

ANNUAL REVIEW

2024 - 25

APPRENTICE EMPLOYMENT
NETWORK NSW & ACT



**Apprentice
Employment Network**
NSW & ACT

ABOUT THE APPRENTICE EMPLOYMENT NETWORK NSW & ACT

The Apprentice Employment Network NSW & ACT (AEN NSW ACT) serves as the leading representative body for 29 accredited, independent, not-for-profit Group Training Organisations (GTOs) across New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory.

AEN NSW ACT is committed to the following key activities:

- » Building strong relationships with State and Territory Government Ministers and agencies.
- » Promoting the visibility and value of Group Training.
- » Expanding the pool of prospective apprentices, trainees, and host employers.
- » Identifying new industry opportunities and projects.
- » Facilitating networking and professional development within the sector.
- » Promoting the sharing of resources and information across the industry.

OUR EXECUTIVE



CHAIRPERSON

Tom Emeleus

NECA Training and Apprenticeships



DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON

Libby Ford

Zeal Futures



TREASURER

Jim Whiteside

Australian Training Company



EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Jason Sultana



AEN NSW ACT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE NAEN BOARD

Sharon Smith

Zeal Futures

OUR PARTNERS

The Apprentice Employment Network NSW & ACT greatly values the support of our Corporate Partners. We extend our sincere appreciation to the following organisations for their contribution to our major events in 2024-25.



CHAIRPERSON MESSAGE

TOM EMELEUS

CHAIRPERSON

Welcome to the 2024–25 Annual Review of the Apprentice Employment Network NSW & ACT. This report provides an opportunity to reflect on the achievements of the past year and the overall strength of our association. I am pleased to present this review, which highlights the significant contributions of our members.

The Apprentice Employment Network NSW & ACT is the industry association representing the largest network of apprentice and trainee employers in the region. Our 29 not-for-profit Group Training Organisations (GTOs) collectively employ and support more than 5,500 apprentices and trainees, meeting the diverse skills and workforce needs of both public and private sector employers.

Our industry continues to face ongoing challenges to grow apprenticeship and traineeship numbers. Despite these challenges, GTOs have drawn on their extensive experience and industry knowledge to create meaningful employment pathways for young people. In a highly competitive market shaped by record-low unemployment and softer business confidence, GTOs have remained steadfast in their commitment to attracting, training, and supporting new talent.

Throughout this period, the Apprentice Employment Network NSW & ACT has continued to demonstrate leadership and innovation. A key strength of our network lies in its ability to collaborate effectively in times of challenge, and the teamwork displayed across our membership has been a source of great pride.

I acknowledge the ongoing support of Training Services and Skills Canberra. For more than four decades, the partnership between government and the group training sector has been central to the success of apprenticeships and traineeships. We greatly value the continued recognition of GTOs as trusted and effective partners in workforce development.

I recognise the strong contribution of my colleagues who join me in representing you on the NAEN Board, Sharon Smith and Nick Couper. I also thank the members of the AEN NSW & ACT Executive—Deputy Chairperson Libby Ford and Treasurer Jim Whiteside—for their commitment and dedication throughout the year. Finally, I extend my sincere thanks to our Executive Officer, Jason Sultana, for his tireless efforts, including the preparation of this Annual Review.

Tom Emeleus

Chairperson

Apprentice Employment Network NSW & ACT

AEN EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT

JASON SULTANA

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The 2024–25 period has continued to present challenges, as governments and host employers navigate difficult economic conditions.

I want to acknowledge the resilience of our network throughout what has been a particularly testing year. The decline in activity over the past 12 months reflects policy changes at both Federal and State Government levels, which have had a significant impact on Group Training Organisations (GTOs). In particular, the exclusion of GTOs from the NSW Local Government Fresh Start program reduced opportunities for our members to continue to contribute to addressing workforce needs in local communities.

The Apprentice Employment Network NSW & ACT remains committed to collaborating with government at all levels to ensure that GTOs are recognised as valuable partners in workforce development. With proven success in achieving higher completion rates and delivering strong employment outcomes, GTOs continue to demonstrate their capacity to strengthen the vocational education and training sector. With the NSW Government’s focus on implementing its Skills Plan, we are optimistic that 2025-26 will be a better year for GTOs.

During the 2024-25 year, our members maintained a strong focus on initiatives including:

- » GTO Recruitment Programs
- » School-to-Work Initiatives
- » School-Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships

At the same time, rising operational costs-particularly the impact of high Workers Compensation Premiums in NSW and the ACT-have continued to place pressure on GTOs.

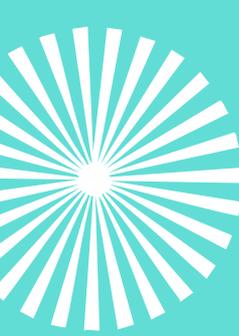
These costs divert resources away from direct support for apprentices and trainees and limit the sector’s capacity to respond to skills shortages fully. Advocacy for reform in this area remains a priority.

I want to thank our members and the Apprentice Employment Network NSW & ACT Executive for their continued support and commitment over the past 12 months. Looking forward, we remain focused on working with all stakeholders to develop new initiatives and highlight the important contribution of Group Training to skills development and workforce growth.

Jason Sultana

Executive Officer

Apprentice Employment Network NSW & ACT



INDUSTRY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

2024-2025 SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES AND IMPACT

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

- » Issued **44 Weekly Member Updates** and **18 Member Alerts**
- » Conducted member visits across the **Sydney Metro, Riverina, Hunter Valley, and Central West**
- » Delivered **GTO Salary and Industry Benchmarking** projects
- » Participation in **15 Career Expo Days**
- » Presented at **GTO Board Meetings** and **Award Ceremonies** (as MC)
- » Facilitated **New Manager inductions** and delivered **GTO Staff Presentations**
- » Launch of **Stage 1 of the new AEN NSW & ACT website**
- » Development underway for a **new GTO Industry Research Report**
- » Updated **Member Code of Conduct**

CONSULTATION AND ADVOCACY

- » Advocated for **improvements to the NSW GTO Registration process**
 - » Supported the **continuation of NSW GTO funding**
 - » Engaged in meetings with:
 - » **Non-AEN and unregistered GTOs**
 - » **Ministers and Members of Parliament in NSW and ACT**
 - » **SafeWork NSW and iCare**
 - » **Organisations pursuing GTO registration**
 - » Participated in:
 - » **NSW Skills Plan Development Consultation**
 - » **Regional NSW Skills Meeting (Dubbo)**
 - » **Metropolitan NSW Skills Meeting (Sydney)**
- 



INDUSTRY REPRESENTATION AND ADVISORY PARTICIPATION

Represented members through participation in:

- » **Western Sydney Local Jobs and Skills Taskforce**
- » **BCRITAB Advisory Group**
- » **Apprenticeship Support Australia Advisory Group**
- » **Business NSW Skills Policy Group**
- » **ACT Labour Hire Authority Advisory Group**



**Apprentice
Employment Network**
NSW & ACT

EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

- » Delivered **mental health and other professional development webinars**
- » Hosted the **AEN Field Officer Conference**
- » Held regular **AEN Member Meetings** and annual **CEO Forum**
- » Delivered the **AEN Duke of Edinburgh Scholarship Program**
- » Acted as judge and sponsor of the **NSW and ACT Training Awards**
- » Delivered the **Apprentice Employment Network Awards**
- » Organised and hosted the annual **Skills Conference**

HIGHLIGHTS & NUMBERS

NSW & ACT LARGEST APPRENTICE & TRAINEE EMPLOYER NETWORK

NSW

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GTO INDUSTRY IN 2024-2025

- » Registered GTOs in NSW - 48
- » GTOs provide services across all parts of NSW and other states.
- » Most GTOs are not-for-profit.
- » Our host employers come from Micro, Small, Medium and Large Businesses.
- » We employ apprentices and trainee across 21 Industry sectors and 185 qualifications.
- » We have GTOs that are regionally focused, industry specific or target a niche area.
- » GTOs are increasing offering managed services to assist employers who directly employ through recruitment, post placement support, mentoring, mental health, WHS and training management.
- » GTO's have a higher rate of filling vacancies than direct employment.
- » GTO Completion rates continue to be higher than direct employment. Some GTOs experience 90% completion rates.
- » GTOs have great success in placing and supporting individuals in targeted equity groups including:
 - » Women in Trades
 - » Indigenous
 - » Disability
 - » Adult Apprentices
 - » School Based

APPRENTICES & TRAINEES EMPLOYED THROUGH A NSW GTO AT THE 30TH JUNE 2025

5426

(5827 IN 2024)

TOTAL NSW MARKET IN TRAINING 2024-25

93337

(2023-24- 102675)

2024-25

2936

NSW OVERALL GTO COMMENCEMENTS
(2023-24 - 3527)

2024-25

427

NSW GTO INDIGENOUS COMMENCEMENTS
(2023-24 - 528)

2024-25

290

NSW GTO SCHOOL BASED COMMENCEMENTS
(2023-24 - 283)

2024-25

1787

NSW GTO COMPLETIONS
(2023-24 - 1847)

2024-25

392

NSW GTO WOMEN IN NON-TRADITIONAL TRADES COMMENCEMENTS
(2023-24 - 387)

2024-25

72

NSW GTO DISABILITY COMMENCEMENTS
(2023-24 - 170)

7% OF THE GTO WORKFORCE COMPARED TO 3% VIA DIRECT EMPLOYMENT.



TOP 5 NSW GTO INDUSTRIES

-  Electrical
-  Construction
-  Automotive
-  Engineering
-  Business

TOP 5 ACT GTO INDUSTRIES

-  Electrical
-  Construction
-  Community Services
-  Information Technology
-  Business

APPRENTICES & TRAINEES CURRENTLY EMPLOYED THROUGH AN ACT GTO

423 (2023-24 – 453)

2024-25

226

**ACT OVERALL GTO
COMMENCEMENTS**
(2023-24 – 281)

2024-25

101

**ACT GTO SCHOOL BASED
COMMENCEMENTS**
(2023-24 – 121)

2024-25

19

**ACT GTO INDIGENOUS
COMMENCEMENTS**
(2023-24 – 50)

2024-25

145

ACT GTO COMPLETIONS
(2023-24 – 156)



2024 APPRENTICE EMPLOYMENT AWARDS

The 2024 Apprentice Employment Network Awards recognise the achievements of apprentices, trainees, host employers and GTOs within the AEN NSW & ACT network.

The event was held on the 11th October 2024 at the Four Seasons Hotel Sydney.

We want to congratulate the following winners:



APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR

Kyle Cheeseman

Employed by: **Ai Group Apprentice & Trainee Centre**

Trained by: **TAFE NSW**

Vocation: **Mechanical Engineering**



TRAINEE OF THE YEAR

Rachel Preston

Employed by: **Australian Training Company**

Trained by: **Australian Training Company**

Vocation: **Business**



SCHOOL-BASED TRAINEE/ APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR

Zachariah Vellacott

Employed by: Apprenticeship
Careers Australia

Trained by: Macarthur Disability
Vocation: Individual Support



FIRST NATIONS TRAINEE/ APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR

Madeline Wilson

Employed by: My Gateway
Trained by: TAFE NSW

Vocation: Events



WOMAN IN TRADES TRAINEE/ APPRENTICE WINNER

Frankie-Mairead Kelly

Employed by: MBA NSW
Apprenticeship Services

Trained by: Master Builders
Association of NSW

Vocation: Carpentry



INCLUSION TRAINEE/ APPRENTICE WINNER

Tai-Thai Nguyen

Employed by: NECA Electrical
Apprenticeships

Trained by: NECA Training and
Apprenticeships

Vocation: Electrical



EXCELLENCE IN GROUP TRAINING
Australian Training Company



LARGE HOST EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR
Bengalla Mining Company
Host for MIGAS



SMALL HOST EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR
Borcat Trailers
Host for Zeal Futures



POOLEY DOWNING AWARD
Connor Moore
Master Builders Apprenticeship Services



POOLEY DOWNING AWARD
Nathan Thomas
Newcastle MBA Group Training

AEN MEMBER MILESTONES IN GROUP TRAINING

20 YEARS



Apprenticeships R Us

25 YEARS



Newcastle MBA Group Training

30 YEARS



Electrogroup

40 YEARS



Smart Apprenticeship Solutions

50 YEARS



Master Builders Apprenticeship Services

2025 SKILLS CONFERENCE

Amora Hotel Jamison

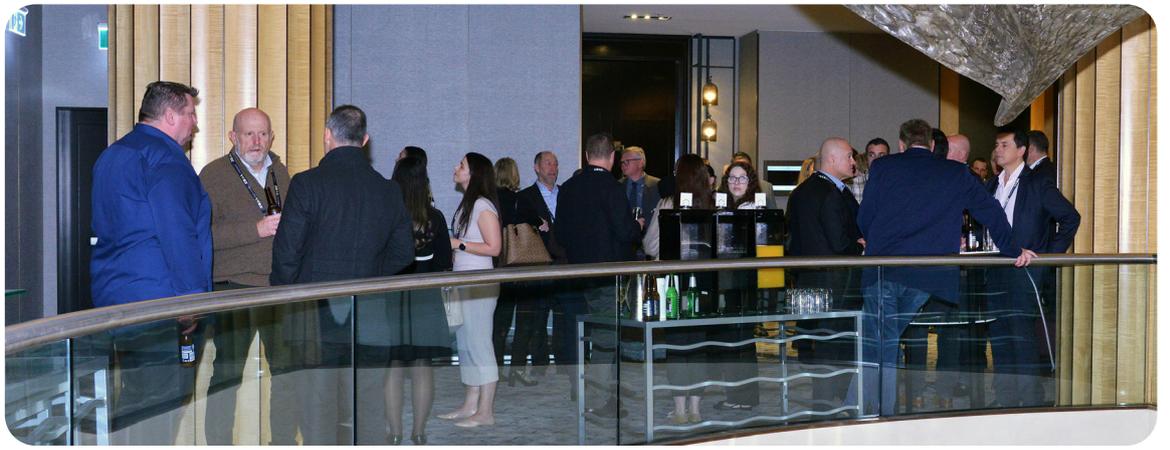
The Skills Conference, held in June 2025, centred around the theme of “Sharing the knowledge.”

This sold-out event welcomed 200 attendees from across all Australian states, offering a platform for the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector to engage in critical discussions on issues affecting apprenticeships and traineeships.

The conference featured a Ministerial Keynote from The Hon. Steve Whan, NSW Minister for Skills, TAFE, and Tertiary Education, along with sessions focused on:

- » Economic Update
- » Jobs and Skills Australia Update
- » Future Direction of Skills & Vocational Education
- » Building an inclusive apprenticeship & traineeship workforce
- » Recruiting smarter in the Australian Labour Market
- » Careers and Pathways success stories
- » Keynote presentation by CEO & Clinical Psychotherapist Katharine McLennan







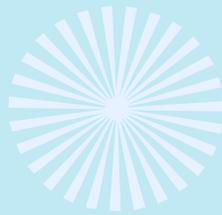
FIELD OFFICER CONFERENCE Penrith NSW

The annual AEN Field Officer Conference took place in July 2024 at Panthers Penrith, bringing together delegates from across the state. The conference remained focused on fostering networking opportunities and enhancing the professional development of our field staff, ensuring they are better equipped to support apprentices and trainees in their workplaces.

Key presentations were delivered from:

- » Apprentice Employment Network NSW & ACT
- » AustralianSuper
- » Busy at Work
- » TAFE NSW
- » MEGT & BCITO
- » Australian College of Commerce & Management
- » SafeWork NSW
- » Training Services NSW

We extend our gratitude to all staff who participated and look forward to an even larger event in August 2025.





NSW PROGRAMS

NSW - GTO RECRUITMENT PROGRAM

This program by Training Services NSW funds Group Training Organisations (GTOs) to recruit, screen, induct and refer students for pre-apprenticeship or pre-traineeship training.

The program allows hundreds of NSW students to:

- » learn about vocational choices and life in the workplace.
- » get support and advice from a GTO and Partner Provider about which pre-apprenticeship or pre-traineeship is suitable
- » start training
- » receive mentoring and assistance where needed and
- » transition into a full apprenticeship or traineeship qualification.

It aims to increase the uptake of apprenticeships and traineeships in NSW, including specific opportunities for women and students.

THE 1000 NSW PUBLIC SECTOR APPRENTICE AND TRAINEE PROGRAM

The NSW Government has committed to employing an additional 1000 apprentices and trainees across NSW Government agencies and State-Owned Corporations over three years, until 30 June 2026.

Round Three of the Program will support up to 430 additional apprenticeship and traineeship roles.

Group Training Organisations who support NSW Government agencies and State-Owned Corporations participate in this program.

NSW - GET BACK IN THE GAME

The Get Back in the Game program supports disengaged young people, aged 15 to 19 years.

This program is available for two cohorts of young people under different titles. Back in the Game, supports young people at school in need of support to remain engaged at school or transition to employment or training. Get in the Game, supports young people disengaged from all employment, education and training.

The Get Back in the Game program funds local community organisations to case-manage transitions of disengaged young people into education, training and employment, and to broker support services such as housing and health which may be essential to successful transitions.

Participating Service Providers

Central West

Local provider: **Skillset**

Far West and Orana

Local provider: **Skillset**

NSW EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS PROGRAM - HEADSTART

The Apprenticeship and Traineeship Head Start initiative helps eligible public high school students in years 10-12 unlock their futures through fee-free accredited training by completing pre-apprenticeship or pre-traineeship courses. Students get to try out career pathways of interest, gain nationally recognised units of competency, and earn credit that can be put towards an School Based Apprenticeship or Traineeship (SBAT) or full apprenticeship or traineeship courses.

Initiative activities include:

- » Training delivered by NSW Smart and Skilled contracted training organisations leading to 3-4 nationally recognised units of competency.
- » Potential work experience with a local host employer.
- » Support and advice on pathways to a career including SBATs, apprenticeships or traineeships.

Initiative activities include:

- » Facilitated training with a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) leading to 3-4 nationally recognised units of competency.
- » Potential work experience with a host employer.

GTOs participating in this program include:

- » **AT Consultancy Group**
- » **Australian Training Company**
- » **CCGT**
- » **Novaskill**
- » **HTN**
- » **HunterNet Career Connections**
- » **My Gateway**
- » **Maxwell**
- » **MIGAS**
- » **My Freight Career**
- » **NECA**
- » **Yalagan**
- » **Zeal Futures**

ACT PROGRAMS

ACT GOVERNMENT AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL BASED APPRENTICESHIPS (ASBAs)

Australian Training Company and **1300apprentice** to provide students with the opportunity to gain hands-on experience within the public sector whilst completing a formal qualification. Each GTO supported the ACT Education Directorate funded program by recruiting, mentoring, and assisting with rotations as required. This program resulted in the successful completion of many students progressing onto full time traineeships within the ACT Education Directorate and other departments.

During the program, some of the students were placed and rotated throughout ACT Public Schools and the ACT Education Directorate to complete their work-based requirements and attended their RTO training for one day each month. Qualifications undertaken by the trainees included Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways and Certificate III in Business, both delivered by CIT.

ACT - VOCATIONAL LEARNING PROGRAMS

Vocational Learning Programs (VLP) provide short career education and vocational learning programs for students in Years 9 to 12, helping students to develop basic industry knowledge and skills to increase their career readiness.

Previously known as Vocational Learning Options, the new programs will increase access to vocational and workplace learning, opportunities for students across all stages of career readiness.

VLPs are tailored to student and industry needs including:

- » universal programs comprising mostly accredited training delivered in partnership with industry and registered training organisations (RTOs)
- » targeted programs comprising mostly non-accredited training that focus on providing students with a pathway to employment and/or accredited vocational learning options.

Australian Training Company has been providing VLP for the ACT Education Directorate.

Understanding Building and Construction Program - Work Experience

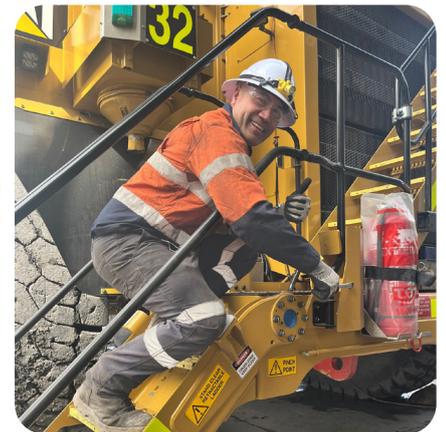
Australian Training Company is delivering the Understanding Building and Construction Pilot Program funded by the ACT Community Services Directorate which aims to increase the participation of young women in vocational education and training in the building and construction industry through learning opportunities in schools.

The program provides a tailored learning experience that integrates industry perspectives for high school students to improve their understanding of the building and construction industry. The program aims to break down the barriers hindering young women and gender diverse students from pursuing a career pathway in this field.

The Understanding Building and Construction Pilot Program is an ACT Government initiative delivered with funding support from the National Careers Institute Partnership Grant.

Canberra Business Chamber

Australian Training Company, in partnership with Canberra Business Chamber, delivered a unique pre-employment program for students with a disability. The 2025 project was funded for 12 participants.



2024-25 AEN NSW ACT MEMBER DIRECTORY

1300 apprentice

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1300apprentice.com.au
1300 277 736



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MIGAS
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SQUAD
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