

17 January 2025

Committee Secretary  
Senate Education and Employees Committees  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Via submission portal

To whom it may concern,

**Re: Free TAFE Bill 2024 [Provisions]**

Clubs Australia appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Free TAFE Bill 2024 [Provisions].

Clubs Australia represents over 5,000 clubs across Australia that employ more than 140,000 people. Clubs are not-for-profit, member-owned organisations whose central activity is to provide sporting and recreation infrastructure to their members and the wider community.

Clubs are significant contributors to training and workforce development, offering safe, inclusive, and stable employment opportunities, as well as work experience, apprenticeships, and traineeships. The average tenure of employees in the many clubs exceeds 6 years.<sup>1</sup>

Apprentices are critical to the hospitality industry and are essential for building the skilled workforce upon which clubs rely. The predominant trade courses in the club sector are:

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

However, the sector faces ongoing skill shortages, particularly for chefs and cooks. These shortages are exacerbated by low apprenticeship completion rates and declining interest in food trade careers. In 2017, the completion rate for food trade apprentices was 12% below the national average.

Analysis by Jobs and Skills Australia shows that recruitment challenges are more pronounced in regional and remote areas. These areas face acute skill pressures, particularly in higher-skilled roles.<sup>2</sup> Feedback provided to Clubs Australia from regional and

---

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

<sup>2</sup> Jobs and Skills Australia Regional Labour Market Indicator, March 2024.



remote clubs reflects this as regional clubs continue to struggle to fill the skilled positions of chefs and cooks.

Clubs Australia supports the Free TAFE Bill as a meaningful step towards strengthening the VET system and support states and territories to deliver free TAFE places, particularly for the hospitality and tourism industry.

As a key issue for clubs, Clubs Australia would appreciate the opportunity to engage with the Government on this matter.

If you have any questions about our submission, please contact us at

[REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Alison Tehan  
Deputy Executive Director  
Clubs Australia