on measurable returns ensures taxpayer dollars are effectively used to support high-quality training, foster economic growth, and address workforce needs, maximising benefits for both students and the broader economy.

“ Unlike public providers, which often rely on guaranteed government funding, independent RTOs depend on their ability to deliver successful outcomes to maintain their reputation and attract students. ”

Key Points For Consideration —

Completion rates directly correlate with the value delivered to taxpayers, as they signify that public funds are translating into meaningful qualifications that contribute to the nation's economic and social prosperity. Evidence consistently shows that independent Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) achieve better returns on taxpayer funds, particularly when measured in terms of student completions.

Independent RTOs operate in a competitive environment that inherently incentivises high completion rates. Unlike public providers, which often rely on guaranteed government funding, independent RTOs depend on their ability to deliver successful outcomes to maintain their reputation and attract students. This competitive pressure drives independent RTOs to implement student-focused strategies, such as personalised support services, flexible delivery models, and tailored training programs that align with individual needs and career goals. These measures directly contribute to higher completion rates, ensuring that taxpayer funds invested in government-funded students yield tangible qualifications that meet workforce requirements.

Government often overlooks official data showing independent RTOs achieve higher qualification completion rates than public TAFE colleges. Ignoring this undermines informed decision-making, leading to funding inefficiencies. Recognising independent RTOs' superior outcomes is vital to support student success, workforce needs, and taxpayer value.

Completion Rates – Government funded students	TAFE	Private
Diploma (And Above)	52.4%	53.1%
Certificate IV	44.4%	43.7%
Certificate III	50.5%	55.8%
Certificate II	34.4%	50.8%
Certificate I	22.8%	37.9%
All qualifications	42.7%	51.7%

SOURCE: 2023 NCVER COMPLETION RATES DATA SLICER

When analysing the value provided by different training providers, one of the most effective metrics to assess taxpayer outcomes is the cost per student completion. This approach calculates the total government funding allocated to skills training and divides it by the number of successful completions delivered by providers. This measure offers a clear indication of how effectively taxpayer funds are translating into meaningful qualifications that contribute to workforce readiness and economic development.

Independent RTOs consistently achieve better outcomes for taxpayers when viewed through the lens of cost per completion. Government funding for skills training is distributed across both public TAFE colleges and independent RTOs, but the outcomes delivered by each sector differ significantly. By dividing the total funding granted to each provider type by the number of completions they achieve, it becomes evident that independent RTOs deliver qualifications more cost-effectively than public TAFE colleges. As policymakers consider the allocation of taxpayer funds within the skills training sector, it is essential to prioritise outcomes that deliver the greatest value. A strong and sustainable skills training system requires recognition of the complementary roles of public and independent providers, with a focus on fostering collaboration and competition that benefits students and taxpayers alike..

“ The lower cost per completion achieved by private RTOs does not come at the expense of quality. These providers are known for their high student satisfaction rates, strong employment outcomes, and alignment with industry needs.”

For Every \$1 It Cost Taxpayers For A Completion With A Private RTO, This Is The Cost For A Completion With TAFE	Private	TAFE
New South Wales	\$1.00	\$2.14
Queensland	\$1.00	\$4.32
South Australia	\$1.00	\$3.39
Tasmania	\$1.00	\$0.75
Victoria	\$1.00	\$3.67
Western Australia	\$1.00	\$3.36
Nationally	\$1.00	\$3.83

SOURCE: ITECA ANALYSIS OF NCVET DATA

Public TAFE colleges often operate with higher administrative costs and face challenges in achieving comparable completion rates. These inefficiencies increase the overall cost per completion, meaning that more taxpayer dollars are required to deliver the same number of qualifications. While TAFEs play an important role in the skills training sector, their structure and operational model often result in higher costs relative to outcomes.

The lower cost per completion achieved by private RTOs does not come at the expense of quality. These providers are known for their high student satisfaction rates, strong employment outcomes, and alignment with industry needs. By delivering efficient and effective training programs, independent RTOs ensure that public funds are used judiciously to build a skilled and capable workforce.

For policymakers, this data underscores the need to prioritise funding allocations based on measurable outcomes such as completions. Supporting independent RTOs through equitable funding and a level playing field ensures that taxpayer dollars are directed toward providers that deliver the greatest return on investment. By focusing on cost per completion as a key metric, governments can enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of Australia's skills training system while maximising benefits for students, employers, and the broader economy.

Recommendation/s —

- 1.4a The Australian Government should support independent RTOs' proven ability to deliver cost-effective, high-quality outcomes by fostering competitive funding models. By prioritising completion rates and workforce alignment, policymakers can enhance the efficiency of the skills training system, maximising value for taxpayers and benefits for students and employers alike.
- 1.4b The Australian Government, through the National Skills Agreement, should use a determining factor that incorporates a number of elements including cost per student completion, in determining skills funding allocations, recognising that independent RTOs consistently achieve better taxpayer returns. Policies promoting equitable funding for high-performing providers will ensure taxpayer investments deliver qualifications aligned with workforce needs and national economic prosperity.

Part 2.1 ■ Is there a legitimate need for the legislation?

Parliamentary Inquiry Into The Free TAFE Bill 2024

Key Points For Consideration —

The *Free TAFE Bill 2024 (Cth)* seeks to provide ongoing financial support to the states and territories for the delivery of at least 100,000 skills training places annually from 2027. While this initiative may appear to advance accessibility and affordability in skills training, the necessity of the legislation is questionable when considering the existing frameworks and agreements already in place. The Bill is arguably redundant and duplicative, given the comprehensive measures established under the current five-year National Skills Agreement.

“Introducing new legislation to address objectives already covered under the NSA could lead to confusion and fragmentation in the delivery of training programs.”

Issues Summary —

The NSA, which came into effect on 1 January 2024, represents a landmark agreement between the Australian Government and the states and territories. It is specifically designed to strengthen the skills training sector through a coordinated approach that integrates significant federal and state funding. With an additional \$3.7 billion of Australian Government investment over five years, the total funding commitment to state and territory training systems has risen to an unprecedented \$12.6 billion over the same period. This level of investment demonstrates a clear commitment to addressing national skills shortages and meeting local industry needs, including through mechanisms that enable states and territories to fund initiatives such as free TAFE.

One of the defining features of the NSA is the introduction of a 'national stewardship' model, an innovative mechanism that ensures strategic alignment between national and local workforce priorities. This model allows for targeted investment in areas of critical skills demand, such as health, technology, and infrastructure, while providing states and territories with the flexibility to address specific regional and industry needs. By design, the NSA enables the delivery of free or subsidised skills training programs in alignment with both national objectives and local imperatives. The flexibility inherent in this model negates the need for separate legislation, as the objectives of the Free TAFE Bill are already achievable within the existing framework.

The Free TAFE Bill is proposed to come into effect with two full years of the five-year period of the current NSA still remaining. That is, the Bill being considered by the Committee will overlap with the NSA by two full years from the time delivery of free TAFE places under the Bill is proposed to commence; with the delivery of "at least 100,000 Free TAFE places across Australia each year" according to the Objects of the Bill to commence from 1 January 2027. This highlights the obvious duplication between the NSA objectives and the Bill before the Committee.

The Free TAFE Bill, therefore, risks duplicating efforts and creating inefficiencies; and indeed, is likely to introduce both these into a system where the states and territories, rather than the Australian Government that manage the heavy lifting. Introducing new legislation to address objectives already covered under the NSA is likely to lead to confusion and fragmentation in the delivery of training programs. Moreover, it may result in additional administrative burdens, with resources diverted toward managing overlapping funding arrangements rather than enhancing the quality and accessibility of training. This could

undermine the streamlined approach the NSA seeks to establish, ultimately diluting its impact.

Critically, the Free TAFE Bill does not appear to offer any substantive value beyond what the NSA already delivers. The current agreement's extensive funding provisions, coupled with the strategic oversight provided by the National Stewardship model, ensure that states and territories are well-equipped to design and implement initiatives that support fully subsidised training – whether at a TAFE or an independent RTO – where they are most needed. Adding another layer of legislation risks shifting the focus from optimising current mechanisms to navigating redundant legal and administrative processes.

Rather than introducing the Free TAFE Bill, the focus should be on maximising the impact of the NSA. This must also include maximising transparency and accountability in the allocation and utilisation of funds, fostering collaboration between governments and industry, and continuously evaluating the outcomes of funded programs to ensure they meet workforce needs. By concentrating efforts on enhancing the effectiveness of the existing framework, policymakers can achieve the same objectives without the complications and inefficiencies associated with new legislation.

From a legal and policy perspective, the *Free TAFE Bill 2024 (Cth)* is an unnecessary addition to the current policy landscape. Its goals are already comprehensively addressed by the NSA, which provides a well-funded, flexible, and strategically coordinated approach to strengthening the skills training sector. Introducing redundant legislation risks complicating existing processes and detracting from the NSA's potential to deliver impactful outcomes for the economy and the workforce.

“From a legal and policy perspective, the proposed legislation is an unnecessary addition to the current policy landscape.”

Recommendation/s –

- 2.1a Given that the National Skills Agreement already provides a mechanism for the Australian Government to support state and territory government in skills delivery, the Bill is both redundant and duplicative and, therefore should be set aside and not progressed.

Part 2.2 ▪ Determination of costing

Parliamentary Inquiry Into The Free TAFE Bill 2024

Issues Summary —

The introduction of the Free TAFE Bill 2024 (Cth) and supporting material raises significant concerns about the Australian Government's sincerity in transparently addressing its funding implications for the sector. Ostensibly, the Bill's purpose is to provide ongoing financial support to states and territories for delivering at least 100,000 Free TAFE places annually, ensuring Australians have access to critical vocational education and training opportunities. However, the Explanatory Memorandum accompanying the Bill states that "there is no financial impact resulting from this legislation that would support free training of at least 100,000 Australians. This does not appear to be a genuine and transparent statement about the cost implications of the Bill.

“ By failing to provide an honest and transparent account of how the funding will be sourced, the government risks appearing disingenuous in its commitment to vocational education. ”

Key Points For Consideration —

The Bill explicitly requires the Australian Government to provide financial assistance to states and territories via grants made under the *Federal Financial Relations Act 2009 (Cth)*, as outlined in Subclause 6(2). These grants from the Australian Government to the states & territories are for the purpose of supporting the delivery at least 100,000 free TAFE places every year. It is not feasible for the Australian Government to suggest that such a program has no fiscal impact on the Australian Government Budget. Indeed, ITECA would suggest the funding to support this Bill can come from one of two mechanisms:

- New Budget funding allocated for the purpose outlined in this Bill; or
- Funding already committed elsewhere in the Budget and reallocated for the purpose outlined in this Bill.

In either case, the Australian taxpayer deserves a transparent and genuine explanation as to where the funding to support the outcomes highlighted in the Bill will come from, especially given they are not going directly to support student choice.

This funding mechanism is presented as essential to "removing barriers to education and training, including for people experiencing economic disadvantage...". But this statement in the Objects of the Bill is incongruous, it is independent RTOs that support the majority of students in these cohorts in skills training:

- 88.6% of students from low socio-economic backgrounds in skills training are supported by Independent RTOs
- 79.9% of Indigenous students in skills training are supported by Independent RTOs
- 88.3% of students living in rural, regional and remote Australia engaged in skills training are supported by Independent RTOs.

Legislation put in place by the Australian Government that seeks facilitate states and territories meeting the ambitious target of delivering at least 100,000 fully subsidised palces each year shodul also not be framed as relating to only the government-owned and operated provider; whichisn this case has been historically one of the smallest providers for t he listed cohorts.

Such a commitment inherently implies a significant financial outlay from the Commonwealth to the states and territories for expenditure on state and territory owned and operated entities, yet the Government inexplicably asserts that there will be no financial impact. This contradiction leaves observers questioning whether the Bill represents a genuine expansion of funding or simply a repackaging of pre-existing commitments.

The most logical explanation for the "no financial impact" statement is that the funding required to fulfill the objectives of the Free TAFE Bill has already been allocated under the National Skills Agreement (NSA). Under the NSA, which commenced on 1 January 2024, the Australian Government committed to providing up to \$3.7 billion in additional funding over five years to states and territories for skills training, bringing the total federal investment to \$12.6 billion over the same period. The NSA already provides a flexible framework for funding initiatives such as Free TAFE, empowering states and territories to address local skills needs within a nationally coordinated structure. If the government is merely reallocating or relabeling NSA funding to support the Free TAFE Bill, then the legislation adds no real value and does not represent an increase in financial support.

Alternatively, the assertion of "no financial impact" may indicate that the government intends to redirect funds from other programs to finance the Free TAFE Bill. Such an approach would not only undermine the government's claim of supporting the skills training sector but also potentially compromise other essential services or training initiatives. If cuts to other programs are required to meet the Bill's objectives, this would suggest a lack of genuine commitment to expanding access to skills training. Instead, the government would be reshuffling existing resources, creating the illusion of progress without delivering any net benefit.

This inconsistency undermines the transparency and integrity of the Australian Government's approach. While the Bill purports to support the delivery of Free TAFE places and enhance the skills training sector, the lack of clarity around its financial underpinnings suggests otherwise. By failing to provide an honest and transparent account of how the funding will be sourced, the government risks appearing disingenuous in its commitment to vocational education.

Ultimately, the Free TAFE Bill seems less about genuinely expanding funding and more about presenting a political narrative. If the Australian Government is serious about supporting vocational education, it must clarify how the objectives of the Bill will be funded—whether through new investment or the reallocation of existing resources. Without this clarity, the Bill risks being seen as little more than a symbolic gesture, lacking the substantive financial commitment needed to deliver real outcomes for Australians.

Recommendation/s —

- 2.2a The Australian Government should clarify the Bill's funding sources to ensure transparency and demonstrate genuine commitment, avoiding duplicative legislation or resource reallocation that risks undermining existing programs and compromising the integrity of vocational education initiatives.

Part 2.3 ■ Redefining the role of government

Parliamentary Inquiry Into The Free TAFE Bill 2024

Issues Summary —

The *Free TAFE Bill 2024 (Cth)* is fundamentally flawed because it entrenches a policy framework that places TAFE at the heart of Australia's skills training system, to the exclusion of independent Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) even where these independent RTOs may be the best option for students. This disenfranchises the millions of students who choose to study with those independent RTOs across Australia. This legislation reflects a narrow and misguided perspective on the Australian Government's responsibilities, ignoring its broader custodial duty to govern for the entire skills training system and all its students, regardless of where they choose to study.

“ Instead of empowering students to choose the provider that best suits their needs, the government's policy limits choice, steering students toward TAFE even when it may not be the most suitable option for their circumstances or career goals. ”

Key Points For Consideration —

The Australian Government has made much of its responsibility for national stewardship of the skills training system. ITECA has agreed with this approach. However, stewardship for the system does not mean stewardship of and bolstering TAFE at the expense of student choice and of the rest of the skills system.

The Australian Government, working in concert with states and territories, has custodianship of the nation's skills training system. This responsibility extends far beyond public TAFE colleges, encompassing the full diversity of training providers, including independent RTOs. These organisations support 4.5 million students annually, and overwhelmingly, the majority of the skills training sector rely on their high-quality, flexible, and industry-aligned training to build careers and meet the evolving needs of Australia's workforce. By cementing TAFE as the system's central focus, the Free TAFE Bill 2024 (Cth) sidelines these students and their providers, abdicating the government's fundamental obligation to ensure equitable support across the entire sector.

The 2027 commencement date for the legislation raises questions about its necessity. If the Australian Government plans to provide ongoing financial support to states and territories for skills training in the interim, it suggests no practical urgency for the legislation. This extended timeline undermines the rationale for introducing such reforms now, as the existing funding mechanisms will continue to underpin skills training delivery without requiring immediate legislative change.

Independent RTOs have consistently demonstrated their ability to deliver superior outcomes. According to data from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), independent RTOs outperform public TAFE colleges in student satisfaction, employment outcomes, and responsiveness to industry needs. They are often better equipped to provide specialised training, adapt to emerging skill demands, and offer programs in regional and remote areas where TAFE is absent or inadequate. By privileging TAFE, the Australian Government ignores these contributions, effectively undermining the training system's overall capacity to meet the diverse needs of students and employers.

The exclusion of 4.5 million students who study with independent RTOs represents a profound failure of policy. It is not merely a matter of oversight; it is a deliberate choice to prioritise one segment of the training sector at the expense of others. This favoritism

creates an inequitable system that disadvantages independent providers and the students who rely on them. Instead of empowering students to choose the provider that best suits their needs, the government's policy limits choice, steering students toward TAFE even when it may not be the most suitable option for their circumstances or career goals.

This approach fundamentally abrogates the Australian Government's responsibilities. The role of government is not to pick winners within the skills training sector but to create a level playing field that supports all students and all providers, something particularly relevant when it comes to differential of independent and public providers. By funnelling resources and policy advantages exclusively to TAFE, the Australian Government is failing in its duty to govern for the entirety of the skills training system. Such an approach compromises fairness, stifles innovation, and undermines the skills training sector's ability to respond effectively to the needs of students and the economy.

Moreover, the focus on TAFE entrenches inefficiencies within the system. Public TAFE colleges have historically struggled with high costs, inflexible operations, and variable performance. Instead of addressing these challenges, the Free TAFE Bill 2024 (Cth) doubles down on a model that is ill-suited to meet Australia's complex and dynamic workforce demands. By sidelining independent RTOs, which have proven their ability to deliver efficient and targeted training, the Australian Government risks weakening the entire system.

The Free TAFE Bill 2024 (Cth) reflects poor policy and is likely to result in poor consequences because it prioritises ideology over outcomes, undermines the diversity and inclusivity of the skills training system, and fails to honour the Australian Government's obligation to support all students equally. To fulfill its custodial responsibilities, the Australian Government must embrace a genuinely student-centered approach that recognises and supports the contributions of all providers, ensuring that every student has access to the education and training they need to succeed.

The Free TAFE Bill 2024 (Cth) raises concerns about its true intent. Could it be laying the groundwork for the Australian Government to assume control of the skills training system from states and territories? This shift would centralise authority, potentially sidelining the diverse and effective contributions of independent RTOs while undermining state-based responsiveness to local workforce and industry needs.

“ The Free TAFE Bill 2024 is bad policy because it prioritises ideology over outcomes, undermines the diversity and inclusivity of the skills training system, and fails to honour the government's obligation to support all students equally. ”

Recommendation/s —

- 2.3a The Australian Government should adopt a genuinely student-centered approach by supporting all training providers, ensuring equitable funding for independent RTOs and public TAFEs to reflect their contributions to the skills training sector.
- 2.3b The government must shift its focus from privileging TAFE to fostering a competitive, fair, and innovative skills training environment, empowering students to choose the provider that best meets their individual and career needs.
- 2.3c To fulfill its custodial responsibilities, the government should implement policies that support the entire skills training sector, promoting accountability and efficient resource allocation across all providers, not just TAFEs.

Appendix A ■ ITECA Introduction

Parliamentary Inquiry Into The Free TAFE Bill 2024

Formed in 1992 the Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia (ITECA) is the peak body representing independent providers in the skills training, higher education, and international education sectors. Consistent with ITECA's tertiary education leadership role, the ITECA membership includes a growing number of industry associations and professional bodies that have an interest in the development of qualifications and microcredentials.

ITECA empowers its members with the information to make sound business decisions and the influence to drive reform.

With a firm eye on creating an environment that supports students, ITECA members are a strong advocate for an integrated tertiary education system operates as one, yet the skills training and higher education sectors retain their separate strengths and identities. Allied to this is the focus of ITECA members on red tape reduction, where the regulatory environment protects students without placing redundant, duplicative and burdensome reporting obligations on providers in the skills training, higher education, and international education sector.

Through regular updates, ITECA keeps its members updated on changes to student loan and funding programs, regulatory changes, strategic risks to the sector's sustainability and reputation, and emerging business opportunities.

ITECA convenes some of the tertiary education sector's largest events, including the annual ITEC Conference that sells out each year, plus the annual RTO Business Summit series of events held throughout the country. Several specialist events in the higher education and skills training sector are also highly valued by members.

As a growing community of independent tertiary education providers that share a commitment to excellence, the ITECA membership has grown by around 20% on a year-on-year basis for the past three years.

In 2019 ITECA changed its name, having previously been known as the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET). The change of name reflected the fact that many ITECA members are not-for-profit providers (not just private providers) and the increasing number of ITECA members that deliver higher education programs.

ITECA has an established reputation for working with the Australian, state and territory governments. Through engagement with ITECA, governments have been able to increase the tertiary education sector's trust in the policy-making process. ITECA is seen as an independent and objective stakeholder that is working to create an environment in which students have access to quality programs delivered by independent skills training, higher education and international education providers.

Members of ITECA are united, informed and influential. They set our agenda, guide our projects, fund our activities, and directly benefit from the results.

ITECA Membership – It's a great time to get involved.

www.iteca.edu.au

“ A growing community of independent tertiary education providers that share a commitment to excellence, the ITECA membership has grown by around 20% per year for each of the past three years. ”

Appendix B ■ National Skills Training Snapshot

Parliamentary Inquiry Into The Free TAFE Bill 2024

The following data from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) builds an understanding of the significant contribution that independent Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) make to workforce skilling, reskilling and upskilling of the Australian workforce. To build a comparative understanding, the comparative data for public TAFE.

Student Satisfaction – Government funded students	TAFE	Private RTOs
Achieved main reason for doing training	84.8%	88.6%
Improved employment status after training	61.9%	67.7%
Improved writing skills	53.9%	54.1%
Satisfied with the support services	77.9%	81.6%
Satisfied with the teaching	87.7%	88.5%
Satisfied with the learning resources	82.4%	85.2%
Satisfied with the training overall	89.1%	90.3%

SOURCE: NCVER DATABUILDER 2024

Completion Rates – Government funded students	TAFE	Private
Diploma (And Above)	52.4%	53.1%
Certificate IV	44.4%	43.7%
Certificate III	50.5%	55.8%
Certificate II	34.4%	50.8%
Certificate I	22.8%	37.9%
All qualifications	42.7%	51.7%

SOURCE: NCVER DATABUILDER 2024

In its 2020 review of the *National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development*, the Productivity Commission noted that "while some claim that the quality of training is superior at TAFEs, the evidence suggests that at least some outcomes (satisfaction and labour force outcomes) are similar across provider types." The data above reflects the Commission's assessment.

Appendix C ■ Understanding the data in this report

Parliamentary Inquiry Into The Free TAFE Bill 2024

Unless otherwise stated, the data referenced in this report is produced by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER). The NCVER is a not-for-profit organisation in Australia that conducts research and provides data and analysis on vocational education and training (VET). The organisation was established in 1981 and is funded by the Australian, state and territory governments.

The NCVER's mission is to provide high-quality research, statistics, and other information on skills training in Australia. This includes conducting surveys and other research projects, analysing and interpreting data on skills training participation, outcomes, and trends, and disseminating information to stakeholders in the education and training sectors.

The source material for the data in this submission is the NCVER Databuilder. This is an online tool provided that allows users to access and analyse data on vocational education and training (VET) in Australia. The tool provides access to a wide range of data sources, including data on skills training participation, outcomes, and funding, with the data drawn from that submitted by state and territory governments, plus surveys of students and employers.

To ensure the integrity of the data collected by the NCVER, the organisation follows a rigorous process of data collection, cleaning, and analysis. This includes working closely with providers in the skills training sector (both independent RTOs and public TAFE colleges), and government agencies to ensure that the data collected is accurate, consistent, and up-to-date. The NCVER also has a number of quality assurance processes in place to ensure the accuracy and reliability of its data. These include regular audits and reviews of its data collection methods and processes, as well as ongoing validation and verification of data through comparisons with other data sources and surveys.

When reviewing data on student enrolments referenced in this submission, in some cases the figures may exceed 100% as an individual student may enrol with both an independent RTO and a public TAFE college in a different course in one year, thus the student would be counted twice. Conversely, the data may not add up to 100% as enrolments (as students) from skills training in schools students is excluded.

For more information on NCVER data visit their website at:

www.ncver.edu.au

“To ensure the integrity of the data collected by the NCVER, the organisation follows a rigorous process of data collection, cleaning, and analysis.”

Appendix D ■ Common Tertiary Education Abbreviations

Parliamentary Inquiry Into The Free TAFE Bill 2024

AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
AVETMISS	Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard
ASQA	Australian Skills Quality Authority
ITECA	Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia
HEPPP	Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program
ISSP	Indigenous Student Support Program
JSA	Jobs and Skills Australia
JSC	Jobs and Skills Councils
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
PRISMS	Provider Registration and International Student Management System
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TCSI	Tertiary Collection of Student Information
TEQSA	Tertiary Education Quality & Standards Agency
VET	Vocational Education & Training
VSL	VET Student Loans

[ITECA Reference: N4.12.11]



The Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia (ITECA) is the peak body representing independent providers in the skills training, higher education, and international education sectors.

ITECA members are united, informed, and influential.

Members come together, through ITECA, to create an environment in which providers can offer students and their employers the quality outcomes they are looking for.

If you're interested in working with others that share your commitment to quality in order to improve the reputation of the independent tertiary education sector, get involved in ITECA today.

www.iteca.edu.au



ITECA Nationwide
t: 1300 421 017
f: 1300 421 018

ITECA National Office
a: GPO Box 450, Canberra, ACT, 2601
e: national.office@iteca.edu.au

ITECA Capital Territory
a: GPO Box 450, Canberra, ACT, 2601
e: act@iteca.edu.au

ITECA New South Wales
a: GPO Box 1493, Sydney, NSW, 2001
e: nsw@iteca.edu.au

ITECA Northern Territory
a: GPO Box 1755, Darwin, NT, 0801
e: nt@iteca.edu.au

ITECA Queensland
a: GPO Box 1182, Brisbane, QLD, 4001
e: qld@iteca.edu.au

ITECA South Australia
a: GPO 1547, Adelaide, SA, 5001
e: sa@iteca.edu.au

ITECA Tasmania
a: GPO Box 411, Hobart, TAS, 7001
e: tas@iteca.edu.au

ITECA Victoria
a: GPO Box 1939, Melbourne, VIC, 3001
e: vic@iteca.edu.au

ITECA Western Australia
a: PO Box Z5349 St George Tc, Perth, WA, 6831
e: wa@iteca.edu.au