



SUBMISSION

Parliament of Australia

Inquiry into the Jobs and Skills Australia Amendment Bill 2023

April 2023

Adult Learning Australia (ALA) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) Amendment Bill 2023 and provides the following feedback.

About ALA

ALA has been operating for more than 60 years and is the oldest and largest national peak body for adult community education in Australia.

ALA is a not-for-profit entity with organisational and individual members in all states and territories who reflect the diversity of adult learning and community education, including community learning centres, community colleges, neighbourhood houses, libraries, worker education associations, Aboriginal training and skills organisations, TAFEs and other adult education institutions. ALA exists to provide leadership and professional development for the sector and to advance quality services for all adult learners.

Our vision is for equitable access to learning for all Australians to support social cohesion and economic prosperity.

We believe in the power and potential of adult learning and community education to transform lives and to affect both social and economic change. ALA values and promotes the benefits of learning in all of its forms and is an active advocate in state, territory, national and international communities.

Our members offer a range of learning and education opportunities: from personal enrichment learning, and foundation skills to formal or accredited learning.

ALA attended the Jobs and Skills Summit in July 2022 and is a current member of the Australian Government's Foundation Skills Advisory Group and the VET Workforce Blueprint Steering Group.

Our organisation has a keen interest in ensuring that the adult learning and community education sector is recognised. ALA advocates for good quality programs and a strong network of providers. We are committed to local solutions to community learning needs.

Jobs and Skills Australia Amendment Bill 2023

Context

The Australian Government has established Jobs and Skills Australia to provide independent advice to the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations and the Minister for Skills and Training on current, emerging, and future workforce, skills, and training needs.

On 22 March 2023, the [Australian Government introduced into Parliament the *Jobs and Skills Australia Amendment Bill 2023*](#) which has been informed by stakeholder consultation through the [Jobs and Skills Australia Discussion Paper and consultation](#), as part of the Jobs and Skills Summit.

Feedback

ALA supports the Amendment Bill 2023 but highlights the following areas for your attention.

Community sector advice and representation

ALA backs the expansion of functions of JSA to undertake studies to improve the analysis and understanding of Australians that have historically experienced disadvantage and exclusion in the labour market.

Our sector has a successful record of working with vulnerable and marginalised cohorts in place based settings in local communities where wrap around support services such as child care enable them to find pathways back into education, skills and training, into jobs or to help them keep their jobs through confidence building and upskilling.

Some of our community education providers work directly with local industries to tailor short courses and credentials to industry needs which help to successfully prepare and build the local workforce. These local collaborations with community providers are often more flexible to the specific needs of adult learners than large institutional settings.

ALA seeks to ensure that our sector is represented; that it has a place at the table providing expertise and advice to JSA in these areas.

Recognition of learning and employment pathways

We seek recognition that learning pathways (learning to learn) and pre-accredited learning are identified as critical steps to ensure the inclusion of some of the most disadvantaged Australians. These groups may be marginalised, by way of age, health, gender, cultural background or lack of education and opportunity. The [Ministerial Declaration on Adult and Community Education \(ACE\)](#) recognised the importance of ACE in providing pathways to further education and training for 'second chance' learners and was developed to inform ACE policy across jurisdictions.

Australian International Commitments



JSA reports should consider our international commitments as a signatory to the following documents:

1. 2030 Agenda for [Sustainable Developments](#) (SDGs), including SDG 8 – ‘Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all’ and SDG 4 - ‘Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all’ and
2. [UNESCO CONFINTEA VII Marrakech Framework for Action](#) - Harnessing the transformational power of Adult Learning and Education, including section 19: Preparing adults for the future of work.
3. UN Transforming Education: An urgent political imperative for our collective future
[National Statement of Commitment to Transform Education](#)

ALA looks forward to ongoing engagement with JSA in the future. If you have enquiries regarding this submission, please contact us as below.

Adult Learning Australia
Henderson House
45 Moreland Street
FOOTSCRAY 3011
(03) 96898623