



CLUBS AUSTRALIA SUBMISSION SUPPORTING WOMEN TO ACHIEVE VET-BASED CAREERS

Clubs Australia welcomes the opportunity to comment on the 'Supporting Women to Achieve VET-based Careers' discussion paper.

Clubs Australia represents 6,000 licensed clubs that employ more than 140,000 people. Clubs are not-for-profit, member-owned organisations that provide sporting and recreation infrastructure to their members and the wider community.

VET-based courses, particularly apprenticeships, are critical for the clubs industry to build skilled workforce and lift productivity. The predominant VET-based courses for clubs are:

- Certificate III in Commercial Cookery,
- Certificate IV in Commercial Cookery,
- Certificate III in Patisserie,
- Certificate III in Sports Turf Management,
- Certificate III in Hospitality.

There is an acute need for more skilled workers in the clubs sector, particularly chefs and cooks. Women are significantly under-represented in these positions. This can be partially attributed to unattractive work hours, inflexibility in course delivery and concerns about job stability. Additionally, fewer women participate in apprenticeship and trainee courses than men, and these pathways lead to increased employment opportunities.

Australia's evolving economic landscape requires an adaptable, resilient, and highly trained workforce. Improving women's contribution in the clubs sector is crucial, as they offer diverse perspectives that cultivate a more inclusive and dynamic workplace environment.

Clubs Australia supports the Federal Government's commitment to assist women in successfully undertaking a VET-based career and believes there are important opportunities to enhance skills development and training.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- Promote vocational education and training as a viable career pathway to success and actively challenge stereotypes and bias.
- Offer comprehensive career counselling to women, showcasing the diverse opportunities available in the hospitality sector.
- Introduce flexible learning options to support women, particularly those employed or with carer responsibilities.
- Consider providing additional support to alleviate barriers that deter women from pursuing VET courses.
- Facilitate networking and mentoring opportunities to support women students in establishing connections with industry professionals and their peers.
- Expand fee-free TAFE courses to support women in training or upskilling.



PROMOTE VET AS A VIABLE CAREER PATHWAY TO SUCCESS AND ACTIVELY CHALLENGE STEREOTYPES AND BIAS

Women's workforce participation choices are often affected by traditional gender stereotypes and industry and occupational segregation as outlined in the discussion paper. Roles in clubs, including greenskeepers, chefs and cooks, are often perceived as 'male-dominant'. This perception could discourage women from considering a VET-based career in the clubs sector.

Clubs offer a safe and inclusive environment for women to gain work experience and explore VET-based careers. There are opportunities for women to advance in critical roles, such as Head Chef, Golf Course Superintendent, Chief Operations Officer, Chief Financial Officer, and Chief Executive Officer. Many venues encourage and financially support women to pursue additional VET-related study, enabling them to upskill in specific areas.

Clubs, such as Club Central, part of the ICC Group, believe the club industry may not appear appealing to women because of the stigma associated with the perceived career prospects and security. The COVID-19 pandemic and associated closures of hospitality venues has led to a perception of clubs as an insecure place of employment. However, the average tenure of employees in the many clubs is over 6 years.¹

Clubs Australia believes the Australian Government should work with the club industry to promote opportunities for women in clubs through awareness campaigns and education initiatives.

Clubs Australia recommends that the Federal Government places a greater emphasis on promoting VET as a viable pathway to a successful career.

PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE CAREER COUNSELLING TO WOMEN, SHOWCASING THE DIVERSE OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE IN THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR

Higher education is often framed as the preferred avenue of study following secondary school by parents and teachers, compared to VET courses. This impacts VET-based careers across all industries.

Career counselling may assist with challenging women's stereotypical ideologies about pursuing a VET-related course, especially an apprenticeship or training course, including in the club industry.

Clubs Australia believes career counselling in senior schools should emphasise the value of VET courses, especially in areas with prevalent skill shortages, such as food trade apprenticeships in the clubs sector.

Clubs Australia recommends that career counselling places a stronger emphasis on the value of VET courses, especially in areas with skill shortages.

¹ Results obtained from a survey ClubsNSW conducted with regional and metropolitan clubs in NSW.



INTRODUCE FLEXIBLE LEARNING OPTIONS TO SUPPORT WOMEN, PARTICULARLY THOSE EMPLOYED OR WITH FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

Women students often seek flexible study arrangements, such as part-time, online modules, and intensive courses.

The absence of flexibility has proven to be a significant deterrent for women seeking a VET qualification, particularly those who are reskilling or changing careers.

Trainees and apprentices, particularly in regional locations, experience difficulties completing the regular off-the-job training component due to financial and social constraints. While there are 136 TAFE campuses in NSW, there are only 68 delivery options for a Commercial Cookery Certificate III, predominately in metropolitan areas. Additionally, the Certificate III in Hospitality is only offered at 28 delivery locations. Some students may need to travel 750km to complete the 'off-the-job' training component of their course without receiving any supplementary financial assistance.

We believe flexible study options and additional course locations should be made available to women undertaking a VET-focused program.

Further, Clubs Australia believes teaching methods and materials which resonate with women should be implemented. This will ensure a supportive and inclusive learning environment.

Clubs Australia recommends considering flexible study arrangements and expanding course locations, resulting in greater course uptake and higher completion rates for women.

CONSIDER PROVIDING ADDITIONAL SUPPORT TO ALLEVIATE BARRIERS THAT DETER WOMEN FROM PURSUING VET COURSES

Clubs have articulated that the cost of study and associated expenses may be a barrier for women aspiring to pursue a career in the hospitality sector. Upfront course costs and lost income during study deters women from commencing a VET-related course.

Clubs Australia believes the Australian Government should consider providing financial scholarships, yearly incentives or other assistance to support women in pursuing a VET-based career. Such support should be extended to women trainees and apprentices, along with their respective employers.

This would result in a more skilled Australian workforce, leading to an increase of qualified domestic workers and a reduction in unemployment.

Furthermore, post-completion outcomes for women do not align with the national standards.² Women exhibit some of the highest rates of employment change after completing hospitality-related VET courses.³

² Jobs and Skills Australia. 2023. 'VET Student Outcomes – Top 100 courses'.

³ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. 2023. 'Higher education, vocational educational and training'.



Clubs Australia suggests women trainees or apprentices should be provided access to a mentoring program during and after the completion of their course, especially in the initial stages of post qualification.

Clubs Australia recommends providing additional support to women students.

FACILITATE NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT WOMEN STUDENTS IN ESTABLISHING CONNECTIONS WITH INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS AND THEIR PEERS

Clubs have outlined that additional networking and social opportunities would support women completing a VET-based career or completing their course.

Women seeking to pursue a VET-based career need a network of industry contacts or fellow students for advice. On the other hand, those considering unenrolling from their program lack accessible guidance from professionals and peers.

The Australian Government should consider facilitating networking events where aspiring and current women students can connect with industry professionals and their peers. This will offer women a supportive network they can seek advice from.

Clubs Australia notes that many clubs, such as Bankstown Sports in Western Sydney, have allocated resources to mentoring and supporting trainees.

Clubs Australia recommends expanding networking opportunities to aspiring and current women students in establishing meaningful connections.

EXPAND FEE-FREE TAFE COURSES TO SUPPORT WOMEN IN TRAINING OR UPSKILLING

The fee-free TAFE courses initiative has provided individuals with a valuable opportunity to undergo training and enhance their skills in priority areas.

In NSW, the only food and hospitality related course offered for Semester 1 in 2024 is a Certificate III in Patisserie, despite the significant shortage of chefs and cooks.

Clubs Australia believes there should be an increase in the variety of food and hospitality related courses. This would encourage women in pursuing a career in the club sector and assist businesses in training aspiring women.

Clubs Australia recommends providing additional fee-free TAFE food and hospitality related courses.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Clubs Australia appreciates the opportunity to provide a submission. For further information, please contact Olivia Simpson, Manager of Policy and Government, on 0400 400 043 or osimpson@clubsaustralia.com.au.