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# SKILLS CONNECT FUND

Delivering whole-of-workforce solutions

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Victoria**



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## **SKILLS CONNECT**

Skills Connect is the Australian Government's service to link Australian enterprises with support for skills and workforce development. Funding available through Skills Connect support national growth in skills, qualifications, productivity and social inclusion, as well as more effective workforce planning and development.



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## PROGRAMS MANAGED IN VICTORIA...

- **Australian Apprenticeships Support Services (AASS) Program**

Australian Apprenticeships encompass all apprenticeships and traineeships. They combine time at work with training and can be full-time, part-time or school-based.

Australian Apprenticeships are the best way to combine training and employment and they can lead to a nationally recognised qualification. Australian Apprenticeships are available to anyone of working age and do not require any entry qualifications. Australian Apprentices are available to school-leavers, those re-entering the workforce or those wishing to change careers.

- **Workplace English Language and Literacy Program (WELL)**

The WELL Program addresses the English language, literacy and numeracy needs of all workers including eligible Australian Apprentices, who require support with core literacy, numeracy and learning skills as part of their workplace training. Funding is available on a competitive grants basis to all industry sectors for the provision of language, literacy and numeracy training integrated with vocational training, to help workers to meet their current and future employment and training needs.

Contact for enquiries: [WELL-VIC@innovation.gov.au](mailto:WELL-VIC@innovation.gov.au)



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## PROGRAMS MANAGED IN VICTORIA...

- **Australian Apprenticeships Access Program (Access)**  
This program provides vulnerable job seekers who experience barriers to entering skilled employment with nationally recognised pre-vocational training, support and assistance. The Access Program is delivered locally by brokers and providers who work closely with employers to deliver training that meets industry needs. The program is provided at no cost to participants and assists them to find and keep an Australian Apprenticeship, or to enter employment or further education or training.
- **Skills for Education and Employment Program (SEE)**  
This program seeks to improve participants' language, literacy and/or numeracy, with the expectation that such improvements will enable them to participate more effectively in training or in the labour force and lead to greater gains for them and society in the longer term. The SEE program provides up to 800 hours of free accredited language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) training for eligible job seekers whose LLN skills are below the level considered necessary to secure sustainable employment or pursue further education and training.

Eligible job seekers are referred to a SEE provider by Referring Agencies, currently Centrelink, Job Services Australia (JSA) providers and Disability Employment Service (DES) providers.

Contact for enquiries: [VICSEE@innovation.gov.au](mailto:VICSEE@innovation.gov.au)



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## THE SKILLS CONNECT FUND...

- The Skills Connect Fund is leading the government's focus on workforce development to improve business productivity
- Responds to stakeholder feedback, seeking simplified access to workforce development solutions
- An opportunity for enterprises seeking a multi-faceted approach through a single application and funding agreement



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## **PRESENTATION OVERVIEW**

- Funding appropriated for 2013-14, but projects may extend beyond this period
- Individual enterprises and/or business clusters may apply
- Whole of workforce development solutions via a single 'transaction' with the Australian Government
- Government co-contributes directly to the costs of workforce training and support services
- Co-contributions means employers will be fully committed to employee outcomes
- Up-skilling and re-skilling of new and existing workers eg mentoring, foundation skills development
- Nationally recognised vocational training to help businesses maximise productivity and individuals to achieve career goals



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## **KEY MESSAGES-BUSINESS NEED**

- Employer is the key client of skills and training projects and must be engaged in solution. Co-contribution is a requirement.
- Training and support proposals must be aligned to specific business needs identified as part of business planning.
- All training must be from industry endorsed Training Packages (including qualifications, skills sets) Units of competency may be considered if identified as part of a support service.
- Flexible, tailored solutions which may not just be about training.



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## KEY MESSAGES-DEVELOPING A PROPOSAL

- Funding is available on a competitive basis.
- Proposals should identify clear and measurable outcomes, which represent value for money and are sustainable.
- State/territory programs can work side by side as part of whole-of-workforce solutions - but care must be taken to ensure 'no double dipping' or 'cost shifting'.
- Australian government support for mature age workers now being administered through the Skills Connect Fund. Streamlined application processes have been developed for micro businesses seeking support for small numbers of employees. Whole of workforce proposals incorporating mature age cohorts continue to be encouraged.





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## KEY MESSAGES- SELECTION CRITERIA

**1: Capacity to Benefit** - proposals will be assessed on the extent to which:

- The proposed solution/s aligns with the business strategy and the current and future skills needs of the organisation/s.
- The supporting evidence links to the project outcomes e.g. a workforce development plan.
- Evidence that the funding will have clearly defined benefits by enhancing the capability of the participants, and in turn lifting the productivity and capacity of the organisation/s.
- The proponent/lead organisation, employers and other support organisations demonstrate the capacity to implement the proposed projects.
- For regional or industry-based targeted proposals a consideration of broader planning for that region or industry.



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## **KEY MESSAGES- SELECTION CRITERIA**

**2: Value for Money** - proposals will be assessed on the extent to which:

- The detail and justification of the cost of training and support services, incl the co-contribution from participating employers.
- The governance arrangements to be implemented to ensure delivery of outcomes.
- The relevant experience of the enterprise/s to deliver a high quality project, including delivering Australian Government skills initiatives.
- The level of risk involved in successfully delivering the project.
- The opportunity for projects to achieve outcomes that can be sustained beyond the period of the project funding.
- For regional or industry-based targeted proposals a proven track record of regional (or industry) leadership and influence.



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## HOW THE SKILLS CONNECT FUND WORKS

- Proposals must be submitted online
- Employers can seek assistance to finalise a proposal through the Skills Connect network-including state or national offices
- Departmental assessment processes, with tiered delegations for approval based on government co-contribution value
- Projects exceeding \$1 million of government co-funding will require Ministerial approval



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## CASE STUDY 1

- A small plumbing company, Company X, employs 5 tradesman. Two of these employees John and Bill are over 50 years (mature age).
- While John and Bill are much more experienced than the younger employees, they were limited in the types of jobs they could undertake because they had completed training over 30 years ago and the formal qualifications for plumbers has since changed to incorporate gas fitting. Gas fitting was a separate trade when John and Bill undertook their plumbing qualification.
- Company X applied for John and Bill to undergo skills assessment and gap training for a Certificate III in Gas fitting, so that both tradesmen would have the same qualification as their younger counterparts. This would also allow them to mentor any new apprentices that the company may take on in the future.
- Company X sought quotes from 3 RTOs to provide the skills assessment and gap training. RTO ZZ Pty Ltd provided the best value for money, quoting \$3,700 per employee.



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## CASE STUDY 2

- Company Z, a medium size manufacture employing approximately 110 staff, has recently undertaken some strategic planning to identify their goals over the next 5 years.
- They have identified that they would like to expand their business through diversifying their products and growing their customer base.
- The Company has undertaken an analysis of their current workforce and have identified some skills gaps to achieving this goal. They have also had some trouble retaining new employees and want to ensure that their valuable staff are retained.



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## NO WRONG DOOR APPROACH

- A range of experts are available through the national Skills Connect adviser network to assist and guide enterprises with business and workforce planning:
  - Skills Connect State Network
  - Industry Skills Councils
  - Enterprise Connect Business Advisers
  - Education and Training Advisers
  - Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Coordinators
  - Local Employment Coordinators
  - Minerals Council of Australia (MOU) Regional Coordinators
- AusIndustry clients also identified as a priority-opportunities for referral



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## ACCESSING FURTHER INFORMATION

<http://skillsconnect.gov.au/home/skills-connect-fund/>

- Workforce planning assistance-training needs analysis templates
- Contact details for State offices
- Guidelines, FAQs, Quick reference guides
- Link for proposal submission
- Proponent User Guide to submitting a proposal
- Case studies to demonstrate how projects work



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## CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

- Please direct any questions about the Skills Connect Fund in Victoria to
  - Email- [skillsconnectfund-VIC@industry.gov.au](mailto:skillsconnectfund-VIC@industry.gov.au)