

Energy Skills Australia June Newsletter 2025

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Energy Skills

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Welcome to the June 2025 edition of the Energy Skills Australia newsletter.
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CEO Message

Welcome to the June edition of the Energy Skills Australia newsletter.

May was a significant month for Energy Skills Australia with the launch of the Big Sister: Advanced Mentoring program in South Australia. This important industry-led initiative is aimed at improving retention and support for women electrical apprentices in South Australia and Western Australia. The program represents a step forward in driving cultural change and strengthening diversity in the electrotechnology and clean energy sectors.

I also had the privilege of attending the NECA National Conference in Japan, where discussions centred on innovation, energy efficiency, and workforce challenges in our sector. Some of the conference highlights included:

- Thomas Green from Enginuity Power Solutions delivering valuable insights on cost savings through energy efficiency;
- An excellent presentation on the latest developments in lighting technology by Malcolm Richards;
- A thought-provoking panel session on workforce challenges in the electrical industry with

Kaela Bonomi GAICD, Anthea Middleton of PSO, Michelle Ellis NECA, and Peter Beveridge GAICD. This panel reinforced the need for a skilled, adaptable, and supported workforce as the sector evolves.

We also recently submitted feedback to the Productivity Commission, providing industry insight into key challenges and opportunities shaping the energy sector workforce.

Of particular importance is the announcement from last week's Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council meeting regarding the development of a Future Apprenticeships Workplan. This plan is set to drive immediate and long-term actions to grow apprenticeships and traineeships in priority areas — a critical factor for the energy and electrotechnology sectors as we face ongoing skills shortages. Energy Skills Australia provided input to the Strategic Review of the Australian Apprenticeship Incentive System and looks forward to engaging further in the development and implementation of the Workplan.

Thank you all for your continued support and dedication to building a safer, smarter, and more inclusive energy workforce.

Warm Regards

Mark Burgess
CEO Energy Skills Australia

Big Sister Program Officially Launched

On Wednesday 29 May, the Big Sister – Advanced Mentoring SA/WA Program was officially launched at PEER in South Australia, marking an important step toward supporting, retaining, and advancing women in the electrical, construction, and clean energy trades.

The event was attended by The Hon. Amanda Rishworth MP, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, and The Hon. Blair Boyer MP, SA Minister for Education, Training & Skills. Representatives from the Commonwealth Department of Employment and Workplace Relations were also present, alongside a broad cross-section of program partners, industry leaders, government agencies, and training stakeholders.

The Big Sister Program is designed to create safer, more inclusive workplaces by providing targeted support, mentoring, and development pathways for women apprentices. The initiative is a key component of the Australian Government's Building Women's Careers Program, which funds projects that strengthen participation and retention of women in traditionally male-dominated sectors.

With a focus on real, lasting cultural change, the program will connect participants with experienced mentors, industry networks, and professional development opportunities across both South Australia and Western Australia.

Keep up to date on the project through the Big Sister website and follow the program's progress on social media.

[**Big Sister Website**](#)

Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council Meeting

Federal, state and territory Skills Ministers met in Brisbane on Friday 13 June 2025 to discuss improvements to Australia's vocational education and training (VET) system. The meeting focused on ensuring the system can lift productivity, foster inclusion, and contribute to economic equality for individuals across the country.

Ministers highlighted the central role that skills, training, and TAFE will play in supporting Australia's future economic growth and productivity. There was a shared recognition that building a highly skilled, adaptable workforce requires a more cohesive and harmonised tertiary education sector.

Future Apprenticeships and Traineeships

Skills Ministers reaffirmed the critical importance of apprenticeships and traineeships in addressing Australia's current and future skills needs — particularly in areas such as housing supply and other priority sectors.

To drive growth in apprentice and trainee commencements and improve completion rates, Ministers agreed to:

- Prioritise actions to boost commencements and completions in key industries.
- Maintain a standing agenda item on apprenticeships and traineeships at future Council meetings to address national challenges and opportunities.
- Develop a Future Apprenticeships Workplan with immediate and long-term actions to support growth in priority areas. This plan will be finalised and approved by Skills Ministers in Q3 2025.
- Consider the outcomes and recommendations from the Strategic Review of the Australian Apprenticeship Incentive System to guide long-term system improvements.

These measures aim to strengthen Australia's VET sector and ensure the workforce is ready to meet the demands of the future economy.

To read the full communique, [click below](#).

Skills Ministers Communique

2025 WorldSkills Australia National Championships

Australia's largest trades and skills showcase — the 2025 WorldSkills Australia National Championships & Skills Show — has officially concluded, marking one of the biggest events in the organisation's 44-year history.

Held at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre from 12–14 June, the championships welcomed over 35,000 visitors, with more than 600 of the nation's top apprentices, trainees, and students competing across 60+ skill categories. From cyber security and cabinetmaking to cookery, floristry and plumbing, the event highlighted the breadth and importance of vocational skills in shaping Australia's economic future.

This year's event set new records for participation and attendance, offering a vibrant platform to showcase the next generation of skilled tradespeople and professionals. The competition also served as a pathway for international recognition, with standout competitors in select categories now in contention to represent Australia as part of Team Australia ("The Skillaroos") at the 48th WorldSkills International Competition in Shanghai in 2026.

A huge congratulations to all competitors, medalists, and finalists for their outstanding achievements. Your skill, passion, and commitment are inspiring. Thank you for leading the next generation of trades and technical professionals.

For more information about WorldSkills Australia and upcoming competitions.

WorldSkills Australia

New NCVER Research: Pre-apprenticeship programs found to improve apprenticeship outcomes

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) has released new research that shows pre-apprenticeship programs can significantly boost the chances of successfully completing an apprenticeship.

The report, Understanding the value of pre-apprenticeships, found that students who completed a pre-apprenticeship in the same field of education as their apprenticeship were 7.3 percentage-points more likely to finish their apprenticeship than those who did not enrol in a pre-apprenticeship program.

The positive impact of pre-apprenticeship programs on apprenticeship completion was most evident among trade apprentices. Trade apprentices who had enrolled in a pre-apprenticeship had a significantly higher probability of completion than those who had not enrolled in a pre-apprenticeship.

Five most common trade apprenticeships commenced following a pre-apprenticeship:

1. Certificate III in Electrotechnology Electrician
2. Certificate III in Carpentry
3. Certificate III in Automotive Underbody Technology
4. Certificate III in Plumbing
5. Certificate III in Engineering – Fabrication Trade

To read the full report click below.

Pre-apprenticeship Paper

NAEN 2025 Conference Wrap-Up

The 2025 National Apprenticeship Employment Network (NAEN) Conference took place in Brisbane from Wednesday 11 to Friday 13 June at the Sofitel Brisbane Central.

The conference opened with a Welcome Reception held jointly with the WorldSkills Australia National Championships at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre on 11 June — a night that celebrated skills excellence and the VET workforce supporting apprenticeship and traineeship pathways.

The theme of this year's event, "Future Skills: Change the World," brought together key voices from government, industry, and training to discuss the challenges and opportunities shaping Australia's future workforce.

ESA CEO Mark Burgess attended the conference, noting the strength of speakers such as Deputy Commissioner Trevor Gauld, who provided practical, real-life applications of data research being undertaken by the Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA).

Julia Banks was also a conference highlight, openly sharing her personal story of entering politics and her experiences as a woman navigating male-dominated industries — an inspiring perspective for those championing greater diversity in trades and leadership.

More than 40 featured speakers contributed to the program, including:

- Minister for Skills and Training, The Hon. Andrew Giles MP
- Deputy Commissioner Jobs and Skills Australia, Trevor Gauld
- SA Skills Commissioner, Cameron Baker
- Senior representatives from government departments
- CEOs of Australia's Jobs and Skills Councils

The event provided an excellent platform for collaboration, idea-sharing, and discussion on how to shape a future-ready Australian workforce.

2025 Australian Training Awards – Heading to Darwin

The 2025 Australian Training Awards will take place in Darwin on Friday, 5 December 2025. Finalists will be announced in October, with the winners revealed at the prestigious gala event in December.

As the nation's premier event for the vocational education and training (VET) sector, the awards celebrate outstanding achievements by individuals, businesses, and training organisations from across Australia.

The event provides an opportunity to showcase excellence, innovation, and best practice in skills development, while recognising the critical role the VET sector plays in building a strong and capable workforce.

For more information, visit the Australian Training Awards website.

Key Diary Dates

NCVER 'No Frills' Conference

National Conference
Gold Coast, QLD
9-11 July 2025

National Skills Week

National
25-31 August 2025

MEA Conference

Gold Coast, QLD
26-30 September 2025

Velg Training National VET Conference

Gold Coast, QLD
30-31 October 2025

TDA Convention 2026

Brisbane
5-7 May 2026

48th WorldSkills International Competition

Shanghai
22-27 September 2026

Energy Skills Australia is an independent, not for profit, bipartite company committed to supporting high quality training and workforce development within and beyond the energy industries.

Energy Skills Australia acknowledges the traditional owners of the country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their cultures and give acknowledgement to elders past and present.

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