

Project Overview

The Workforce Challenge

Skilled migrant plumbers seeking an occupational licence in Australia are currently required to meet different jurisdictional requirements to demonstrate their skills and experience relevant to the current Australian benchmark of *CPC32420 Certificate III in Plumbing*. Other trades have a single nationally accepted Minimum Australian Context Gap course to address gaps in overseas knowledge of Australian-specific legislative and operational requirements, such as refrigeration and air conditioning mechanics (10878NAT), and electricians (10809NAT). However, due to the complexity of the plumbing definition and strong quality standards within the country, there is no single nationally accepted course for migrant plumbers. The absence of a nationally recognised approach creates a disparity in the licensing pathway for migrant plumbers.

The diversity in requirements and lack of a formal process pose a significant risk of discouraging potential migrant plumbers from choosing Australia as a migration destination.

BuildSkills Australia proposes to revisit the conversation and investigate the areas of concern to support the development of a nationally consistent approach to address these issues and ensure there is an effective skills recognition process and progression to licensing for migrant plumbers.

Deliverables

The project will:

1. Explore the role and relevance of a Certificate III in Plumbing (CPC32420) program that is specifically tailored for Offshore Technical Skills Record holders,
 - Facilitate agreement on the specific learning requirements for migrant plumbers to be eligible to apply for a full licence across jurisdictions,
 - If required, BuildSkills will develop a Minimum Australian Context Gap course for migrant plumbers, and this will be subject to the requirements set out in the Training Package Development and Endorsement Process Policy (TPDEPP). The development of this course will ensure a nationally consistent process, as it already exists for air conditioning, refrigeration mechanics and electricians,

Timeframes

- Alleviate concerns from various parties by considering conducting a Pilot Program once the training product development phase is complete.

Project commencement date: 24th June 2024

Project end date: 23 February 2026

Training Product Priority: Complex

Consultation Strategy

Based on the scope and complexity of the project, BuildSkills has developed the following consultation strategy:

Step 1 – Initial development

A notice on our website to alert stakeholders that training product development work is commencing.

Stakeholder consultation commences, BuildSkills will conduct consultations which are:

- Purposeful: Set a clear understanding of what is to be achieved
- Inclusive: Identify relevant stakeholders and make it easy for them to engage
- Timely: Involve stakeholders early in the process and agree on when and how to engage
- Transparent: Be open, honest and set clear expectations
- Respectful: Acknowledge the expertise, perspectives and needs of stakeholders.

BuildSkills has notified the relevant stakeholders of the start of training product development work: Commonwealth and state and territory senior responsible officers, the Assurance Body; and other JSCs.

Technical Committee meetings

A Technical Committee will be established. The Technical Committee (TC) will draw on their expertise to provide technical advice to the project team. They will also support us in identifying additional stakeholders to include in the consultation strategy.

The Technical Committee will meet at commencement of the project, and additional meetings will occur throughout the project. The first meeting will occur on 19 September 2024.

Additional meetings will be held in October 2024, November 2024 and December 2024.

If it is determined that development of training products is an appropriate solution, a final meeting for Stage 1 will be held in February 2025 to sign off on any draft training products prepared.

Any further consultation identified throughout the project will be discussed and coordinated with the technical committee.

Meetings will be held virtually via Microsoft Teams or face to face.

Step 2 – Public and government consultation

Targeted consultation

The following stakeholders will be engaged throughout the project.

Engagement through email feedback and/or online or face to face interview:

Regulators

- Trades Recognition Australia
- Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)
- Training Accreditation Council
- Victorian registration and Qualification Authority

Licensing bodies

- Access Canberra
- New South Wales Fair Trading
- The Northern Territory Plumbers and Drainers Licensing Board
- Queensland Building and Construction Commission (QBCC)
- The Consumer and Business Services SA
- The Tasmanian Government Department of Justice
- Victorian Building Authority
- The Department of Mines,
- Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS)

Consultation with additional Government stakeholders such as State Training Authorities will be undertaken as determined throughout the project.

Engagement through industry workshops, email feedback and/or online or face-to-face interviews:

- Master Plumbers Association
- The Plumbing and Pipe Trades Employees Union

Engagement with these stakeholders will be primarily via the nominated stakeholder contact advised by the stakeholder's Technical Committee representative

Engagement through focus groups, national online survey, email feedback and/or online or face-to-face interviews:

- Australian Trade Training College
- VETASSESS
- TAFE NSW
- Charles Darwin University
- Avante Education Pty Ltd
- TasTAFE
- PICAC
- Skilled migrant plumbers (impacted cohort)
- Other RTOs across jurisdictions as identified throughout the project
- Learners and other interested stakeholders across the plumbing sector
- Other Jobs and Skills Councils as appropriate

Public consultation

If training products are developed, the draft training products will be uploaded to the website for stakeholders to access and provide feedback. At a minimum, BuildSkills will make the following information publicly available for consultation:

- a detailed summary of the changes made and why,
- the draft product for review, including mapping information (limitations may apply for products that are not for public access), and
- draft Companion Volume Implementation Guide (CVIG).

BuildSkills will allow a minimum of four weeks to undertake consultations and this is planned to occur in March and April 2025 and will include 2 public webinars. These dates are subject to change should delays occur during Stage 1 of the project.

Feedback will be captured through a website form located on the project website and will be maintained in a consultation log throughout the training product development process and publicly available on our website. The consultation log will include:

- generic stakeholder information (stakeholder type and location).
- feedback method and feedback received
- consideration and response, including justification if feedback has not been incorporated
- general summary of all feedback and its incorporation into the draft training products

Additional feedback can be provided directly to the Project Manager:

Karen Noble

Phone – 07 3073 6166

Email – karen@buildskills.com.au

Technical Committee

The Technical Committee will meet in May 2025 to review the outcomes of the feedback received and make any further recommendations. Should additional amendments be made at this stage, additional Technical Committee meetings will be held between June and August 2025 to review the final training products prior to submission to the Assurance Body.

Step 3 – Incorporating feedback

After consultations have ended, feedback will be collated, analysed and incorporated (as required) into any proposed solutions, such as draft training products. After this, it will be determined if further modifications/consultations are required based on the feedback received. This process is planned to occur during September 2025.

Once changes have been made, it is up to the project team and the Technical Committee to determine if further consultation is required.

If significant modifications have been made to the proposed solution because of the public and government consultations, BuildSkills may decide to undertake further consultation with relevant stakeholders to address this and ensure the final outcome reflects broad stakeholder consensus. The outcomes of these additional consultations, including a justification for changes, will be captured in the consultation log. Further, the consultation log will also include justification on why the feedback has not been considered, the reasons why issues cannot be resolved, any steps taken, and the potential impact on learners and employers.

If one or more stakeholders disagree about the proposed solution including the structure and/or content of any proposed training products, BuildSkills will work to resolve these disputes before submission to the Assurance Body. Please refer to the Dispute Resolution Policy on our website.

Step 4 – Senior Officials' Check

Should training products be developed, Government feedback on the content of relevant training products will be delivered to BuildSkills through consultations with Commonwealth and state/territory Senior Responsible Officers. This consultation will be conducted by email feedback and is planned to occur in October 2025.

Step 5 – Finalisation and Submission to Assurance Body

If training products are developed, after the training product development has occurred, and consultations and feedback have been implemented and incorporated into the training product(s), BuildSkills will submit a pack to the Assurance Body and publish the submission on its website. This process is planned to occur during November 2025.

Step 6 - Assurance Body consideration & Step 7 - Skills Ministers' Endorsement

If training products are developed, after submission, the Assurance body will evaluate the submission based on compliance with the TPOF and ensure that BuildSkills has provided all necessary evidence to support the submission. After the Assurance Body reviews the training product(s), the products are supplied to the Skills Ministers' members for endorsement.

After training product(s) are endorsed by the Skills Minister, BuildSkills will upload the training products and the Companion Volume Implementation Guides (CVIG) on the National Register of VET within 10 business days of endorsement.

BuildSkills will also

- consult with the Technical Committee to notify them of the outcome,
- contact the stakeholders that engaged in the training product development process to notify them of the outcome,
- send an update on the training product(s) changes to subscribers who have indicated their interest in the subject matter, and
- post a notification of changes and updates to the relevant training product(s) on the BuildSkills website and social platforms.

This process is planned for January 2026.

The Skilled Migrant Plumber Project Technical Committee reviewed and contributed to this Consultation Strategy and gave their support on 3 October 2024