



CLUBS AUSTRALIA SUBMISSION NATIONAL SKILLS PASSPORT

INTRODUCTION

Clubs Australia welcomes the opportunity to comment on the National Skills Passport Consultation 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 club industry to build a skilled workforce and lift productivity. The predominant VET-based courses for club employees 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.

Clubs Australia supports the Australian Government's vision for a dynamic and inclusive labour market that works for businesses and their staff.

Clubs offer a safe and inclusive environment for employment, work experience, apprenticeships, and traineeships. The average tenure of employees in the many clubs exceeds 6 years.¹

There is an acute need for more skilled workers in the club sector, particularly chefs and cooks. Clubs struggle to fill job vacancies due to the scarcity of local skilled workers. Where clubs successfully recruit these workers, retaining them is often challenging due to unappealing work hours and challenges accessing off-the-job training. This issue is most acute in regional areas.

Clubs Australia supports the introduction of the National Skills Passport, which would assist businesses to identify and connect with prospective employees. Enhancing the alignment of skilled workers with employers who need their expertise, qualifications, and experience, will streamline recruitment processes and improve employment outcomes nationwide.

Clubs Australia recommends a number of changes to ensure the proposed National Skills Passport serves as an effective platform for employers and employees.

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



SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Clubs Australia recommends:

- Giving employers some access to the National Skills Passport of prospective employees with relevant skills in their industry.
- Enabling working visa holders to opt to use the National Skills Passport (in addition to permanent residents and Australian citizens).
- Enabling secondary school students and younger apprentices and trainees to opt to use the National Skills Passport.
- Creating a suitable process for uploading evidence of overseas qualifications recognised in Australia.
- Using MyGov's existing infrastructure to administer the National Skills Passport, acknowledging the possibility of additional privacy considerations that may need to be taken into account.

EMPLOYERS ACCESS TO THE NATIONAL SKILLS PASSPORT

The National Skills Passport should support employers to connect with skilled workers.

Clubs Australia proposes an 'online hub' where businesses request access to some details of the National Skills Passport of prospective employees who have skills relevant to job vacancies in their industry.

This online hub will enable prospective employees to specify their employment status on the National Skills Passport, indicating whether they are unemployed, employed, or actively seeking work.

This would support businesses to connect with prospective employees who are seeking work and are well-positioned to fill existing job vacancies. Both businesses and prospective employees would benefit from a reduced recruitment timeline under this model.

To facilitate this arrangement, holders of a National Skills Passport should have the choice to grant consent to a specific employer or extend consent to all potential employees.

Clubs Australia recommends that employers should be provided some access to the National Skills Passport of prospective employees with relevant skills in their industry.

WORKING VISA HOLDERS CAN OPT TO USE THE NATIONAL SKILLS PASSPORT

Skilled visa holders play a crucial role across the hospitality sector, including in clubs, filling various roles across all operations.

Clubs often struggle to fill job vacancies due to the shortage of domestic skilled workers, particularly for culinary roles. These shortages have a significant impact on clubs' ability to operate restaurants and food outlets and has led to many clubs reducing their operating hours. Consequently, many clubs employ and sponsor migrant workers. Clubs often use professional support to identify migrant workers who are qualified for vacant positions.



Clubs Australia believes some visa holders entitled to work in Australia should be able to use the National Skills Passport to demonstrate their qualifications. This includes some skilled visa holders and student visa holders.

The arrangement would assist businesses, especially those in regional locations, to identify a broader group of suitably qualified workers while also supporting visa holders to connect with verified Australian businesses.

Clubs Australia recommends visa holders (in addition to permanent residents and Australian citizens) can opt to use the National Skills Passport.

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS CAN ACQUIRE THE NATIONAL SKILLS PASSPORT

Providing secondary school students, aged 14 and above, with an opportunity to access the National Skills Passport would assist them to establish connections with potential employers, and explore further career interests. This would also support students in gaining insights into industries facing skill shortages, empowering them to make more informed career decisions.

Access to this platform is crucial for students who undertake VET-based courses during secondary school and those who finish their education before Year 12 to pursue a trade.

The hospitality industry offers many underutilised career avenues, such as apprenticeships. The National Skills Passport could play a crucial role in promoting these opportunities to secondary students.

Clubs Australia considers there should be appropriate mechanisms to enable parents and guardians to provide consent on behalf of those under the age of 18.

Clubs Australia recommends secondary students and younger apprentices and trainees can opt to use the National Skills Passport.

UPLOADING EVIDENCE OF OVERSEAS QUALIFICATIONS

Many prospective employees, trainees and apprentices hold international qualifications which are recognised in Australia. This is particularly significant for skilled employees, such as chefs and cooks, in the club sector.

In addition to domestically obtained qualifications, Clubs Australia supports implementing suitable procedures to authenticate international qualifications for inclusion on the National Skills Passport. This may include uploading certified documentation on the platform.

This arrangement would simplify the recruitment process, eliminating the need for employers to request additional documentation to verify an individual's qualifications through the National Skills Passport.



Clubs Australia believes prospective employees with an internationally recognised qualification in Australia should not be disadvantaged in obtaining suitable work.

Clubs Australia recommends creating a suitable process for uploading evidence of overseas qualifications recognised in Australia.

UTILISE MYGOV TO ADMINISTER THE NATIONAL SKILLS PASSPORT

MyGov is an accessible and user-friendly platform for Australians to access online government services.

Clubs Australia supports connecting the National Skills Passport to MyGov, recognising many visa holders, Australian permanent residents, and citizens are already familiar with the site.

Individuals with a MyGov account have already submitted documentation, such as a birth certificate, through this platform for identification purposes. Therefore, opting for the National Skills Passport through this service would accelerate the verification process.

We acknowledge there may be additional privacy considerations that may need to be taken into account, especially since businesses may have access to personal and sensitive information.

Clubs Australia believes that affected parties should be further consulted in the design phase to ensure the MyGov system is suitable for various stakeholders.

Clubs Australia recommends the Federal Government administers the National Skills Passport through MyGov, acknowledging the possibility of additional privacy considerations that may need to be taken into account.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Clubs Australia appreciates the opportunity to provide a submission. For further information, please contact Simon Sawday, Executive Manager of Policy and Government, on 0451661475 or ssawday@clubsaustralia.com.au.