Northern Territory Closing the Gap Activity Plan, Performance Indicators and Evaluation Plan



NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT

Acronyms	Full form
NT	Northern Territory
NTG	Northern Territory Government
DET	Department of Education and Training
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
VET	Vocational Education and Training
AG	The Advisory Group
NSA	National Skills Agreement
SPI	Specific Policy Initiative
BIP	Bilateral Implementation Plan
PI	Performance Indicators
M1–M8	National Skills Agreement milestone stages as set out in the Closing the Gap Bilateral Implementation Plan

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1. Northern Territory Closing the Gap Activity Plan

1.1 Purpose

This Activity Plan outlines how the Northern Territory (NT) Government will implement National Skills Agreement (NSA)–related Closing the Gap (CtG) measures, in alignment with the NT Closing the Gap Bilateral Implementation Plan. In line with Closing the Gap principles of shared decision-making, the Plan has been collaboratively co-designed with, and endorsed by, the NT First Nations Registered Training Organisation (RTO) Advisory Group (the Advisory Group).

The Plan sets out planned activities, deliverables, timelines, responsible parties and intended outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners and Aboriginal training organisations, supported by funding provided through the National Skills Agreement.

This Activity Plan is also informed by, and aligns with, the NT Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2026–2028, which sets the NT Government's long-term approach to Aboriginal affairs, including community-led decision-making, strong Aboriginal organisations, cultural authority, and place-based responses. Alignment with the Framework supports coherence across NT Government investments and reinforces the intent of NSA Closing the Gap activities to contribute to sustainable, culturally grounded, system-level change.

Intended Outcomes (2025–2028)
Over the National Skills Agreement period, this Activity Plan is intended to contribute to measurable and sustained improvements in:

- the capability, sustainability and leadership of Northern Territory First Nations-led Registered Training Organisations
- culturally safe access, participation and learner experience for Aboriginal Territorians in the VET system, particularly in regional and remote contexts
- system-level cultural responsiveness and accountability across mainstream RTOs delivering training to First Nations learners; and
- the strength and effectiveness of shared decision-making between the NT Government and First Nations training organisations.

These outcomes recognise that Closing the Gap progress occurs incrementally and cumulatively and will be assessed through a combination of quantitative indicators, baselines, qualitative evidence and Aboriginal-led interpretation over time. Throughout the NSA implementation period, the NT Government and the Advisory Group will work in sustained partnership through regular regional engagement, ongoing consultation and collaborative decision-making to ensure activities remain culturally informed, responsive to community priorities and aligned with Closing the Gap objectives.

Implementation progress and outcomes will be monitored through agreed performance measures and reported in line with National Skills Agreement and Closing the Gap reporting requirements. Toward the conclusion of the NSA period, DET and the Advisory Group will consolidate insights, review progress and develop recommendations to guide future priorities, transition planning and ongoing partnership arrangements beyond 2028. Where pilot activities demonstrate clear benefits, opportunities to continue or scale initiatives will be explored, subject to available funding.

While this Activity Plan focuses on system- and sector-level change, rather than direct control of learner-level targets, it contributes to the Northern Territory's Closing the Gap outcomes relating to education participation, skills development, employment pathways and economic security by strengthening Aboriginal-led training capability and improving culturally safe access to Vocational Education and Training.

This Activity Plan demonstrates alignment with the Priority Reforms of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, particularly Priority Reform One (Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision-Making), Priority Reform Two (Building the Community-Controlled Sector), Priority Reform Three (Transforming Government Organisations), and Priority Reform Four (Shared Access to Data and Information at a Regional Level).

This Activity Plan is a living document and will be reviewed and updated, in partnership with the Advisory Group, to reflect implementation progress, emerging priorities and shared decisions. Any updates will be informed by performance reporting, evaluation findings and Advisory Group advice, and will be approved and published in accordance with National Skills Agreement and Closing the Gap governance and reporting requirements.

Evaluation findings will be actively used to inform future NT Skills policy settings, commissioning approaches and investment priorities, including decisions relating to the continuation, scaling, transition or cessation of initiatives beyond the National Skills Agreement period.

1.2 Closing the Gap Implementation Plan Actions

The Northern Territory Government will implement the following high-level actions under the National Skills Agreement to support Closing the Gap outcomes, consistent with the NT Closing the Gap Bilateral Implementation Plan and the Priority Reforms of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. The actions below reflect the Northern Territory's agreed priorities and provide a clear framework for activity delivery, monitoring and reporting.

Actions 1–4 outlined below operationalise the priority actions set out in the Northern Territory Closing the Gap Bilateral Implementation Plan under the National Skills Agreement and provide the framework for activity delivery, performance monitoring and evaluation.

Action 1 – Establish and strengthen genuine partnerships, transparency, governance and collaboration.

(Priority Reform One – Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision-Making; Priority Reform Three – Transforming Government Organisations)

- Maintain and strengthen the formal partnership between the NT Government and the NT First Nations RTO Advisory Group as a shared decision-making body for NSA-related Closing the Gap activities.
- Embed the Advisory Group's advice into the design, implementation and monitoring of NSA initiatives affecting Aboriginal learners and training organisations.
- Support regular regional and Darwin-based meetings to ensure decisions are informed by lived experience and regional and remote contexts, consistent with the NT Implementation Plan's commitment to place-based decision-making.
- Review, update and publish the Activity Plan in partnership with the Advisory Group, in line with Commonwealth and NT reporting requirements, to ensure it remains responsive to community priorities, implementation experience, and shared decisions.

Note: *Responsiveness is essential to account for external factors and cultural considerations that can significantly affect delivery in the Northern Territory, including major weather events (such as cyclones, flooding and extreme heat) and broader economic or geopolitical conditions that impact fuel availability, supply chains, transport reliability and delivery costs, particularly in regional and remote locations.*

This action aligns with the NT Aboriginal Affairs Framework's emphasis on community-led governance, shared decision-making and culturally authoritative partnerships.

Action 2 – Strengthening sustainability and capability of Northern Territory Aboriginal RTOs.

(Priority Reform Two – Building the Community-Controlled Sector)

- Deliver targeted sector-strengthening activities to support the capability, governance and workforce sustainability of Aboriginal-led RTOs.
- Pilot and refine approaches that address systemic barriers faced by Aboriginal training organisations, including workforce supply, compliance burden and operating in regional and remote contexts.
- Use lessons from pilot activities to inform longer-term system improvements and potential scale-up, aligned with NT Implementation Plan actions to strengthen Aboriginal community-controlled organisations.
- Aboriginal RTO self-reported confidence in organisational sustainability and system influence.

Action 3 – Identifying opportunities for Aboriginal VET growth

(Priority Reform One – Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision-Making; Priority Reform Two – Building the Community-Controlled Sector)

- Identify and support new and expanded delivery opportunities for Aboriginal RTOs, particularly in regional and remote areas, aligned to local employment and economic priorities.
- Enable innovative, place-based and partnership-driven delivery models that strengthen learner pathways to jobs and further training.
- Support sector growth through collaborative partnerships, pilots and strategic projects that expand capability, reach and sustainability of the Aboriginal VET sector.

Action 4 – Strengthening cultural competency across mainstream RTOs.

(Priority Reform Three – Transforming Government Organisations; Priority Reform Four – Shared Access to Data and Information at a Regional Level)

- Strengthen system-level cultural competency across the NT VET sector by enabling access to culturally informed guidance, tools and shared learning for mainstream RTOs delivering training to Aboriginal learners.
- Improve culturally safe engagement practices by supporting awareness-raising, peer learning and examples of good practice informed by Aboriginal perspectives and local contexts.
- Embed culturally responsive systems and practices within VET policy design, commissioning and oversight, recognising the distinct needs of regional and remote delivery environments.

1.1. Activities and Deliverables

Each activity under this Activity Plan has been designed to contribute to system-level change aligned with the Closing the Gap Priority Reforms. Activities focus not only on delivery, but on strengthening governance, capability, cultural authority and sustainability across the NT VET system. Deliverables are framed to provide clear, verifiable evidence of implementation and learning, proportionate to the scale and risk of each activity.

Activity: 1	**Title:** Shared decision-making and Aboriginal leadership through the Advisory Group
Description	This activity establishes and maintains the First Nations RTO Advisory Group as the primary shared decision-making forum for NSA-related Closing the Gap initiatives. The objective is to embed Aboriginal leadership, cultural authority and lived experience into VET policy design, implementation and monitoring. The Advisory Group provides a formal mechanism for co-design and culturally governed advice, supporting guidance on culturally safe implementation consistent with Priority Reform One (Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision-Making). This approach reflects evidence that shared governance and sustained partnership structures improve policy relevance, cultural integrity and system responsiveness for Aboriginal learners and training organisations. **Part A – Advisory Group governance and shared decision-making** • Under Part A, the Advisory Group will provide collective advice on the design, implementation and monitoring of NSA Closing the Gap activities • inform priority setting through lived experience and regional and remote perspectives • support transparent, accountable decision-making through agreed governance arrangements **Part B – Aboriginal leadership and independent co-facilitation** Under Part B, the activity will strengthen Aboriginal leadership through independent co-facilitation of the Advisory Group. The co-facilitator role supports culturally safe engagement, effective facilitation, and strong collective decision-making, working alongside the NT Government Secretariat. The co-facilitator is selected through Advisory Group processes and provides leadership support without assuming a delivery role, ensuring clear separation between governance, advice and program delivery.

	This activity does not confer delivery responsibility to the Advisory Group. The Advisory Group's role is to provide culturally governed advice, strategic guidance and shared decision-making input, with implementation remaining the responsibility of the Northern Territory Government and contracted delivery partners.
Expected Outcomes	• Strengthened shared decision-making between the NT Government and Aboriginal training organisations • Increased Aboriginal leadership, influence and cultural authority in VET policy and program delivery • Culturally responsive and community-driven governance supporting NSA-funded activities
Deliverables	**Part A – Advisory Group governance** • Advisory Group Terms of Reference and governance documents • Meeting agendas, attendance records and decision summaries, with minutes maintained on file • Annual advice and inputs to NSA reporting and review processes **Part B – Co-facilitation and leadership** • Co-facilitator role description • Appointment and onboarding documentation • Annual co-facilitator reflection or activity report, documenting themes, lessons and advice-to-change examples to inform continuous improvement and reporting.
Allocated Funding	Detailed expenditure breakdowns will be provided through biannual performance reporting in line with National Skills Agreement requirements.
Timeframe	May 2025 – December 2028
Lead	DET in partnership with AG
Action mapping	Action 1

Activity: 2	**Title:** First Nations Sector Strengthening Grant
Description	This activity delivers targeted, multi-year grant funding to strengthen the sustainability, governance and delivery capability of NT Aboriginal RTOs. The objective is to address long-standing structural and operational barriers that limit the capacity of Aboriginal training organisations, particularly in regional and remote contexts. Activities include development of co-designed program guidelines, funding agreements, and milestone-based delivery focused on organisational capability, workforce stability and learner support. The activity has been co-designed with the Advisory Group and reflects research highlighting the importance of sustained investment and wrap-around support for community-controlled organisations.
Expected Outcomes	• Improved organisational capability and sustainability of Aboriginal RTOs • Stronger governance, compliance and delivery systems • Enhanced capacity to support Aboriginal learners and communities • Demonstrated improvement against agreed organisational capability baselines, including governance, workforce stability, delivery readiness and compliance confidence.
Deliverables	• Program guidelines • Annual uptake of funding agreements • Annual progress reports • Summary of integrated skilling support to inform future programs • Consolidated sector-level insights report (de-identified), summarising common enablers, barriers and system implications.
Allocated Funding	Detailed expenditure breakdowns will be provided through biannual performance reporting in line with National Skills Agreement requirements.
Timeframe	March 2026 – December 2028
Lead	DET in collaboration/ partnership with NT based Aboriginal RTOs.
Action mapping	Action 2

Activity: 3	**Title:** Aboriginal VET Workforce capability uplift
Description	This activity strengthens the Aboriginal VET workforce by supporting capability development of existing staff and creating pathways for new Aboriginal trainers, assessors and VET support staff. The objective is to build a stable, culturally grounded workforce that supports learner success, high-quality delivery and organisational sustainability across the Northern Territory. In recognition of workforce shortages and thin labour markets in regional and very remote locations, the activity may also support culturally responsive non-Aboriginal trainers and staff, where appropriate. This approach is intended to ensure continuity of delivery, strengthen culturally safe practice, and support the overall sustainability and effectiveness of the Aboriginal VET sector while Aboriginal workforce pipelines continue to grow. Any support for culturally responsive non-Aboriginal staff will be time-limited, capability-focused and aligned to growing Aboriginal workforce leadership over time, rather than substituting for Aboriginal employment pathways. Activities include baseline workforce assessments, co-designed workforce development plans, targeted training and professional development, recruitment and retention initiatives, and mentoring pathways. The activity responds to documented workforce constraints in regional and remote VET delivery and aligns with Action 2 (sector capability and sustainability) and Action 3 (growth and access) of the NT Closing the Gap Bilateral Implementation Plan.
Expected Outcomes	• Increased capability and stability of the VET workforce across the Aboriginal RTO sector • Clearer career pathways for Aboriginal people in the VET sector • Improved First Nation learner engagement and outcomes through culturally responsive delivery
Deliverables	• Workforce baseline assessment • Workforce development plans • Capability-building activities delivered and/or attended • VET Workforce outcomes report
Allocated Funding	Detailed expenditure breakdowns will be provided through biannual performance reporting in line with National Skills Agreement requirements.
Timeframe	May 2026 – December 2028

Lead	DET in collaboration/partnership with NT based Aboriginal RTOs.
Action mapping	Action 2 and Action 3
Activity: 4	**Title:** Strengthen cultural competency across the NT VET ecosystem (enablement and accredited pathways)
Description	This activity strengthens cultural competency across the Northern Territory VET ecosystem through a two-part, sequenced approach that combines non-accredited system enablement with the development of an accredited cultural competency pathway that can be sustained beyond the National Skills Agreement period. The overall objective is to improve cultural safety, capability and accountability across the VET ecosystem, particularly for RTOs delivering training to Aboriginal learners, while ensuring culturally informed practice is supported both short term (through guidance and shared learning) and long-term (through nationally recognised accreditation). The Aboriginal RTO Advisory Group will provide cultural governance and co-design oversight across both parts of the activity to ensure alignment with Aboriginal expectations, NT contexts and Closing the Gap priorities. **Part A – Non-Accredited system wide cultural competency enablement** Part A focuses on system wide enablement for mainstream RTOs through evidence, guidance and shared learning, without mandating uptake or prescribing delivery approaches. This component will: • be informed by an aggregated baseline assessment of cultural responsiveness across mainstream RTOs; • co-design NT-specific guidance, tools and practical resources to support culturally safe engagement, recruitment and induction practices; and • deliver shared learning opportunities (e.g. workshops, forums, case studies) to support peer exchange and awareness-raising, particularly in regional and remote contexts. Adoption of guidance and resources will be voluntary and responsive to provider context, capability and regulatory obligations. The mid-term review (2027) will provide a decision point to assess early evidence of uptake and impact and determine whether enablement activities should continue, adapt or transition.

	Part B – Accredited cultural competency pathway (long-term) Part B focuses on the co-design and development of a nationally recognised VET skill set or qualification in cultural competency for the NT VET sector, creating a durable workforce capability pathway that can be delivered beyond the NSA period. This component will: • co-design and culturally govern an accredited course or skill set grounded in Aboriginal knowledge systems, NT cultural contexts and practical VET application; • map to appropriate Training Package or accreditation pathways, including engagement with relevant national and regulatory bodies; and • pilot delivery through appropriately qualified NT-based RTOs, including Aboriginal RTOs where they hold scope and choose to participate. The accredited pathway is intended to enable some NT RTOs to add the qualification or skill set to scope, supporting ongoing delivery, workforce development and system transformation after NSA funding concludes. Clear probity will be maintained at all times: the Advisory Group's role is limited to cultural governance and co-design advice. Any delivery by member organisations will be subject to standard procurement, contracting and regulatory arrangements.
Expected Outcomes	• Improved cultural safety, engagement and learner experience across the NT VET system • Increased capability and confidence of VET staff working with Aboriginal learners and communities • Availability of both practical, non-accredited guidance and a nationally recognised accredited pathway to support sustained system change • Stronger alignment between VET practice, Closing the Gap priorities and Aboriginal expectations
Deliverables	**Part A – Enablement** • Aggregated mainstream RTO cultural responsiveness baseline • Co-designed guidance materials and practical tools

	• Shared learning activities and engagement summaries **Part B – Accredited pathway** • Co-design and cultural governance framework • Accredited course or skill set (or approved Training Package alignment) • Training and assessment materials • Pilot delivery and evaluation findings (where feasible) • Recommendations for ongoing delivery, scaling and integration post NSA
Allocated Funding	Detailed expenditure breakdowns will be provided through biannual performance reporting in line with National Skills Agreement requirements.
Timeframe	**Part A:** 2026–2028 (baseline, enablement, refinement) **Part B:** Co-design and accreditation pathway: 2027 - 2028
Lead	DET with co-design and cultural governance input from the Aboriginal RTO Advisory Group
Action mapping	Action 4 – Strengthening cultural competency across the NT VET system, with linkages to Action 1 through shared decision-making and cultural governance.

Activity: 5	**Title:** NT Aboriginal RTO Digital Empowerment
Description	Co-designed program to strengthen digital operational readiness: baseline digital assessments, RTO-specific digital plans, and targeted infrastructure upgrades to support technology-enabled delivery in remote contexts.
Expected Outcomes	• Enhanced digital infrastructure operational resilience • Increased technology-enabled delivery • Improved access for regional/remote learners • Improved access, continuity and reliability of training delivery for Aboriginal learners in regional and remote communities.
Deliverables	• Program guidelines • Digital baselines • RTO digital plans • Infrastructure/tech upgrades • Evaluation report
Allocated Funding	Detailed expenditure breakdowns will be provided through biannual performance reporting in line with National Skills Agreement requirements.
Timeframe	Jul 2026 – Dec 2028
Lead	NT based Aboriginal RTOs (DET oversight)
Action mapping	Action 2 and Action 3

Activity: 6	**Title:** Cross-border, regional and remote networking forums and targeted workshops (co-designed)
Description	This activity supports cross-border, regional and remote collaboration through co-designed networking forums and targeted workshops that enable peer exchange, shared learning and system connection across the VET sector. The focus is on strengthening relationships between Aboriginal RTOs across the Northern Territory and neighbouring jurisdictions, with participation from mainstream RTOs where appropriate. Activities will be purpose-designed around identified system challenges and opportunities, with outputs captured to inform coordinated action, policy refinement and future initiatives. While Activity 3 focuses on developing and expanding the Aboriginal VET workforce, this activity is designed as a place-based, on-the-ground initiative that strengthens sector-wide collaboration, consistency and collective capability, particularly in regional and remote operating environments. Funding under this activity supports the delivery and coordination of forums and workshops, including facilitation, engagement of conference or event organisers where required, travel and logistics, and enabling participation of Aboriginal RTO staff and Advisory Group members (e.g. accommodation and catering). Funding is directed to sector-level collaboration and shared learning, rather than individual remuneration or direct organisational funding.
Expected Outcomes	• Increased collaboration and peer learning; • Diffusion of effective culturally responsive practices; • Better system connection to support learner outcomes
Deliverables	• Workshop plans and materials • Participation records • Outcomes summaries with agreed next steps
Allocated Funding	Detailed expenditure breakdowns will be provided through biannual performance reporting in line with National Skills Agreement requirements.
Timeframe	2026 – 2028
Lead	DET in partnership with Advisory Group, other participating RTOs and NT based FN organisations

Action mapping	Action 1 and Action 3
Activity: 7	**Title:** Culturally responsive training resources
Description	This activity strengthens training quality and workforce capability across the Aboriginal VET sector through a coordinated approach to shared culturally responsive resources and TAE40122 workforce development, with a strong focus on regional and remote delivery contexts. **Part A – Cross-RTO culturally responsive, industry-specific shared resources** Under Part A, Aboriginal RTOs will co-develop industry-specific training and assessment resources that reflect Aboriginal knowledge systems, teaching approaches and community contexts in priority industry areas. Resources will be piloted across multiple Aboriginal RTOs (and, where appropriate, mainstream RTOs) with regional and remote delivery interests, and refined iteratively based on learner and trainer feedback. This component aims to reduce duplication, lift quality and consistency, and support culturally safe delivery across the sector. **Part B – Trialling and scaling delivery of TAE40122 (with SPI VET Workforce)** Under Part B, the activity will trial and scale culturally grounded delivery of TAE40122 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, in collaboration with the SPI VET Workforce. Delivery will commence with a small-scale pilot targeting regional and remote learners and locations, with approaches refined and expanded based on evaluation findings. This component strengthens the Aboriginal trainer and assessor workforce pipeline, improves cultural safety in delivery, and supports expanded delivery capacity across the NT. Co-design will occur with the First Nations RTO Advisory Group and participating RTOs. Together, Parts A and B ensure that high-quality, culturally responsive training resources are supported by a capable and growing Aboriginal VET workforce.
Expected Outcomes	• Improved cultural safety, relevance and quality of training delivery • Higher learner engagement and consistency across industry areas • Increased numbers of Aboriginal trainers and assessors holding TAE40122 • Reduced duplication and stronger delivery capability in regional and remote contexts

	• Greater consistency and efficiency across Aboriginal RTO delivery through shared use and adaptation of high-quality resources.
Deliverables	**Part A** – Shared resources • Co-design briefs • Draft and final shared training and assessment resource sets Pilot reports and guidance for wider adoption **Part B** – TAE workforce development • Culturally grounded TAE40122 training and assessment materials • Pilot evaluations • Recommendations and scaling plan
Allocated Funding	Detailed expenditure breakdowns will be provided through biannual performance reporting in line with National Skills Agreement requirements.
Timeframe	Design 2026; pilots 2027; refinement/adoption 2028
Lead	DET, with participating Aboriginal RTOs and SPI VET Workforce (Part A delivered through Aboriginal RTO consortia with DET support)
Action mapping	Action 2, Action 3 and Action 4

Activity: 8	**Title:** Baseline establishment – Aboriginal organisational capability and mainstream RTO cultural responsiveness
Description	This activity establishes a shared evidence base to inform targeted investment, partnership development and growth opportunities for NT-based Aboriginal RTOs, and to support system-level planning under the National Skills Agreement Closing the Gap initiatives. It will undertake structured baseline research to: • establish current VET delivery capability and operational coverage across the NT, to inform growth and delivery opportunities for NT- based Aboriginal RTOs; and • establish the current cultural responsiveness of mainstream RTOs, to inform culturally appropriate partnership, collaboration and delivery models involving Aboriginal RTOs (interrelated with Activity 7). The findings from this activity will be considered alongside the digital capability baseline established under Activity 5 and the Aboriginal VET workforce baseline under Activity 3, to inform coordinated funding decisions, sector-strengthening priorities and future growth opportunities across the NT VET system. Baseline findings will be actively used to inform prioritisation, sequencing and refinement of activities across this Activity Plan, including funding and partnership decisions.
Expected Outcomes	• Clear starting point for measurable improvement; • Targeted investment decisions; • Ability to track progress against agreed indicators.
Deliverables	• FN RTO baseline reports • Mainstream cultural responsiveness baseline • Synthesis report and recommendations
Allocated Funding	Detailed expenditure breakdowns will be provided through biannual performance reporting in line with National Skills Agreement requirements.
Timeframe	• 2026 (baseline build and completion); • 2027–2028 - light-touch updates
Lead	DET (with Advisory Group guidance; participation by FN and NT based mainstream RTOs)

Action mapping	Action 2, Action 3 and Action 4

Activity: 9	**Title:** Identity system improvement and enrolment access initiatives
Description	Co-design practical strategies that reduce barriers to identity confirmation and enrolment (e.g., culturally responsive ID support, community-based verification/enrolment pathways, simplified processes). Prioritise regional/remote communities; partner with relevant NT agencies to ensure policy alignment.
Expected Outcomes	• Reduced administrative burden • Reduced lost time for RTOs • Reduced ID barriers • Increased confidence in and access to enrolment • Improved participation for remote learners • Improved alignment between NT systems, policies and enrolment practices affecting Aboriginal learner access.
Deliverables	• Co-designed tools/guidance; • Pilot activities in selected locations or for pilot RTOs • Outcomes report with recommended refinements
Allocated Funding	Detailed expenditure breakdowns will be provided through biannual performance reporting in line with National Skills Agreement requirements.
Timeframe	• 2026–2028 co-design and pilots in 2026–2027 • 2027–2028 - Refinement and outcomes reporting in
Lead	DET with co-design/input from FN RTOs, ACCs and relevant agencies
Action mapping	Action 2 and Action 3

Activity: 10	**Title:** Partnerships, strategic projects and transition pipeline for long-term sustainability
Description	This activity establishes a connected sustainability stream that: • co-designs and trials collaborative delivery partnerships between Aboriginal RTOs, mainstream RTOs, industry and community (with a focus on regional and remote, place-based projects); • initiates strategic system projects (e.g., shared services, remote delivery toolkits, leadership pipelines) to embed capability and resilience; and • maintains a curated pipeline of future initiatives (concepts proposed by the Advisory Group) for prioritisation, scoping and—where justified—progression to delivery and transition beyond the NSA period. Partnership pilots will formalise "what good partnerships look like" (roles, governance, mutual benefits, risk/benefit-sharing), strengthen RTO–industry–community connections, and create clearer learner pathways aligned to local employment. Strategic projects will convert lessons into durable models and tools that reduce duplication and support operational sustainability. The pipeline will ensure only high-value, additional concepts with a sound case proceed to delivery, supporting post-NSA continuation or scale. The transition pipeline will explicitly assess initiatives against criteria to **stop, adapt, scale or transition**, ensuring resources are directed to activities that demonstrate value, feasibility and alignment with Closing the Gap objectives.
Expected Outcomes	• Enduring partnership models that improve locally relevant delivery and pathways to jobs/further training. • System capability and workforce resilience strengthened through practical tools, frameworks and shared services that persist beyond 2028. • Prioritised transition pipeline with investment-ready initiatives and clear cases for potential continuation/scale (or close-out) post-NSA.
Deliverables	• Partnership artefacts: MOUs/agreements, pilot delivery plans, and outcomes/pathway reports (with lessons and replication guidance). • Strategic system artefacts: business cases, implementation products (toolkits, frameworks, shared models), and sustainability/transition plans.

	• Pipeline artefacts: concept notes, prioritisation decisions, and mini-project charters (measures, risks, governance) for approved items. • Consolidated sustainability summary at mid-term and final stages (what to stop/scale/transition, with rationale).
Allocated Funding	Detailed expenditure breakdowns will be provided through biannual performance reporting in line with National Skills Agreement requirements.
Timeframe	** This activity will be implemented on a phased and adaptive basis, informed by Advisory Group guidance and findings from the mid-term review, to ensure responsiveness to emerging priorities and operating conditions. • 2026: Establishment of the transition pipeline and initial scoping, with substantive activity intentionally staged to align with sector capacity and competing NSA delivery priorities. • 2027: Implementation of partnership pilots and commencement of selected strategic projects, with initial transition and sustainability planning underway. • 2028: Refinement of approaches based on learning and evaluation, confirmation of replication or scale decisions, and finalisation of transition arrangements beyond the NSA period.
Lead	DET with the First Nations RTO Advisory Group (co-design and prioritisation), and participating Aboriginal RTO consortia, mainstream RTOs, industry and community partners.
Action mapping	Action 2 and Action 3.

1.2. General Funding Allocation

Funding allocations represent the indicative distribution of National Skills Agreement – Closing the Gap funding across priority initiatives under the Northern Territory Bilateral Implementation Plan (BIP). Allocations reflect the relative scale, complexity and intended outcomes of each activity, with a focus on sector strengthening, workforce capability and system-level reform.

The table below provides indicative activity-level allocations to support transparency and Commonwealth reporting requirements. Allocations are not fixed and may be refined over the implementation period in response to emerging priorities, evidence and Advisory Group input, with detailed expenditure reported through biannual performance reporting.

Allocations within multi-activity groupings (e.g. Actions 2 and 3) may be adjusted to maintain flexibility and maximise impact across the NT VET system.

Action	Activity	Indicative BIP Funding Allocation	Commentary
1	1. Shared decision making and Aboriginal leadership through the Advisory Group	$750,000	Allocation supports governance, co-facilitation and shared decision-making under Priority Reform 1.
2	2. First Nations Sector Strengthening Grant	$8,000,000	Represents a significant proportion of funding, reflecting the scale of investment required to support structural uplift of Aboriginal RTO governance, sustainability and delivery capability.
2 & 3	3. Aboriginal VET Workforce capability uplift	$4,000,000	Workforce shortages are critical but not as capital-intensive as grants, moderate allocation supports training, pathways and retention.
4	4. Strengthen cultural competency across the NT VET ecosystem (enablement and accredited pathways)	$800,000	Support both non-accredited enablement and development of an accredited cultural competency pathway (system-wide transformation focus).
2 & 3	5. NT Aboriginal RTO Digital Empowerment	$1,000,000	Reflects targeted investment in digital capability, infrastructure and systems to support delivery in remote settings.
1 & 3	6. Cross-border, regional and remote networking forums and workshops	$674,000	Supports collaboration, shared learning and system connectivity across regions, with a focus on enabling sector-wide engagement.
2, 3 & 4 (partial link)	7. Culturally responsive training resources + TAE workforce	$1,000,000	Supports development of shared culturally responsive training resources and workforce capability uplift through TAE delivery pathways.

2, 3 & 4	8. Baseline establishment – capability and cultural responsiveness	$400,000	Foundational investment to establish baseline data to inform targeted investment, evaluation and system planning.
2 & 3	9. Identity system improvement and enrolment access initiatives	$300,000	Supports pilot initiatives to reduce enrolment barriers and improve access, particularly for remote Aboriginal students.
2 & 3	10. Partnerships, strategic projects and transition pipeline	$600,000	Supports development of sustainable partnership models and a pipeline of strategic initiatives to enable long-term impact.
	TOTAL FUNDING:	**$17,524,000**	

The Activity Plan has been endorsed by the Northern Territory Senior Skills Official.

2. Northern Territory Closing the Gap Performance Indicators

2.1 Purpose

This Performance Monitoring and Reporting approach outlines how the Northern Territory (NT) will monitor, report and evaluate National Skills Agreement (NSA) Closing the Gap (CTG) measures, consistent with the reporting requirements and milestones in the Bilateral Implementation Plan.

Performance indicators have been co-designed with the First Nations RTO Advisory Group to ensure measures are culturally relevant, strengths-based and meaningful to Aboriginal partners, learners and training organisations.

Biannual performance reporting will occur by 31 March and 30 September each year using Commonwealth-provided templates. Payments are subject to acceptance of performance evidence against agreed milestones.

Performance indicators have been mapped to the milestone structure set out in the NT Closing the Gap Bilateral Implementation Plan for the National Skills Agreement. Milestone 1 focuses on establishment and foundational activity (governance, baselines and frameworks); Milestone 2 on implementation and early delivery; and Milestone 3 on outcomes, learning and sustainability. This ensures clear line-of-sight between activities, indicators, evidence and milestone-based payments.

Note: *Indicators are intentionally proportionate and minimise reporting burden.*

Qualitative indicators are included where change is best evidenced through lived experience and narrative, consistent with Closing the Gap principles.

2.2. Scope and Alignment

Action 1 – Establish and strengthen genuine partnerships, transparency, governance and collaboration.

(Activity 1)

PI #	Performance Indicator	Rationale/context	Data Sources and Collection Methods	Reporting timeline and evidence	Milestone/Activity linkages
1	Advisory Group established and operating in accordance with endorsed Terms of Reference	Confirms a formal shared decision-making structure is in place and functioning	Endorsed Terms of Reference; meeting schedule; attendance records	Biannual; governance documents and meeting records	**M1–M2** (establishment and consolidation**);** Activity 1, Activity 6
2	NSA Closing the Gap activities are co-designed and implemented in partnership with the Advisory Group, with evidence of shared decision-making influencing outcomes.	Demonstrates meaningful shared decision-making rather than advisory-only engagement	Meeting minutes; Secretariat summaries; documented changes resulting from advice	Biannual; narrative evidence and examples	**M2–M8** (ongoing implementation influence); Activity 1, Activity 6

Action 2 – Strengthening sustainability and capability of Northern Territory Aboriginal RTOs.

(Activities 2, 5, 8)

PI #	Performance Indicator	Rationale/context	Data Sources and Collection Methods	Reporting timeline and evidence	Milestone/Activity linkages
3	Number of NT-based Aboriginal RTOs receiving funding through grant agreements	Measures reach of capability investment across the sector.	Grants NT records. Count of funding agreements.	Biannual reports; quantitative summary and short narrative	**M3–M8**; Activity 2
4	Number of employees in NT-based Aboriginal RTOs (FTE), including proportion of Aboriginal employees and workforce composition (e.g. trainers and assessors)	Tracks growth in Aboriginal staffing and workforce capability in NT RTOs, including representation of Aboriginal employees and their roles.	RTO HR data, including full-time equivalent (FTE) workforce data, with disaggregation by Aboriginal status (where available) and workforce role (e.g. trainers and assessors)	Baseline by **M4**; improvement evidenced in **M6–M8**.	**M3–M8;** Activities 2, 5, 8

Action 3 – Identifying opportunities for Aboriginal VET growth

(Activities 3, 7 [Part A], 9, 10)

PI #	Performance Indicator	Rationale/context	Data Sources and Collection Methods	Reporting timeline and evidence	Milestone/Activity linkages
5	Number of Aboriginal learner enrolments	Measures access and participation, with attention to geographic equity	AVETMISS data, reporting the number of enrolments where students identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.	Biannual; quantitative summary and short narrative.	**M4–M8**; Activities 3, 7 (Part B)
6	Total number of targeted workshops, networking events, and stakeholder engagement activities conducted	Demonstrates how effectively organisations engage with stakeholders, build partnerships, and strengthen operational and sector capability.	Organisational records and reports of workshops, networking events, and stakeholder engagement activities, including attendance lists, event schedules, and meeting notes.	Biannual reports	**M4–M7**; Activity 7 (Part A), Activity 10

Action 4 – Strengthening cultural competency across mainstream RTOs.

(Activities 4 – Parts A and B; Activity 8 – mainstream component)

PI #	Performance Indicator	Rationale/context	Data Sources and Collection Methods	Reporting timeline and evidence	Milestone/Activity linkages
7	Number of mainstream RTOs accessing cultural competency resources	Measures the NT's role in enabling and supporting cultural competency across the VET sector.	Web analytics or download logs User registration or access reports from the portal (to be confirmed)	Every six months following the completion of resource development.	**M4–M6** (implementation phase); **Activities 12 the 16**

3. Northern Territory Closing the Gap Evaluation Plan

3.1 Purpose

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the effectiveness, appropriateness and contribution of the Northern Territory's National Skills Agreement (NSA) Closing the Gap initiatives against the Priority Reforms and outcomes outlined in the Bilateral Implementation Plan.

The evaluation will support:

- assurance of progress against agreed activities, deliverables and performance indicators
- learning and continuous improvement across the NSA period
- evidence-based decision-making at mid-term and final stages
- identification of lessons to inform sustainability and future investment beyond 2028

3.2 Approach

The evaluation will be community-led and culturally governed, with the First Nations RTO Advisory Group providing guidance on evaluation focus, validating findings, and interpreting results.

The evaluation will:

- cover all NSA Closing the Gap activities delivered under Actions 1–4
- assess both what has been delivered and how delivery has occurred
- recognise that some outcomes (e.g. uptake by mainstream RTOs) sit outside direct NT Government control and will be assessed through system-level influence and enablement, rather than compliance

Skills and Pathways NT will oversee evaluation coordination and reporting, with independent input used where appropriate to support rigour and assurance.

3.3. Guiding evaluation questions

The evaluation will be guided by a small set of core, high-level questions, co-designed and endorsed by the First Nations RTO Advisory Group. These questions provide structure and consistency, while allowing flexibility to adapt over time.

The guiding evaluation questions may be refined throughout implementation to remain responsive to:

- community priorities
- implementation experience and learning
- changing regional, social, economic or environmental conditions

Guiding questions include:

1. To what extent have NSA Closing the Gap activities been co-designed and implemented in line with the Closing the Gap Priority Reforms, particularly shared decision-making and community leadership?

2. How effectively are activities strengthening the capability, sustainability and leadership of Aboriginal RTOs and the Aboriginal VET workforce?
3. What system-level changes or early signals of transformation are emerging across the NT VET system, including in regional and remote contexts?
4. How have activities contributed to improved access, participation and learner experience for Aboriginal learners, recognising cumulative and cross-action effects?
5. What lessons from implementation and outcomes should inform refinement, sustainability and future investment decisions, including beyond the NSA period?

3.4. Evaluation framework

The evaluation will use a mixed-methods, outcomes-focused framework aligned to the Bilateral Implementation Plan and Closing the Gap Priority Reforms.

Evidence sources will include:

- agreed performance indicators and milestone reporting
- administrative and program data
- baseline and follow-up assessments
- pilot evaluations and implementation reviews
- facilitated reflections and qualitative insights from Aboriginal partners

Data collection will prioritise existing data and facilitated engagement to minimise reporting burden and uphold Indigenous data sovereignty principles.

3.4 Mid-Term Review

A mid-term review will be conducted to provide a formative assessment of progress, early outcomes and implementation quality.

The review will:

- assess progress against Actions 1–4 using the agreed performance indicators
- identify what is working well, emerging challenges and unintended impacts
- provide practical recommendations to refine sequencing, focus or delivery for the remainder of the NSA period

Findings will be validated with the Advisory Group and will inform adjustments to activities and priorities, consistent with the Bilateral's emphasis on learning and adaptation.

3.5 Final Evaluation

A final evaluation will provide a summative assessment of outcomes achieved over the life of the NSA period, including:

- contribution to Closing the Gap Priority Reforms
- outcomes for Aboriginal learners, RTOs and system-level conditions
- sustainability and scalability of initiatives beyond 2028

The final evaluation will be delivered as a concise evaluation report with a plain-language executive summary suitable for publication and will include recommendations to inform future skills and VET Closing the Gap initiatives.

3.6 Continuous Improvement

Continuous improvement will be embedded through biannual performance reporting, ongoing engagement with the Aboriginal RTO Advisory Group, and regular reflection on evidence from the agreed performance indicators and evaluation findings.

Findings from performance reporting, facilitated discussions and the mid-term review will be considered with the Advisory Group to identify what is working well, emerging issues and opportunities to refine sequencing, delivery approaches or priorities.

Insights from the mid-term review and final evaluation will inform decisions on sustaining, scaling or transitioning initiatives beyond the NSA period, ensuring learning is applied in real time and contributes to improved skills and training outcomes for Aboriginal Territorians.

4. Publication

This Activity Plan will be published by the Northern Territory Government following finalisation and internal review.