An agreement between

- the Commonwealth of Australia and
- the States and Territories, being:
  - The State of New South Wales;
  - The State of Victoria;
  - The State of Queensland;
  - The State of Western Australia;
  - The State of South Australia;
  - The State of Tasmania;
  - The Australian Capital Territory; and
  - The Northern Territory of Australia.

This agreement defines the objectives, outcomes, outputs and performance measures, and clarifies the roles and responsibilities that will guide the Commonwealth and States and Territories in delivery of services across the skills and workforce development sector.
Preliminaries

1. This agreement is created subject to the provisions of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations and should be read in conjunction with that Agreement and subsidiary schedules. In particular, the schedules include direction in respect of performance reporting and payment arrangements.

2. The Parties are committed to addressing the issue of social inclusion, including responding to Indigenous disadvantage. That commitment is embodied in the objectives and outcomes of this agreement. However, the Parties have also agreed other objectives and outcomes – for example, in the National Indigenous Reform Agreement – which the Parties will pursue through the broadest possible spectrum of government action. Consequently, this agreement will be implemented consistently with the objectives and outcomes of all National Agreements and National Partnerships entered into by the Parties.

3. The National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development (the Agreement) identifies the long term objectives of the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments in the areas of skills and workforce development.

4. The Agreement affirms the commitment of all Governments to work in partnership, and with businesses and industry, to develop the skills of the Australian people. It also recognises that the centrepiece to achieving this is a shared commitment of all Governments to a national training system which is responsive to local needs, and delivers high quality and nationally consistent training outcomes.

5. The Agreement recognises the interest of all Governments in ensuring the skills of the Australian people are utilised in the economy. It identifies workforce development as a new area for Government focus and public policy development.

6. While the Agreement is focused on skills developed in the vocational education and training sector and workforce development, Governments acknowledge that the identified long term objectives will not be achieved by skills and workforce development alone. Schooling and higher education will have a significant impact on the skills development objectives, and economic and labour market conditions will impact on skills utilisation.

Scope

7. The Agreement brings together, as far as possible, all Commonwealth government funding of skills and workforce development. There are currently a number of Commonwealth Own Purpose Expenses which sit outside the Agreement, such as funding for apprentices, Group Training and adult literacy.
8. The outcomes contained within the Agreement are ambitious, and the targets are long term (out to 2020) and aspirational. Governments expect to make substantive progress towards these outcomes and targets over the life of the Agreement. However, to ensure these outcomes and targets are met over the long-term, all governments will need to renegotiate their contributions in future iterations of the Agreement.

9. Governments will continue to work together to identify where funding can be moved into the SPP. This may result in changes or additions to funding arrangements during the life of the Agreement. Such changes could also result in changes to roles and responsibilities.

Structure and Terms of the Agreement

Structure

10. The agreement is structured in 3 parts.

(a) Part 1 provides the context for the Agreement; details Governments’ shared objectives, outcomes, outputs and policy reform directions for skills and workforce development; the roles and responsibilities for the different levels of government; agreed areas of reform; and the Public Accountability Framework.

(b) Part 2 details the principles underpinning the national training system, and the supporting infrastructure and architecture which will support Governments in working together to achieving the desired objectives and outcomes.

(c) Part 3 contains the appendices.

Term of the Agreement

11. This National Agreement is a schedule to the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations and should be read in conjunction with that agreement and subsidiary schedules.

The SPP includes VET in Schools funding, including for non-government schools. To ensure that non-government schools are not disadvantaged by the inclusion of VET in Schools funding in the SPP, states and territories are required to pass on appropriate funding to non-government schools.

OBJECTIVES, OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS

12. This Agreement is concerned with improving the outcomes of all Australians, with a particular focus on improving the outcomes of Indigenous Australians.

The funding that each jurisdiction agrees to, including the SPP and the related Commonwealth Own Purpose Expenses (COPE) and National Partnership, Productivity Places Program, will contribute to achieving the following objectives and outcomes.

Objectives

13. All working aged Australians have the opportunity to develop the skills and qualifications needed, including through a responsive training system, to enable them to be effective participants in and contributors to the modern labour market.
14. Individuals are assisted to overcome barriers to education, training and employment, and are motivated to acquire and utilise new skills.

15. Australian industry and businesses develop, harness and utilise the skills and abilities of the workforce.

Outcomes

16. The working age population has gaps in foundation skills levels reduced to enable effective educational, labour market and social participation.

17. The working age population has the depth and breadth of skills and capabilities required for the 21st century labour market.

18. The supply of skills provided by the national training system responds to meet changing labour market demand.

19. Skills are used effectively to increase labour market efficiency, productivity, innovation, and ensure increased utilisation of human capital.

Outputs

20. The following outputs will act as a proxy to measure progress towards the above outcomes.
   (a) Number of enrolments in vocational education and training.
   (b) Number of course completions in vocational education and training.
   (c) Number of unit/module completions in vocational education and training.
   (d) Number of course completions by Indigenous Australians in vocational education and training.
   (e) Number of enrolments by Indigenous Australians in higher level vocational education and training qualifications.
   (f) The outputs are discussed in greater detail at Part 3 (Schedule A).

Progress measures

(a) Proportion of the working age population at literacy level 1, 2 and 3.
(b) Proportion of 20-64 year olds who do not have qualifications at or above a Certificate III.
(c) Proportion of graduates employed after completing training, by previous employment status.
(d) The percentage of graduates with improved employment status after training.
(e) The number of hard to fill vacancies.
(f) Proportion of people employed at or above the level of their qualification, by field of study.
The table below links each progress measure with an agreed outcome:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Progress measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The working age population have gaps in foundation skills levels reduced to enable effective educational, labour market and social participation.</td>
<td>Proportion of the working age population at literacy level 1, 2, and 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The working age population has the depth and breadth of skills and capabilities required for the 21st century labour market.</td>
<td>Proportion of 20-64 year olds who do not have qualifications at or above a Certificate III.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The supply of skills provided by the national training system responds to meet changing labour market demand.</td>
<td>Proportion of graduates employed after completing training, by previous employment status. The percentage of graduates with improved employment status after training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills are used effectively to increase labour market efficiency, productivity, innovation, and ensure increased utilisation of human capital.</td>
<td>The number of hard to fill vacancies Proportion of people employed at or above the level of their qualification, by field of study.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Targets**

(a) Halve the proportion of Australians ages 20-64 without qualifications at Certificate III level and above between 2009 and 2020.

(b) Double the number of higher qualification completions (diploma and advanced diploma) between 2009 and 2020.

**REVIEW**

21. There will be a review of the achievement of the outputs specified in Schedule A two years from the commencement of the agreement.

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Shared responsibilities**

22. Develop and maintain the national training system including:

   (a) Establish priorities and develop strategic policy initiatives;

   (b) Determine the levels and requirements of funding arrangements;

   (c) The National Governance Framework;

   (d) The National Skills Framework;
(e) Quality assurance and regulation; and
(f) Industry engagement.

23. Develop, resource, and share data to monitor and review the contribution and performance of all governments.

24. Conduct coordinated research and trials of better practice with a view to sharing the findings.

25. Raise the status of vocational education and training.

26. Be accountable to the community for achieving outcomes.

**State and Territory responsibilities**

27. Determine resource allocation within the State/Territory.

28. Oversee delivery of public funded training within the State/Territory.

29. Facilitate development and training of the public VET workforce within the state/territory.

30. Allocate funding to support the maintenance of public training infrastructure within the state/territory.

31. Ensure the effective operation of the training market, including in relation to market information, within the State/Territory.

32. Provide the necessary information and data to enable the production of the Annual National Report.

**Commonwealth responsibilities**

33. Provide funding contributions to States and Territories to support their training systems.

34. Provide incentives to attract clients to training, especially in target national priority areas.

35. Provide specific interventions and assistance to support national priority areas including assisting adults to acquire foundation skills (including literacy, language and numeracy) and supporting unemployed Australians and those seeking to enter the workforce.

36. Provide national market information to clients and potential clients in all jurisdictions. This includes information relating to the labour market and skill shortages.

37. Coordinate the development and publication of the Annual National Report.

**POLICY AND REFORM DIRECTIONS**

38. All Parties agree that the following policy and reform directions represent the areas of policy effort that will have the greatest impacts on the achievement of the agreed outcomes.

   (a) Reforming training products, services, information systems and regulation to meet a more demand and client driven system;
Driving further competition in current training arrangements and strengthening capacity of providers and businesses to build the foundation and deeper and broader skills required by the 21st century labour market;

Creating an investment environment and settings that optimises investment from all sources (governments, individuals, businesses and industry) including funding for delivery, tax policy, employment programs and incentives;

Renewal of governance framework to reinforce the role of industry and maximise effectiveness and efficiency in intergovernmental relations;

Ensuring that skills are fully utilised and wastage of human capital is reduced; and

Identify barriers and implement changes needed in the structure and operation of the training system (both nationally and locally) to improve qualification completions and participation in higher level qualifications by Indigenous Australians.

Policy directions will be reviewed regularly to incorporate evaluations of existing interventions and provide the opportunity to respond to emerging evidence or challenges.

All parties to the Agreement recognise that a strong, integrated national training system, which allows for local diversity and flexibility, is essential to enable Governments to make progress towards the desired outcomes and objectives in skills and workforce development.

All parties to the Agreement confirm their commitment to the following principles, governance structures, quality assurance and regulatory frameworks, and national products underpinning the quality and integrity of the national training system. They also confirm their commitment to the following infrastructure and architecture as essential supporting mechanisms for Governments in working together to achieve the desired objectives and outcomes.

The principles underpinning the national training system are:

(a) Government policy and investment priorities are informed by the needs of the clients of the training system – individuals and businesses;

(b) The clients are the centre of the system;

(c) Investment in skills is a joint responsibility between Governments, individuals, businesses and industry;

(d) Total investment in skills is sufficient to meet labour market need;

(e) A partnership between industry, business and government provides leadership in national, state and territory policy development, priority setting and delivery of skills;

(f) Policy and funding priorities are targeted at areas of maximum social and economic return and focused on increasing workforce participation and productivity; and
(g) The training framework is flexible to enable the development of products and services which respond to the needs of clients and the quality assurance system is transparent, accountable, consistent, proportional, and focused on outcomes.

**Governance**

43. The governance structures and arrangements detailed in this section are current at the time the Agreement was signed. These arrangements are currently under review and may be changed over the life of the Agreement.

**Ministerial Council for Vocational and Technical Education (MCVTE)**

44. The Ministerial Council is the key decision-making body, and has overall responsibility for the national training system, including strategic policy, priority setting, national training system funding, planning and performance. The Council is chaired by the Commonwealth Minister for Vocational and Further Education and consists of state and territory government ministers responsible for training. It is supported by a National Senior Officials Committee, National Industry Skills Committee and National Quality Council.

**National Senior Officials Committee (NSOC)**

45. The National Senior Officials Committee is responsible for supporting the Ministerial Council for Vocational and Technical Education, implementing its decisions, driving national collaboration on training matters and monitoring the effectiveness of the national training system.

46. The National Senior Officials Committee consists of the chief executive officers of the Australian and State and Territory government departments responsible for training. The Committee is chaired by the Deputy Secretary of the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

**National Industry Skills Committee (NISC)**

47. To enhance the industry-led focus of the vocational education and training system, the National Industry Skills Committee provides the Ministerial Council with high-level advice on workforce planning, future training priorities and other critical issues facing the training sector. It has a cross-section of employers from a range of industries, including emerging industries; small, medium and large enterprises; and businesses from a diverse geography.

48. The National Industry Skills Committee meets with the Ministerial Council ahead of council meetings, and has joint meetings with the National Senior Officials Committee during each year.

49. The Committee provides advice to the Ministerial Council which may include:

   (a) Strategies to improve training outcomes and delivery, usability of and access to the national training system;

   (b) Industry training research priorities to ensure that the system is well positioned to respond to emerging challenges; and

   (c) Ways that industry can work with governments to improve outcomes for disadvantaged clients, particularly Indigenous Australians and people with a disability.
50. The Committee also plays a key role with the National Senior Officials Committee in advising the Ministerial Council on national research priorities to ensure that the system is well positioned to respond to emerging challenges.

National Quality Council (NQC)

51. The National Quality Council has a key role in bringing together the major players in the vocational education and training sector - industry, employee representatives, governments, equity groups and practitioners - to oversee and support the current and future quality of vocational and technical education across Australia.

52. The National Quality Council is a committee of the Ministerial Council for Vocational and Technical Education, and oversees quality assurance and ensures national consistency in the application of the Australian Quality Training Framework standards for the audit and registration of training providers. It has specific decision-making powers in relation to the endorsement of training packages and other aspects of the quality assurance under the National Skills Framework.

National Training Statistics Committee (NTSC)

53. The National Training Statistics Committee provides advice to the National Senior Officials Committee on the collection and reporting of vocational education and training statistics.

National Action Groups and Taskforces

54. National action groups and taskforces are established on a needs basis, for a fixed time period, with the aim of providing targeted, specialist advice requested by the Ministerial Council or the National Senior Officials Committee. Responsibility for managing and coordinating the work of a group rests with a state or Commonwealth training department.

55. Currently, the following action groups and taskforces are in operation:

   (a) Equity Advisory Taskforce;
   (b) Indigenous Advisory Taskforce;
   (c) Disability Advisory Taskforce; and
   (d) Advisory Alliance.¹

Industry Skills Councils (ISCs)

56. The 11 national Industry Skills Councils (ISCs) are independent, not for profit companies that represent the various sectors of Australian industry. The Commonwealth Government funds ISCs to:

   (a) Provide advice on workforce development and skills needs;
   (b) Develop high quality training and workforce development products and services including training packages;

¹ A proposal to establish a National VET Equity Advisory Council (NVEAC) has been endorsed by NSOC (October 2008) and will be considered for endorsement by MCVTE (November 2008), including funding of $1.5 million p.a. and establishment of NVEAC to commence in line with this Agreement.
(c) Provide independent skills and training advice to enterprises;

(d) Work with RTOs, enterprises and employment service providers to match training needs to appropriate training solutions; and

(e) Engage with State and Territory Governments, State and Territory industry advisory bodies and peak representative bodies in their areas of industry coverage.

National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER)

57. The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) is a not-for-profit company owned by the federal, state and territory ministers responsible for training. It is unique in Australia's education system. It is responsible for collecting, managing, analysing, evaluating and communicating research and statistics about vocational education and training (VET).

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Australia Ltd

58. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Australia Limited is a ministerial company owned by the Commonwealth, state and territory ministers responsible for training.

59. TVET Australia was established by the Ministerial Council for Vocational and Technical Education (MCVTE) on 18 November 2005 to provide responsive and high quality services to support the National Training System.

60. The National Audit and Registration Agency (NARA) is managed by Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Australia and offers national training providers, operating across state or territory borders the option of having their registration and audit arrangements managed nationally.

61. TVET Australia provides eligible training organisations with the option of national registration under delegation from the existing state and territory registering authorities.

Quality assurance and regulation

Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF)

62. The Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) comprises national standards for the registration and auditing of training providers and accreditation of courses, and national standards for state and territory registering authorities.

63. The AQTF was revised with effect from 1 July 2007 to improve the quality of training and assessment in the VET sector. The new arrangements encourage greater participation of licensing and industry regulatory bodies in ensuring the quality of training, and will also achieve greater national consistency through new standards for state and territory registering bodies. Outcomes-focussed audits will allow providers to focus more on the quality of the outcomes of their training and assessment, which in turn will give industry greater confidence in the outcomes of training.
National products

Australian Qualifications Framework

64. The Australian Qualifications Framework (commonly known as the AQF) is a unified system of national qualifications in schools, vocational education and training (TAFEs and private providers) and the higher education sector (mainly universities). The AQF was introduced Australia-wide on 1 January 1995 and was phased in over five years, with full implementation by the year 2000.

65. The qualifications within the AQF are: Senior Secondary Certificate of Education; Certificate I; Certificate II; Certificate III; Certificate IV; Diploma, Advanced Diploma; Associate Degree; Bachelor Degree; Vocational Graduate Certificate; Vocational Graduate Diploma; Graduate Certificate; Graduate Diploma; Masters Degree; and Doctoral Degree.

66. Guidelines for each qualification are provided in the AQF Implementation Handbook (2007).

67. The Framework links together all these qualifications and is a highly visible, quality-assured national system of educational recognition which promotes lifelong learning and a seamless and diverse education and training system.

AQF Council

68. The AQF was developed under instruction from State, Territory and Commonwealth Education and Training Ministers meeting as the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA). MCEETYA established an AQF Advisory Board to protect the AQF qualifications guidelines and to promote and monitor national implementation of the AQF.

69. In May 2008, MCEETYA replaced AQFAB with the AQF Council to provide Education and Training Ministers with strategic and authoritative advice on the AQF to ensure it is nationally and internationally robust and supports flexible cross-sectoral linkages and pathways.

70. The AQF Council is led by an independent Chair and Council members represent the three education sectors, governments and industry.

Training Packages

71. Training Packages specify the skills and knowledge required to perform effectively in the workplace. They do not prescribe how an individual should be trained. Trainers and supervisors develop learning strategies – the 'how' – to support an individual learners' needs, abilities and circumstances.

72. The development and endorsement process for Training Packages ensures the specifications are developed to an agreed quality standard and are highly responsive to industry’s existing and future demand for new skills.

73. The following key principles underpin the development and endorsement processes:

(a) Open and inclusive industry-driven maintenance, validation and endorsement of Training Packages;

(b) Strong and clear key stakeholder roles with critical points of intervention and consultation;

(c) Continuous improvement, with full Training Package reviews where required;
(d) Highly responsive process capable of meeting industry’s needs and priorities for new skills; and

(e) Industry Skills Councils’ responsibility and accountability for the quality and relevance of Training Packages.

74. Each Training Package:

(a) Provides a consistent and reliable set of endorsed components – endorsed by the National Quality Council which is representative of industry, unions, the Commonwealth and States/Territory State governments;

(b) Enables nationally recognised VET qualifications to be awarded through direct assessment of workplace competencies;

(c) Encourages the development and delivery of flexible training which suits individual and industry requirements; and

(d) Encourages learning and assessment in a work-related environment which leads to verifiable workplace outcomes.

75. Training Packages are made up of three nationally endorsed components.

(a) Units of competency: the specifications of knowledge and skill, and the application of that knowledge and skill to the standard of performance required in the workplace. Units of competency cover a range of functions, relevant to the workplace and appropriate to either an enterprise, industry or cross-industry application.

(b) Qualifications framework: created by packaging units of competency into meaningful groups defined in accordance with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

(c) Assessment guidelines: an industry framework for assessing competency in the specified industry, industry sector or enterprise. Assessments should be valid, reliable, flexible and fair and consistent with the Essential Standards for Registration under the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF 2007).

Funding to support the National Training System

76. All parties to the Agreement affirm that $47.4 million annually for management of the National Training System will be quarantined from the SPP.2

77. The allocation will be reviewed annually by the National Senior Officials Committee, and the Ministerial Council has the authority to alter the allocation of these funds throughout the life of the Agreement.

2 Funding for indexation of this amount will not be taken from the Funding Agreement.
OUTPUTS BY STATE AND TERRITORY

A1 States and Territories will deliver the outputs detailed below.

The baseline outputs are the average of 2004 to 2006 for qualifications awarded, and the average of 2005 to 2007 for all other measures. The baseline includes Agreement-funded activity only (National funding source code: ‘01’; ‘11’ (for 2007)). Since there is no funding source information for qualifications awarded, the baseline includes all qualifications awarded. Module/unit completions are based on a student’s highest funding source, rather than the funding source for the module/unit since this is the counting methodology used in the ANR.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Australian Capital Territory</th>
<th>Output</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Enrolments in vocational education and training.</td>
<td>25,503</td>
<td></td>
<td>25,503</td>
<td></td>
<td>25,503</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Course completions in vocational education and training.</td>
<td>6,826</td>
<td>6,826</td>
<td>6,826</td>
<td>6,826</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Unit/module completions in vocational education and training.</td>
<td>123,811</td>
<td>123,811</td>
<td>123,811</td>
<td>123,811</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Course completions by Indigenous Australians in vocational education and training.</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>161</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Enrolments by Indigenous Australians in higher level vocational education and training qualifications.</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>217</td>
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### New South Wales

<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>1. Enrolments in vocational education and training.</td>
<td>458,728</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Course completions in vocational education and training.</td>
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<td>3. Unit/module completions in vocational education and training.</td>
<td>2,626,015</td>
<td>2,626,015</td>
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<td>5. Enrolments by Indigenous Australians in higher level vocational education and training qualifications.</td>
<td>6,268</td>
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### Northern Territory

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<tr>
<td>1. Enrolments in vocational education and training.</td>
<td>23,268</td>
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<td>2. Course completions in vocational education and training.</td>
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<td>3. Unit/module completions in vocational education and training.</td>
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<td>4. Course completions by Indigenous Australians in vocational education and training.</td>
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<td>5. Enrolments by Indigenous Australians in higher level vocational education and training qualifications.</td>
<td>2,558</td>
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## National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development

### Queensland

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<td>2. Course completions in vocational education and training.</td>
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<td>4. Course completions by Indigenous Australians in vocational education and training.</td>
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<td>5. Enrolments by Indigenous Australians in higher level vocational education and training qualifications.</td>
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<td>4. Course completions by Indigenous Australians in vocational education and training.</td>
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<td>5. Enrolments by Indigenous Australians in higher level vocational education and training qualifications.</td>
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### Output 2009 2010 2011 2012

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<tr>
<td>3. Unit/module completions in vocational education and training.</td>
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<td>4. Course completions by Indigenous Australians in vocational education and training.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Enrolments by Indigenous Australians in higher level vocational education and training qualifications.</td>
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<td>Output</td>
<td>Victoria</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Enrolments in vocational education and training.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Course completions in vocational education and training.</td>
<td>81,259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Unit/module completions in vocational education and training.</td>
<td>1,692,975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Course completions by Indigenous Australians in vocational education and training.</td>
<td>527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Enrolments by Indigenous Australians in higher level vocational education and training qualifications.</td>
<td>1,930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Enrolments in vocational education and training.</td>
<td>125,691</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Course completions in vocational education and training.</td>
<td>29,704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Unit/module completions in vocational education and training.</td>
<td>658,140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Course completions by Indigenous Australians in vocational education and training.</td>
<td>1,198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Enrolments by Indigenous Australians in higher level qualifications vocational education and training.</td>
<td>2,952</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>