

# Annual Report

2020/21



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## OUR VISION

To create life-changing opportunities for people and communities in regional NSW.

## OUR PURPOSE

Creating and sustaining innovative and effective partnerships to generate employment opportunities through education and skills development for people across regional NSW.

## OUR VALUES



Respect



Collaboration



Professionalism



Integrity



Helping Others



Community

## Acknowledgement of Country

Skillset would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional custodians of the lands on which we work and live. We pay respect to the Elders, past, present and to the younger generation of the community who will be the future leaders in years to come.

## Professional Associations

- Apprentice Employment Network NSW & ACT
- The Association of Independent Schools
- Australian Industry Group
- Australian Institute of Company Directors
- Business NSW
- Career Development Association of Australia
- Central West Careers Advisers Association
- Institute of Managers and Leaders
- National Apprentice Employment Network
- NSW Council of Social Service
- Recruitment, Consulting and Staffing Association of Australia & New Zealand
- Youth Action

## Funding Acknowledgments



Australian Government  
Department of Education,  
Skills and Employment



empowering  
independent  
education







BOOSTING  
SKILLS & EDUCATION

I'M  
BOOSTING  
MY SKILLS  
AND EDUCATION!

I'M  
BOOSTING  
MY CAREER!

Kiss J & EM General & Precision Engineering, Condobolin  
Left to right: Mick Colley, Joe Kiss, Luke Marsh and Clayton Laneyrie



Board of Directors



David Cooke



Cr Graeme Hanger



Craig Hort



Cr Reg Kidd



Cr Maree Statham



Ian Tooke



Simone Townsend



Cr Alan Ward



Jacqueline Woods



“

**Meet Burra McHughes. Burra was a retail School-Based Trainee with Skillset back in 2014 while completing his HSC. He has since become Crew Leader for the All-Indigenous Mitigation Squad in regional NSW while working towards his dream of becoming a paramedic.**

”

“My experience as a school-based trainee back in 2014 was really positive. My consultant, Kerry, supported me every step of the way. I learnt so much during my traineeship and took away key skills that I’ve used throughout my adult life, especially in the Mitigation Squad when communicating to different people.”

**Burra McHughes, Former Skillset Trainee**

“Burra is such an amazing young man and has achieved so much, taking every opportunity that has been presented to him so that he can reach his goals and in return, help his community. I tell him how proud I am of him every chance I get and I often use Burra’s story to lift and motivate the next generation of young people that I work with. If Burra from Brewarrina can do great things, then so can they!”

**Kerry Moore, Youth Connect Consultant**





# Our Services

Supporting the career lifecycle through life, learning and work.

## skillset TRADEUP

This program works with local high schools to increase the exposure of Year 7-12 students to trade careers and helps prepare them for job seeking and the world of work.

## skillset youth connect

Youth Connect helps young people aged 15-19 years who are not in school, training or work to re-engage with education, training and pathways to employment.

## skillset senior college

Skillset Senior College is an accredited secondary school offering Years 10, 11 and 12, and has a mission to partner with young people that may be experiencing barriers to their education. Promoting 'engagement through relationships' in a small school environment, the College operates campuses in Bathurst and Dubbo.

## skillset SCHOOL2TRADE

School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships

School2Trade is Skillset's School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBAT) program which is offered to high school students in Years 10, 11 and 12. An SBAT combines paid work, training and school, and allows participants to gain an industry-recognised national qualification that can be used towards the HSC.



Skills4Trade is a pre-apprenticeship program offering participants the opportunity to complete training to build skills, experience a variety of industries and gain the necessary tools to support work-readiness.

## skillset LAND WORKS

Land Works delivers revegetation and planting, environmental restoration and landscape maintenance services across regional NSW, whilst giving young people the opportunity to gain valuable skills and experience for their future career.

## skillset RECRUITMENT

Clients who experience seasonal demand or temporary skills gaps in their workforce can take advantage of Skillset's extensive experience in labour hire services. Organisations looking for permanent candidates or apprentices and trainees can benefit from Skillset's six-step process which aims to save businesses time and money when outsourcing their hiring needs.

## skillset CAREERLINK CENTRAL WEST

CareerLink Central West is a free career development service available to all residents of the Central West which is aimed at providing quality, accessible and relevant career information so that people can make informed career decisions. As part of this program, eligible candidates can book a career planning session with one of Skillset's Career Consultants.



# Where You Can Find Us



2

Skillset Senior College Campuses



4

Skillset Offices



Home to over

275,531

people



Covering an area of over

101,904

square kilometres







## Meet Lars and John Baxter



**Meet Lars and John Baxter. Thirty years ago, John was the Apprentice Master at the Wallerawang Power Station, and with other businesses in Lithgow, consolidated their resources to create the Skills Centre at Lithgow TAFE, with the aim of assisting local apprentices with their training.**

The concept of a 'Skills Centre' came after John identified a need for multi-skills training. John realised that many exercises apprentices were given through standard training were often meaningless tasks and never utilised after completion.

John says: "Society has downplayed the importance of tradespeople. We must recognise that university is not for everyone and a trade gives a young person the opportunity from Year 10 at school! Trades give kids confidence in themselves, a positive self-image and pride in what they do, whilst making them employable!"

This year, excitingly, John watched his grandson, Lars graduate from the Skills Centre Program after six months of study, which he completed in the first year of his Engineering Apprenticeship through Skillset with Thales Australia Lithgow Arms.

Lars says: "The Skills Centre has given me a basic understanding of the various trades and helped me in my day to day duties. It has also given me confidence and an urge to do better with each task I commence, and pride in my work. It has opened my eyes to the diversity of each trade and I am hungry to learn more and become a better tradesman." Most of all, Lars says "I am proud to be a part of something my Grandfather pioneered, and is so passionate about"

John is very proud of Lars' achievements and he is also proud to have left a lasting legacy for the kids of the Lithgow area to realise their dreams.





## Chairman's Report

David Cooke

### “The common characteristic in success is resilience.”

It is a privilege to serve on the Skillset Board, and I would like to thank my fellow directors for their contribution. We are extremely fortunate to have Craig Randazzo as our amazing CEO. Craig, together with his highly effective management team, have worked incredibly hard over the past 12 months through a time of unprecedented uncertainty. I thank Craig, Jane, Emma and Abbey for their determination and leadership during these challenging times.

The following words from John McFarlane, Chairman, Westpac Group strike a chord as I reflect on Skillset's 39th year in business and its approach to the challenges of covid-19:

*“There are few times in history where we have needed to move so rapidly. Circumstances are different now, and our approach must change.”*

Our team has remained 100% committed to our Vision and Purpose, which has never been more relevant. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we've reached out to employers, apprentices and trainees to make an enthusiastic and positive impact at a time when our communities have needed it the most. Our team has been agile and adaptable in response to unforeseen changes that have arisen.

Being resilient means having the courage to bounce back and take risks despite adversity and setbacks. Whilst we cannot fully anticipate what 2022 has in store, I have great confidence that Skillset will continue its critically important role in creating life-changing opportunities in our region. And we will do it with the same resolve, energy and enthusiasm that we have brought to the past year.



## Chief Executive Officer's Report

Craig Randazzo

### “In a year of unrelenting disruptions, Skillset remained a stable and dependable business partner and service provider to thousands of regional Australians as we celebrated our 39th continuous year in business.”

This year, Skillset celebrates its 39th year of changing lives in regional NSW.

At Skillset we are passionate about working and living in country NSW. Our strong connections to local communities and the quality, value and impact of our programs and services continue to earn the trust of individuals and businesses. The Local Government sector has been a highlight this year and it has been immensely encouraging to see Skillset engaged by the 15 councils across our extensive regional footprint.

In 2020/21 we broadened our service scope and reach to cater for the entire career lifecycle. From our Trade-Up program starting in Year 7 that informs high-school students about the benefits of trade careers, to our Youth Connect program for at-risk 15 to 19 year olds, right through to our GTO-managed apprenticeship service and

CareerLink Central West programs, Skillset is helping navigate every stage of the career journey.

In another year of disruption and uncertainty, Skillset remained a stable business partner and was one of only 13 organisations to be awarded a National Careers Institute Partnership Grant. We added Skillset's strength to the Federal Government's 50% apprentice wage subsidy stimulus through our Boost Campaign resulting in a 20% increase in apprentice commencements. Offering Year 12 at our new Dubbo campus at Skillset Senior College, and a generational IT infrastructure upgrade, were also highlights from the year.

I thank the Skillset Chair, David Cooke and the entire Board for their sound governance, and congratulate our amazing team of professional staff and managers for another successful year.





Denison College, Bathurst High Campus  
Left to right: Natalie Saini (Deputy Principal, Bathurst High School), Alex Cuttiford (Youth Connect Contract Lead, Skillset) and Nicholas Williams (Deputy Principal, Bathurst High School)

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**Nicholas Williams,  
Deputy Principal,  
Bathurst High School**

“Denison College Bathurst High Campus has a very strong relationship with Skillset and in particular, the Youth Connect Program. This relationship is built upon a shared focus on individualised pathways for students; whether that be for furthering their secondary education, transitioning to further study at TAFE, or engagement in employment, traineeships or apprenticeships. Many students in the Youth Connect program highlight the importance of mentoring and support they receive to connect to study, training or employment not only upon commencement but throughout their transition period.”





**Chief Financial  
Officer's Report**  
Emma Thomas

**“Being responsive in the face of change has been one of the cornerstones of Skillset’s success in 2020/21.”**

Skillset has achieved another positive financial result this year with an annual operating surplus and positive cash flows from our operating activities. This is particularly encouraging given the many covid-19 related challenges of the past 12 months. Skillset continues to operate debt-free with exceptional financial indicators and growth in key areas of the business.

Skillset increased its staff by 13% during the year in response to its growing business, a changing market and to coincide with changes in career development programs.

Throughout 2020/21 Skillset administered a number of government stimulus opportunities to assist host businesses navigate the pandemic:

**JobKeeper**

The JobKeeper Scheme was a major initiative of the Australian Government designed to keep staff connected to their workplaces by helping affected businesses cover the costs of their employees' wages

during the coronavirus pandemic. JobKeeper finished in March 2021. This program enabled Skillset to assist 103 businesses hosting 224 apprentices and trainees, passing on \$6,554,583 to businesses needing support.

**Boosting Apprentice and Trainee commencement incentive**

In October 2020 the Australian Government introduced this program to assist businesses with their recovery from the impact of covid-19 and to promote the employment of young people by engaging them in apprenticeships or traineeships. With this incentive, Skillset employed 141 apprentices and trainees, hosted at 73 organisations between 5 October 2020 and 30 June 2021. Support totalling \$793,338 was passed onto businesses in 2020/21.

During the coming year, Skillset will continue to adapt to the changing economy and diversify its revenue streams to ensure the sustainability of the business.



**General  
Manager's Report**  
Jane McWilliam

**“Supporting people on their career journey has never been more important.”**

2020/21's challenges have clarified Skillset's responsibility to the regional communities we serve. Australia is currently in the midst of the 'skills crisis' we had to have! This crisis has forced businesses to realise the necessity of, and their responsibility for, investing in local skills development!

And this clarity has refocused Skillset's passion to support every stage of the career lifecycle. We have redefined the word CAREER – an individual's journey through life, learning and work – and endeavour to make the concept of a 'career' relevant to all of our clients, regardless of age and experience.

Skillset's Vision, Purpose and Values are alive within our organisation. We reflect constantly on our responsibilities to our regional communities. We meet people unsupported and in need, and seek ways to embrace their desires and build confidence to deliver life-changing opportunities on their career journey. We have career conversations every day with a variety of people - school students,

university graduates, migrants, tree-changers and those seeking to use their transferable skills on a new career path.

Career support is the focus and at the core of everything our staff deliver. An individual may meet multiple people within our organisation as they navigate the stages of their career journey. The passion with which our people deliver this valuable service is incredible and a source of immense pride. I am deeply thankful for their work!

In 2021/22, we will continue to identify gaps and develop solutions to further strengthen our career development services. We want people in our regional communities to join the Skillset 'tribe' for the duration of their career journey and know that a trusted advisor is only a call or a click away!





Skillset Senior College Students – Dubbo Campus

“Skillset Senior College has been amazing with the support it has provided to students during these turbulent times. The kids always come first and I am so glad my child is a part of this network.”

Kathy, Skillset Senior College Parent





## Head of Skillset Senior College Report Abbey Barrett

**“The success of our school lies in the strength and generosity of our staff, students and community. We are always shoulder to shoulder”.**

Adversity can bind together people and communities, and 2020/21 has been an incredible example of this. Our little, but mighty, school has gone from strength to strength while facing global and local challenges. Whatever the hurdles, we are stronger together, shoulder to shoulder. The staff and students live and breathe our school values of kindness, courage and consideration to contribute to our vision of creating the ‘best future imaginable’. Our Bathurst and Dubbo campuses met their goals in 2020/21 - we relocated our Dubbo campus to Sheraton Road, we exceeded budgeted targets, and our staff and student numbers increased.

We also rolled out new subjects and activities to enhance and enrich the lives of our students. This included continuing the Duke of Edinburgh Program, and offering Marine Studies, Visual Design, Work Studies and Industrial Technology whilst maintaining and exceeding all mandatory requirements. The research team, headed by Dr Martin

Hughes, focused on our wellbeing practices as they continue to examine the impact these have on student outcomes.

In 2020/21 our Skillset Senior College teaching team led the way in engaging teaching and learning through the development of quality relationships and by challenging students to ‘dream big!’ The staff empower young people to believe in themselves, to problem solve and apply critical thinking to fulfil their potential.

Thank you to all staff, our school leadership team and our SSC community. It is with your support, integrity and wisdom that we collaboratively pave the way for the ‘best future imaginable’ for our school, families and communities.





# A Year In Review

5,514



individuals engaged

skillset  
**CAREERLINK**  
CENTRAL WEST

1,734  
CareerLink engagements



4,060

high school students learnt about trade careers



148

students enrolled & 15 HSC graduates at SSC



15

LGA's serviced



\$793,338

apprentice wage subsidies delivered



617

lives changed through Skillforce500 campaign



13%

increase in corporate staff



214

apprentices & trainees commenced



28,028

trees planted



Yancoal Moolarben Coal Operations Conservation Land Management Trainees, Cordellia Powell-Andrews & Tyler Flick



“Forbes Shire Council is proud to partner with Skillset CareerLink Central West and provide our community with exciting new career opportunities and skill development possibilities. This program launched in March this year and there was a definite need for a service such as this in our community.”

**Cassandra Gates, Senior Communications Officer, Forbes Shire Council**



CareerLink Central West Launch with Forbes Shire Council



# 2021 Awards



**Gordon Hawkes Apprentice of the Year**  
Shane Martin, Certificate III in Electrotechnology, Moolarben Coal Operations



**Joyce Hawkes Trainee of the Year**  
Jasmin Daley, Certificate III in Community Services, Orana Support Services



**Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Trainee of the Year**  
Tyler Flick, Certificate III in Conservation & Land Management, Skillset Land Works, NEWCO & Moolarben Coal Operations



**School2Trade Award - School Based Trainee of the Year**  
Bronte Gibson, Certificate III in Business Services, REDI.E and UGL



**Skillset Partnership Award**  
Thales Australia  
Lithgow Arms



**Jim Todman Safety Award**  
Western NSW Local  
Health District



**GTO Host of the Year (SME)**  
Johnsons Towing &  
Mechanical



**GTO Host of the Year (Large)**  
Hort Enterprises



**Labour Hire Candidate of the Year**  
John Cross



**Local Government Award**  
Bathurst Regional Council



**Trade Up Award**  
Renae Justice, Career  
Advisor, Dubbo College



**Land Works Award**  
Northparkes Mine



**Permanent Recruitment Client of the Year**  
Storco



**Youth Connect Award**  
Millen Keeley

### Western NSW Training Awards

**Winner: Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Trainee of the Year**  
Winona Gray-Levett

**Finalists**  
Jock Elliot  
Peter Kaden  
Heather Waters

### AEN Awards NSW & ACT

**Winner: Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Trainee of the Year**  
Winona Gray-Levett

**Finalists**  
Peter Kaden





Yancoal Moolarben Coal Operations Conservation Land Management Trainees  
Left to right: Cordellia Powell-Andrews, Brittney Peck and Tyler Flick

“

“The Land Conservation Trainee program in partnership with Skillset and the North East Wiradjuri Company is a valuable addition to our community commitment. We would like to recognise the importance of such a program in providing sustainable employment opportunities in the Mudgee area while ensuring skills development and training for those involved in a vital, environmentally focused initiative.”

**Grant Arnold, Human Resources Manager,  
Yancoal Moolarben Coal Operations**





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**info@skillset.com.au**

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**Orange**  
2/150 Lords Place, Orange NSW, 2800

**Dubbo**  
34A Victoria Street, Dubbo, 2830

**Mudgee**  
48A Market Street, Mudgee NSW, 2850

**Skillset Senior College**  
390 Panorama Avenue, Bathurst NSW 2795  
171 Sheraton Road, Dubbo NSW, 2830