



Our advocacy team is based in Canberra

www.cosboa.org.au

Committee Secretary
Senate Education and Employment Committees
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

By email: eec.sen@aph.gov.au

RE: Submission in relation to the Jobs and Skills Australia Bill 2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission concerning the *Jobs and Skills Australia Bill 2022*. The Council of Small Business Organisations Australia (COSBOA) welcomes the opportunity to offer the following comments.

The Council of Small Business Organisations Australia (COSBOA)

COSBOA is the national peak body representing the interests of small businesses. COSBOA's members collectively represent an estimated 1.3 million of the 2.5 million small and family businesses operating in Australia.

As a collaboration of peak organisations across a wide range of industries, COSBOA acknowledges small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are significant contributors to the Australian economy. SMEs employ 68% of Australia's workforce. In GDP terms, SMEs together contribute 56% of value added. Therefore, small and medium businesses are critical partners in rebuilding Australia's economy as Australia emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Small business perspective - Jobs and Skills Australia

COSBOA believes there is an opportunity for Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) to co-ordinate and consolidate data, coordinate VET Skills Reform, and support small businesses. Central to the success of small businesses in navigating the complex skills sector should be the implementation of a new role, a Commissioner for Small Business in Jobs and Skills Australia with a "roving" brief across other aspects of JSA, including apprenticeships, qualification development, and skills forecasting.

JSA should make it easier for small businesses to navigate the multiple jurisdictions of the skills environment. Currently, there are too many agencies providing similar services and programs.



We believe a potential role for the JSA could also be to coordinate the federal and state-based programs while funding is maintained through states and territories. COSBOA would support continuing industry-led skills reform through JSA, where the small business sector is part of workforce development, consulted at the strategic end and on product development. Additionally, its role should include data-driven forecasting where data is recognised at the state level, and the federal JSA has an overview function.

Fundamentally, the JSA should provide a lifelong learning model that incorporates foundation, trade, micro-credentials, VET, and university training as building blocks to skilling workers and improving their capabilities and competencies in moving through their careers.

COSBOA advocates for continued small business stakeholder consultation, and we would welcome further opportunities to provide feedback in the future.

On behalf of our members, I sincerely thank you for the opportunity to participate in this process.

Yours sincerely,

Alexi Boyd
Chief Executive Officer
Council of Small Business Organisations Australia (COSBOA)

19 August 2022