



Youth Parliament of Western Australia

# **Future Skills and Education Advancement Act 2025**

## **Explanatory Memorandum**

The cost of living in Western Australia (WA) has reached record highs (2023–25), hitting tertiary students with rising textbook prices, housing stress, and extra burdens for regional learners. A long-term, fiscally balanced solution is needed—for students, universities, and WA’s future economy. The Future Skills and Education Advancement Act 2025 is part of that solution. It delivers a structured, future-focused framework to support students and strengthen WA’s innovation and research sector.

Part 2 establishes the Tertiary Education Endowment Fund, using ring-fenced mining royalties to fund student supports and ensure research excellence. Part 3 creates the WA Tertiary Student Assistance Payment, expanding financial help for vulnerable students, as well as supplementing the Commonwealth Prac payment to strengthen WA’s leadership in tertiary education support. By creating a payment that runs parallel to the Commonwealth’s payment, it will increase workforce retention in critical sectors and expand the scope of assistance for those within WA.

Part 4 establishes a student employment directive that requires public universities to give enrolled students priority access to on-campus employment roles. Part 4 also establishes the Personal Empowerment and Readiness for Life initiative, an upskilling program designed to ensure tertiary students are prepared once leaving tertiary education. It also establishes a statewide Integrated Student Support framework, requiring all public tertiary education institutions to consolidate existing services, implement minimum support standards, and ensure timely, coordinated responses to students in distress.

Part 5 establishes the WA Skills Pathway Portal and Career Bridging Grants for workforce development, skills transferability, and access to retraining opportunities for Western Australian residents. The measures address current and future labour market needs, particularly in priority sectors, by facilitating access to education and training, financial assistance, and workforce information.

Western Australia

# **Future Skills and Education Advancement Act 2025**

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Youth Parliament of Western Australia

# **Future Skills and Education Advancement Act 2025**

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**No. 2 of 2025**

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**An Act —**

- **to provide critical funding for the tertiary education sector; and**
- **to support tertiary students in covering education costs and practical work placements; and**
- **to ensure streamlined industry transitions with Western Australia; and**
- **for related purposes.**

*[Assented to DATE MONTH 2025]*

The Youth Parliament of Western Australia enacts as follows:

## **Part 1 — Preliminary**

### **1. Short Title**

This is the *Future Skills and Education Advancement Act 2025*.

### **2. Commencement**

This Act comes into operation on the day on which this Act receives the Youth Governor's Assent.

### **3. Terms used**

In this Act —

***accredited micro-credentials*** means nationally recognized, quality-assured certifications of specific skills or knowledge, issued by approved providers and designed to be stackable toward larger qualifications;

***Action Plan*** refers to the Annual Student Retention Action Plan, as outlined in section 40 of this Act;

***allied health*** means any occupation that involves, but is not limited to—

- (a) physiotherapy;
- (b) occupational therapy;
- (c) speech pathology;
- (d) dietetics; and
- (e) medical imaging and radiation therapy;

***Career Bridging Grants*** refers to the Career Bridging Grants Program, as outlined in Part 5, Division 2 of this Act;

***completion rates*** refers to the number of tertiary students as a percentage that fully complete their enrolled university course;

**Consolidated Account** means the account established under section 64 of the *Constitution Act 1889*, into which all revenues or moneys raised or received by the Government of Western Australia are required to be paid, and from which appropriations for the services of the Government are made, except where otherwise provided by law;

**Council** means the Industry Education Advisory Council;

**corpus** means the principal amount invested into the TEEF Account, as well as the total sum invested in the account;

**Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD)** refers to groups and individuals who are different based on religion, language, and ethnicity, and whose ancestry is not predominantly Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Celtic, or Indigenous;

**Directive** refers to the Student Employment Priority Directive, as outlined by Part 4, Division 2 of this Act;

**disability** refers to long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments, which in interaction with various barriers may hinder an individual's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others;

**eligible role** means any occupation that involves, but is not limited to—

- (a) involves duties for which an enrolled student may reasonably be trained, supervised or supported within the scope of their employment; and
- (b) can reasonably be performed without undue interference with that student's academic commitments;

**emergency** means a situation that poses an immediate risk to the health, safety, housing, or financial security of a student, and that requires urgent intervention or support to prevent further harm or crisis escalation;

***emerging industries*** are fields that are experiencing significant growth, innovation, and transformation, often driven by technological advancements or shifts in societal needs;

***energy transition*** means the shift from the use of fossil fuel-based energy systems to low-emissions or zero-emissions energy systems, including changes in—

- (a) energy production;
- (b) energy distribution and infrastructure;
- (c) consumption patterns; and
- (d) related workforce, economic, and policy frameworks with the aim of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing sustainability in the energy sector;

***enrolled student*** means a person undertaking a diploma, undergraduate, or postgraduate course with an active enrolment status at a public university;

***equitable access*** means fair opportunity for all students, regardless of geographical location, socioeconomic status, or educational background, to engage with and benefit from the PEARL initiative;

***external community service*** means non-university service providers, including not-for-profit organisations, government agencies, and community-based entities, that deliver specialised support in areas such as mental health, housing, financial assistance, legal aid, or emergency relief;

***First 48 Response System*** means a structured, documented coordination mechanism that is designed to ensure students in distress are likely to receive an appropriate and timely response, without guaranteeing resolution within the timeframe;

***industry groups*** means associations or organisations that represent the interests of businesses and employers within a

specific sector, advocating for workforce needs, industry standards, and economic development;

***industry training advisory bodies*** means organisations that provide guidance and expertise on the skills and training needs of specific industries to ensure education and workforce development programs align with current industry standards and future demands;

***Integrated Student Support Hubs***, as outlined in section 38 of this Act;

***Integrated Student Support Services***, as outlined under Part 4, Division 4 of this Act;

***marginalised*** means student cohorts who experience systemic barriers to full participation in educational, social, or economic life due to structural inequality, discrimination, or historical exclusion. This includes but is not limited to students with lived experience of homelessness, family violence, mental ill-health, disability, incarceration, or care arrangements;

***micro-credential ladder*** means a structured sequence of micro-credentials that illustrates pathways between fields, including entry-level credentials, options for cross-industry movement, and mechanisms for skills equivalency and recognition of prior learning;

***mining royalty*** means a payment to the Western Australian government by a company that utilizes land for mineral extraction and is required by law to do so;

***Minister*** means the current Minister for the Western Australian Department of Education;

***on-campus role*** means a casual or part-time paid role administered directly by a public university and located on a university campus or within university-operated facilities;

***operational funding*** means financial resources allocated to support the internal activities, services, or infrastructure of a public university in connection with its obligation under the Student Employment Priority Directive, including but not limited to staffing, systems, student employment administration, training programs, and related service delivery costs;

***PEARL initiative*** means the Personal Empowerment and Readiness for Life initiative established under this Act to deliver education and resources designed to enhance life skills and civic knowledge among students and young adults;

***Prac*** means the university mandated practical work placement of a tertiary student to gain work experience in their field of study; can be shorthand for “Practical work placement;”

***preferred hiring directive*** means a requirement issued under this Act that obliges universities to offer eligible on-campus roles to enrolled students prior to advertising the roles externally;

***program*** means the set of courses, modules, and learning resources delivered under the PEARL initiative;

***Public Financial Management (PFM)*** means the processes, policies, and systems used by governments to plan, direct, control, and account for public resources and spending in a transparent and efficient way;

***reasonable effort*** means demonstrable action taken by a public university to ensure enrolled students are provided meaningful and timely access to eligible roles prior to external advertisement, including but not limited to internal job portals, early-release notifications, or targeted communications;

***regional*** means all parts or areas of Western Australia that are outside of the Perth metropolitan region, as defined in the *Planning and Development Act 2005*, Schedule 3;

**Registered Training Organisation (RTO)** means a training provider that is approved by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) to deliver recognised Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses;

**relevant government agencies** means Commonwealth, State, or Territory agencies with jurisdiction or subject-matter expertise relevant to the scope of the PEARL initiative;

**remote** means an area of the State that is classified as “Remote” or “Very Remote” according to the latest Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) Remoteness Structure published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS);

**required learning materials** are any collection of objects or resources that an educator deems useful or necessary in teaching and learning situations to help achieve desired learning outcomes;

**satellite campus** means a branch of a university in a different location to the main campus which provides access to students who cannot access onsite learning;

**serious distress** means any acute or escalating condition of mental, academic, or financial strain that significantly impairs a student’s wellbeing, academic performance or daily functioning, and which may reasonably require formal intervention;

**short course** means a focused learning program, as used by TAFEs and universities, typically lasting from a few hours to several weeks, designed to build specific skills or knowledge without leading to a full qualification;

**specialist qualifications** means a set of technical skills, certifications or professional licenses that are required by law, regulation, or university policy for the safe and lawful performance of a role; that are not reasonably expected to be

held by a typical undergraduate, postgraduate, or diploma-level student at the time of application; and that are necessary at the time of hiring and not feasibly trainable within the duration of the employment period;

**student** means any individual enrolled in an educational institution or undertaking the PEARL program through approved delivery methods;

**subject matter experts** means individuals or entities with demonstrated expertise in areas covered by the PEARL initiative, including but not limited to financial literacy, civic education, and administrative literacy;

**TAFE** means Technical and Further Education;

**TEEF** means the Tertiary Education Endowment Fund;

**TEEF Account** means the Tertiary Education Endowment Account, where the Minister for Education is responsible for the operational spending of the TEEF and in which other lawful contributions can be made;

**tertiary education** means all post-secondary education, including university degrees and vocational education and training (VET) through institutions like TAFEs and private colleges;

**the Board** means the TEEF Advisory Board established under section 10 of this Act;

**Treasurer** means a senior government official responsible for managing state finances but is not permitted to control spending or investments from the TEEF Account unless explicitly allowed by the Bill;

***underrepresented*** means any student cohort that is statistically less likely to access, participate in, or complete tertiary education compared to the general student population, including but not limited to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from low socio-economic backgrounds, students with disability, regional and remote students, and students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;

***utilities bills*** includes, but is not limited to, electricity, gas, water, and telecommunications services bills;

***WASPP*** means the WA Skills Pathway Portal;

***WATPP*** means the Western Australian Tertiary Placements Payment;

***WATSAP*** means the Western Australian Tertiary Student Assistance Payment.

## **Part 2 — The Western Australian Tertiary Education Endowment Fund**

### **5. Establishment of the WA Tertiary Education Endowment Fund**

- (1) The Western Australian Tertiary Education Endowment Fund Account is created to support the strategic objectives, as outlined in section 11.
- (2) The TEEF Account is an agency special purpose account under the *Financial Management Act 2006*, section 16.
- (3) The TEEF Account is to be administered by the Minister for Education
- (4) Money standing in the credit of the TEEF Account is to be held in the Public Bank Account, subject to any investment of that money under the *Financial Management Act 2006*, section 37(1).

### **5. Credits to the TEEF from forecast royalty income**

- (1) In each financial year that starts on or after this Act receives the Youth Governor's Assent—
  - (a) the TEEF is to be credited with 5% of the forecast mining royalty income for the financial year; and
  - (b) that amount is to be credited to the TEEF Account and charged to the Consolidated Account, which is to the extent necessary, appropriated accordingly.

### **6. Additional money to be credited to the TEEF**

In addition to the amounts credited to the TEEF under section 5, the following amounts are also credited to the TEEF—

- (a) any income derived from investment of money standing to the credit of the TEEF;
- (b) any other money made lawfully available to the TEEF.

**7. Application of the TEEF**

- (1) The Minister may do the following—
- (a) make arrangements that the Minister considers will further, or facilitate the furthering of, the strategic objectives outlined in section 11;
  - (b) approve arrangements—
    - (i) that have already been made (whether by the Minister for Education or otherwise); and
    - (ii) that the Minister for Education considers will further or facilitate the furthering of the objectives outlined in section 11.

**8. Financial oversight and responsibility**

- (1) The Minister has primary authority for the expenditure and allocation of funds from the TEEF Account, in alignment with the strategic objectives outlined in section 11.
- (2) The TEEF Advisory Board has the mandate to provide independent oversight of the management of the TEEF Account and other relevant structures.
- (3) The Treasurer has no authority to direct or intervene in the expenditure or investment of the TEEF Account, except as otherwise stated in this Act.
- (4) The *Financial Management Act 2006* applies to the TEEF Account only to the extent it is not inconsistent with this Act, and where inconsistencies exist, this Act prevails.
- (5) The Minister must not approve any expenditure from the TEEF Account without first seeking a written recommendation from The Board in accordance with section 9(2).

**9. Establishment of the TEEF Advisory Board**

- (1) Pursuant to section 7(1), the Minister must establish an advisory body to be known as the TEEF Advisory Board (referred to in this Act as "the Board"), with the mandate to—
  - (a) act as impartial guardians of the Western Australian Tertiary Education Endowment Fund Account and its associated structures;
  - (b) make appropriate arrangements to ensure the corpus of the TEEF Account is continuously growing;
  - (c) provide regular council, reports, and advice to the Government on the business of the Board, updates on The TEEF's growth and any other matters the Board deems important.
- (2) Before the Minister can make or approve any arrangements under section 7(1) that will operate during a financial year, or applying money standing to the credit of the TEEF Account in that financial year, the Minister must—
  - (a) direct the Board to make a recommendation on how the money standing to the credit of the TEEF Account should be applied during the financial year; and
  - (b) consider the Board's recommendation and any other advice that may be pertinent to the arrangement—
    - (i) if the Minister decides to make an arrangement that is considered against the Board's recommended actions, the Minister must justify their decision in a written declaration to the Legislative Assembly and the Board.
- (3) Subsection (2) does not apply to the establishment of the Board and associated processes under subsection (1).

**10. Composition of the Board and its governance**

- (1) The Board must consist of no more than eight members appointed by the Minister from a list of applicants, and each member must have experience of at least one of the following categories—
  - (a) the delivery of tertiary education;
  - (b) tertiary education policy and procedure;
  - (c) the public financial management in accordance with the *Public Financial Management Act 2006*;
  - (d) Western Australian Aboriginal tertiary education students or Torres Strait Islander education students;
  - (e) Culturally and Linguistically Diverse students;
  - (f) regional and remote Western Australian tertiary students, inclusive of internal and online students;
  - (g) students with disability; and
  - (h) students with experience of mental ill health.
- (2) All categories outlined under section 10(1) must be represented in board membership.
- (3) Members are appointed to a term not exceeding three years.
- (4) The Minister may appoint a chairperson of the board, and if the chairperson is absent, the members shall choose between their own numbers to nominate a temporary chairperson.
- (5) The Department of Education is responsible for providing the Board with the necessary administrative support which will allow the members to perform their legislatively required duties.
- (6) Members are required to meet at least once in a period not exceeding three months, with the means to be decided by the Board.
- (7) The Board must provide, at least one a year, a report that outlines—

- (a) the financial performance of the TEEF Account; and
- (b) any recommendations made to the Minister;
- (c) any matters that pertain to the strategic or operational objectives of the Board and of the TEEF Account and associated structures.

**11. Outlining strategic objectives of the TEEF**

- (1) A arrangements and decisions made by the Minister for Education or The Board must align with strategic objectives outlined by The Board.
- (2) These strategic objectives shall include, but are not limited to—
  - (a) identification of priority funding areas;
  - (b) assessment of critical skill gaps within WA’s economy;
  - (c) funding for essential research sectors within tertiary providers.
- (3) The Board must comprehensively review these primary objectives every three years and provide recommendations for updating these objectives to be approved by the Minister and to be tabled in Parliament thereafter.

**12. Temporary special provisions within this Act**

- (1) The Minister for Education must allocate approximately 30% of the TEEF’s income from royalties that are not entering the corpus to the following provisions of this Act for the first two years of its operation—
  - (a) approximately 10% to the WATSAP as outlined in Part 3 of this Act; and
  - (b) approximately 7.5% to the WA Tertiary Practical Placements Payment as outlined in Part 3 of this Act; and
  - (c) approximately 2.5% to the PEARL initiative as outlined in Part 4 of this Act; and

- (d) approximately 5% to the Mandated Integrated Student Support Services in Public Tertiary Institutions initiative as outlined in Part 4 of this Act; and
  - (e) approximately 5% to career bridging grants as outlined in Part 5 of this Act.
- (2) After the two-year period has expired, the allocation of these funds is to be determined by the Board, pursuant to section 7.

## **Part 3 — Financial assistance to WA’s tertiary students**

### **Division 1 — The WA Tertiary Student Assistance Payment**

#### **13. Establishment of the WA Tertiary Student Assistance Payment**

The Western Australian Tertiary Student Assistance Payment (WATSAP) is a targeted financial support to first year university students to aid with rising, non-course related costs.

#### **14. Eligibility criteria to receive the WATSAP**

To be eligible for the WATSAP, individuals must meet all the following criteria, they must—

- (a) be an Australian citizen or permanent resident; and
- (b) reside primarily within an address located in WA; and
- (c) be enrolled in an applicable part-time or full-time University Course or TAFE course; and
- (d) be in a first year of their course, or within three months of starting their first year in that course.

#### **15. Amount paid to those eligible for the WATSAP**

- (1) Upon successfully applying for the WATSAP, and satisfying the criteria outlined in section 11(1), the individual shall receive—
  - (a) \$225 at the beginning of the first tertiary semester of the calendar year; and
  - (b) \$225 at the beginning of the second tertiary semester of the calendar year.
- (2) The Minister for Tertiary and International Education shall decide the specific date individuals shall receive the payment and notify the public of this at least 28 days before the start of the university term.

**16. Course conditions pertaining to the WATSAP**

- (1) A recipient of the WATSAP must not withdraw from, or cease to be enrolled in, any unit after the recipient's University's published unit amendment deadline has passed, as this will disqualify them from the second payment instalment, unless—
  - (a) sufficient evidence is provided to the Department of Education to qualify as an extraneous or special circumstance and justify withdrawal, where this can include—
    - (i) evidence of a medical condition, injury or mental health issue that poses significant impact to the recipient's ability to continue their studies, such as a medical certificate, hospital record or letter from a healthcare provider;
    - (ii) evidence of compassionate or personal circumstances such as the death of a close family member, domestic violence or an unexpected change in family circumstances, or other major life events that impact a student's ability to continue their studies;
    - (iii) evidence of substantial disruptions caused by natural disasters or emergencies.

**17. Duration of the WATSAP**

- (1) The first payments for the WATSAP shall be made at the beginning of the first semester after this act receives royal ascent and shall occur for the next two years after the first.
- (2) The WATSAP shall not be granted to students for longer than three years without legislative approval to extend the period in which the payment can be offered

**Division 2 — Assisting tertiary students with practical placements within enrolled courses**

**18. The Western Australian Tertiary Placements Payment**

(1) The Western Australian Tertiary Placements Payment (WATPP) is established for eligible students pursuant to section 14, undertaking a course or qualification that requires practical work placements (Pracs) in one of the following fields—

- (a) allied health;
- (b) paramedicine;
- (c) psychology; or
- (d) any additional discipline declared by the Minister for Tertiary and International Education.

**19. Amount prescribed for the WATPP**

A weekly payment of \$319.50 is available to eligible students under clause 18.

**20. Eligibility for the WATPP**

A student undertaking practical placements for course purposes must fit all the following criteria—

- (a) be a domestic student currently enrolled in a Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP);
- (b) be pursuing a bachelor's or master's degree in a course outlined in section 18;
- (c) be undertaking a mandatory placement that demands more than 15 hours a week;
- (d) be either—
  - (i) receiving a Commonwealth income support payment, including; or
    - i. AusStudy;
    - ii. ABStudy;

- iii. Youth Allowance; or
- iv. DVA Education Allowance;
- (ii) earning no more than \$1,500 per week.

**21. WATPP timeframe**

The WA Tertiary Placements Payment shall begin after the Commonwealth Practical Payments have begun, or after this Act has received the Youth Governor's Assent.

## **Part 4 — Advancing student opportunity and support**

### **Division 1 — Student Employment Priority Directive**

#### **22. Duty to identify eligible roles**

- (1) A public university must, at the beginning of each academic year, identify general occupational roles suitable for employment by enrolled students.
- (2) The university must maintain and annually review an internal list of eligible roles to ensure consistency with the purpose of this Directive.
- (3) The list must be made available to the Department of Education upon request.

#### **23. Student priority advertising period**

- (1) A public university must make each eligible role available to enrolled students for a period of no fewer than seven calendar days before advertising the role to the general public.
- (2) The advertising period under subsection 22(1) must occur through a job portal, platform or communication method accessible to all enrolled students;
  - (a) A university may advertise an eligible role to the general public before the expiry of the seven-day period only if—
    - (i) the role must be urgently filled to maintain core operations; and
    - (ii) the university documents its justification and makes this available to the Department of Education upon request.

**24. Reasonable effort to preference students**

- (1) A public university must take reasonable steps to ensure enrolled students are given priority consideration for eligible roles.
- (2) Reasonable steps include, but are not limited to—
  - (a) prioritised internal advertisements;
  - (b) direct communication with eligible student cohorts;
  - (c) integration with learning management platforms; and
  - (d) provision of role relevant training or support where appropriate.

**Division 2 — Reporting and transparency for the Directive**

**25. Reporting requirements**

- (1) A public university must submit an annual summary report to the Department of Education by the 31<sup>st</sup> of March following each academic year.
- (2) The report must include—
  - (a) the number of eligible roles identified;
  - (b) the number of roles advertised to students;
  - (c) the number of student applications received;
  - (d) the number of roles filled by enrolled students; and
  - (e) any relevant feedback from students or departments, where appropriate.
- (3) A university must submit the report even where no roles were filled by students.

**26. Incentives and recognition**

- (1) The Department of Education may recognise a public university that demonstrates exemplary performance in implementing this Directive.

- (2) Recognition may be based on—
  - (a) the proportion of eligible roles filled by enrolled students;
  - (b) evidence of strong communication and outreach efforts;
  - (c) innovative practices that promote student participation in on-campus roles; and
  - (d) student feedback, where available.
- (3) Recognition may include—
  - (a) publication of performance outcomes in an annual report issued by the Department of Education;
  - (b) official commendation by the Minister for Education; and
  - (c) eligibility for performance linked incentives under section 27.

**27. Performance-based funding incentives**

- (1) The Minister may, on the recommendation of the Department of Education, allocate additional operational funding to a public university that demonstrates high compliance and strong student uptake under this Directive.
- (2) Funding may be provided to—
  - (a) support student employment infrastructure or systems;
  - (b) subsidise student wages in priority roles.
- (3) The amount and purpose of funding must be proportionate to the scale of performance and must be reported in accordance with public finance transparency requirements.
- (4) All incentive allocations made under this section must be published annually in the Departments of Education’s public expenditure report.

**28. Formal review by the Department of Education**

- (1) The Department of Education must conduct a formal review of the implementation and impact of this, following the completion of the first academic year under this Directive.
- (2) The review must assess—
  - (a) student application and hiring rates under the directive;
  - (b) the effect of student employment in academic performance and wellbeing, where measurable;
  - (c) administrative and operational impact on public universities; and
  - (d) feedback from student employees and university staff.

**29. Ongoing review and continuous improvement**

- (1) The Department of Education must conduct a comprehensive review of the Directive every three years following implementation.
- (2) A review under this section may recommend—
  - (a) refinements to definitions, eligibility criteria, or reporting mechanisms;
  - (b) expansion of the directive to additional education sectors or roles;
  - (c) development of centralised tools or support services for student employment coordination; or
  - (d) discontinuation of the directive if it is no longer achieving its intended purpose.
- (3) The Minister must table a copy of each review's findings in Parliament.

**30. Departmental guidance and clarification**

- (1) The Department of Education may issue written guidelines to support the implementation of this Directive.

- (2) Any guidance or interpretive decision issued by the Department of Education must be consistent with the purpose and objectives of this Directive as set out in Part 4, where such guidance must not alter the intent or negate the functional obligations set out in Part 4.
- (3) Any written guidelines or interpretive decisions issued by the Department of Education under these sections must be made publicly available in a timely manner, including publication of the Department of Education's official website.

**31. Commencement**

This Directive shall commence on the next academic year or when granted royal ascent

**32. Sunset clause**

- (1) If after two full review cycles under section 29, the Minister determines that the directive has failed to achieve its intended purpose, the Minister may, by notice in the Gazette, declare that this directive ceases to have effect on a date specified in the notice.
- (2) The declaration must be accompanied by a tabled review report in the Parliament and a justification.

**Division 3 — The Personal Empowerment and Readiness for Life Initiative**

**33. Establishing the Personal Empowerment and Readiness for Life Initiative**

- (1) The Personal Empowerment and Readiness for Life (PEARL) initiative is established to meet support students in their transition from tertiary education into life.
- (2) The PEARL initiative is to be administered by the Department for Education.

- (3) The Minister for Education may, by written direction, assign responsibilities related to the implementation and function of PEARL to another government agency.

**34. Scope and content**

- (1) The PEARL initiative is to include, but is not limited to, courses and resources on the following topics—
- (a) financial literacy, including payment of taxes, utilities bills and budgeting;
  - (b) civics education, including the structure and function of government, voting systems and interpreting policy impacts; and
  - (c) the method to correctly fill out essential forms, including but not limited to housing applications, medical documentation and passport forms.
- (2) The program is to be regularly reviewed and updated with in consultation with relevant government agencies, education institutions and subject matter experts.

**35. Modes of delivery**

- (1) The PEARL initiative will be delivered through an online program as individuals' modules on each subject.
- (2) The Department of Education must ensure equitable access to all modules under the PEARL initiative, regardless of student location.

**36. Monitoring and evaluation of PEARL**

- (1) The Department of Education must monitor participation rates and outcomes of the PEARL initiative.
- (2) The Department of Education must prepare and submit an annual report to the Minister of Education outlining—
- (a) program delivery and uptake;

- (b) key outcomes and performance indicators; and
- (c) recommendations for improvement.

**37. Annual report to Parliament**

The Minister must table the report referred to in section 36(2) before Parliament within 60 days of receiving it, or, if Parliament is not sitting, within 60 days of the next sitting day

**Division 4 — Mandated Integrated Student Support Services in public tertiary institutions**

**38. Monitoring and evaluation of PEARL**

- (1) All public tertiary education institutions in Western Australia must establish Integrated Student Support Hubs by consolidating existing campus services into a centralised, accessible point.
- (2) Integrated Student Support Hubs must coordinate the following services, either through direct provision or coordinated referral pathways—
  - (a) academic support services;
  - (b) mental health and wellbeing services;
  - (c) financial counselling and emergency support;
  - (d) housing support and referrals.
- (3) Institutions must use existing infrastructure and resources to deliver services under subsection (2), with no additional capital grants provided under this Act.
- (4) Institutions with regional or satellite campuses must ensure equivalent services are made available through digital, telehealth, or hybrid models.

**39. Minimum service standards and State funding**

- (1) All public tertiary education institutions must ensure the following service standards—
  - (a) on-demand academic support services available online or through tele-support;
  - (b) 24/7 mental health services, including telehealth counselling and crisis response, with regional and remote access prioritised; and
  - (c) emergency financial assistance facilitated through streamlined application pathways to existing funding mechanisms, including scholarships, student support grants, and relevant government or philanthropic relief programs.
- (2) Institutions are responsible for the staffing, coordination, and delivery of services required under sections 38 and 39, in a manner that builds upon and complements existing university infrastructure and support systems, with minimal additional administrative burden.

**40. Annual student retention action plan**

- (1) All public tertiary education providers must prepare and submit an Annual Student Retention Action Plan to the Minister for Education.
- (2) The Action Plan must include, but is not limited to—
  - (a) service utilisation metrics, including data on student engagement with academic, mental health, financial, and housing support services;
  - (b) improvement strategies, detailing how the institution intends to enhance service delivery and effectiveness based on student feedback and service outcomes;
  - (c) strategies to address barriers to student retention, with a specific focus on underrepresented, regional, and

marginalised student cohorts grants, and relevant government or philanthropic relief programs.

- (3) The Minister must table the annual Student Retention Action Plans in Parliament within 60 days of receipt, or if Parliament is not sitting, within 60 days of the next sitting day

**41. Collaboration and referral standards**

- (1) All Integrated Student Support Hubs must establish formal referral pathways with external community services, including but not limited to—
  - (a) local mental health providers;
  - (b) youth homelessness and housing support organisations; and
  - (c) financial counselling and emergency relief providers.
- (2) Each institution must publish a public directory of these partnerships and update it annually.

**42. Departmental evaluation and oversight**

- (1) The Department of Education must conduct a formal evaluation of the Integrated Student Support framework every three years.
- (2) The evaluation must assess—
  - (a) student wellbeing, academic progress, and retention outcomes;
  - (b) effectiveness and accessibility of telehealth, tutoring, and financial assistance services;
  - (c) equity of service delivery for regional, remote, Indigenous, and low-income students.
- (3) The Department of Education must table a copy of the evaluation report in Parliament within 90 days of its completion.

**43. First 48 Response System framework for crisis response**

- (1) Each public tertiary education institution must implement a First 48 Response System, to ensure that any student reporting serious distress, whether financial, academic, or mental health-related, receives a first point of contact within 48 hours of the report being made.
- (2) The First 48 Response System must include, at a minimum—
  - (a) a designated contact officer for each category of support—academic, mental health, and housing/financial—responsible for initial outreach and triage;
  - (b) a centralised case referral platform, hosted within the Integrated Student Support Hub, that records student distress reports, assigns relevant officers, and facilitates case tracking;
  - (c) a check-in and follow-up protocol, where—
    - (i) check-in refers to the first direct outreach made to the student by a relevant support officer within the 48-hour period; and
    - (ii) follow-up refers to subsequent contact made to ensure the student has been linked with appropriate services, and to assess whether further support is needed.
- (3) The Department of Education may issue minimum service standards, performance metrics, or template frameworks to support implementation and ensure statewide consistency across institutions.

## **Part 5 — Workforce development and career transitions**

### **Division 1 — Western Australian Skills Pathway Portal**

#### **44. Establishment of the Western Australian Skills Pathway Portal**

The Western Australian Skills Pathway Portal (WASPP) is to be established by the Department of Training and Workforce Development to address current and projected skill needs across industries in Western Australia by supporting individuals through skills transferability, retraining pathways, and direct access to education and funding opportunities.

#### **45. Function of the WASPP**

WASPP must serve as a centralised digital resource to—

- (a) provide current and projected industry skill needs and shortages;
- (b) offer a skills transferability tool for individuals to identify retraining options based on previous employment and education;
- (c) provide access to the PEARL program; and
- (d) list available grants, financial assistance, and scholarships offered by institutions or private bodies.

#### **46. Micro-credential mapping and skills transferability**

- (1) The Department of Training and Workforce Development must consult with and coordinate the following stakeholders, to maintain relevant and up-to-date training pathways—
  - (a) TAFE institutions;
  - (b) universities and higher education providers;
  - (c) industry training advisory bodies; and
  - (d) employers and industry groups.

- (2) WASPP must include micro-credential ladders illustrating pathways between fields, including—
  - (a) entry-level credentials and bridging programs;
  - (b) options for movement across industries; and
  - (c) skills equivalency and recognition of prior learning

### **Division 2 — Career Bridging Grants Program**

#### **47. Establishment of Career Bridging Grants**

- (1) The Minister for Training and Workforce Development must establish a financial assistance scheme to be known as the Career Bridging Grants Program.
- (2) The purpose of the Career Bridging Grants Program is to provide financial support to eligible individuals seeking to retrain for employment in designated priority sectors.

#### **48. Eligibility criteria to receive a Career Bridging Grant**

- (1) To be eligible for a grant under this Section, an individual must—
  - (a) be a resident of Western Australia;
  - (b) have an annual income below \$60,000;
  - (c) intend to enrol in an approved course or program that supports transition into a priority sector; and
  - (d) not be in receipt of any other government funding for the same course, unless otherwise approved.
- (2) An individual is ineligible for a Career Bridging Grant if any of the following apply—
  - (a) they have received a Career Bridging Grant previously; and
  - (b) they are currently or have previously worked or studied in a priority sector.

**49. Priority sector designation**

- (1) Priority sectors may include, but are not limited to—
  - (a) aged care and disability support services;
  - (b) cybersecurity and digital infrastructure;
  - (c) clean energy and environmental sustainability;
  - (d) early childhood and school education;
  - (e) allied health and paramedicine; and
  - (f) other sectors as prescribed by the Minister for Training and Workforce Development.
- (2) In making such a determination, the Minister for Training and Workforce Development must consider—
  - (a) labour shortages;
  - (b) future workforce projections; and
  - (c) economic and social benefit to Western Australia.
- (3) The Minister of Training and Workforce Development can, by notice, publish in the Gazette, other identified priority sectors.

**50. Approved courses and providers**

- (1) Career Bridging Grants may be used to support enrolment in—
  - (a) short courses;
  - (b) accredited micro-credentials;
  - (c) certificate-level vocational education and training; and
  - (d) other non-award or bridging programs recognised by the Department of Training and Workforce Development.
- (2) Eligible programs must be delivered by—
  - (a) Registered Training Organisations (RTO's);
  - (b) publicly funded universities or TAFEs; and
  - (c) other institutions as approved by the Department of Training and Workforce Development.

**51. Grant coverage**

- (1) The value of a grant awarded under this Division may include funding for—
  - (a) tuition or course fees;
  - (b) required learning materials; and
  - (c) transport and travel costs associated with course attendance.
- (2) Career Bridging Grants may be awarded for full-time study.

**52. Prioritisation of applications**

In assessing applications, the Department of Training and Workforce Development must give priority to—

- (a) applicants from regional, remote, or outer metropolitan areas;
- (b) applicants from CALD backgrounds;
- (c) Indigenous applicants;
- (d) applicants with a disability; and
- (e) applicants facing significant housing or financial stress that may burden their access to employment or education.

**Division 3 — Reporting and accountability**

**53. Establishment of the Industry Education Advisory Council**

- (1) The Industry Education Advisory Council is established by the Department of Training and Workforce Development.
- (2) The Council is to act as an advisory body to support alignment between education, training, and workforce needs across Western Australia.

**54. Composition of the Council**

- (1) The Council must include representatives appointed by the Minister for Training and Workforce Development from the following sectors—
  - (a) peak industry bodies and employer groups;
  - (b) trade unions;
  - (c) TAFEs and other vocational education and training providers;
  - (d) universities and higher education institutions; and
  - (e) The Department of Training and Workforce Development.
- (2) The Minister of Training and Workforce Development may appoint additional members as required to ensure appropriate representation of —
  - (a) regional and remote areas;
  - (b) various population groups; and
  - (c) emerging industries.
- (3) Members are to be appointed for a term not exceeding three years and may be reappointed.
- (4) Members of the Council are to be remunerated in accordance with the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal.

**55. Functions of the Council**

The Council is responsible for—

- (a) conducting an annual review of the alignment between training programs and current or projected workforce needs;
- (b) publishing sector-based workforce and skills outlooks, including recommendations for career transition pathways;

- (c) Advising the Minister for Training and Workforce Development on emerging priority areas for upskilling, micro-credentials, and skills investment;
- (d) supporting the development and continuous improvement of the WASPP; and
- (e) facilitating consultation between industry, education providers, and government on matters relating to training and workforce development.

**56. Reporting requirements**

- (1) The Council must submit an annual report to the Minister for Training and Workforce Development by 30<sup>th</sup> of September each year, outlining—
  - (a) key findings of workforce alignment review;
  - (b) skills priorities and gaps identified in collaboration with industry and education stakeholders;
  - (c) recommendation for government action; and
  - (d) work undertaken by the Council throughout the year.
- (2) The Minister of Training and Workforce Development must table the report in Parliament within 30 sitting days of receiving it.

**57. Public reporting dashboard**

- (1) The Department of Training and Workforce Development must maintain a publicly accessible dashboard on WASPP that reports quarterly, the—
  - (a) uptake of bridging and retraining grants;
  - (b) usage statistics of the WASPP and PEARL; and
  - (c) employment outcomes of individuals completing funded training programs.
- (2) All data published under this section must be—
  - (a) accurate and up to date as of the most recent quarter;

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- (b) presented in an accessible and understandable format;  
and
- (c) made available for public download.