

Annual Report

2022
23



Acknowledgement of Country

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

Table of Contents

About Skillset	4
Chairman’s Report	6
Board of Directors	7
Chief Executive Officer’s Report	9
Chief Financial Officer’s Report	10
Skillset’s Services	12
General Manager’s Report	15
Partnering with Local Government	16
Head of Skillset Senior College Report	18
Year in Review	21

About Skillset

Skillset is a leading regional not-for-profit organisation that offers apprenticeship and traineeship services, skills development and mentoring programs, recruitment and labour hire services, and alternative education pathways through its independent senior secondary school, Skillset Senior College.

Established in Bathurst in 1982, Skillset is committed to providing employment, education and skills development services that support the sustainability of regional communities into the future.

Our Vision

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

Our Purpose

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

Our Values



Respect



Collaboration



Professionalism



Integrity



Helping Others



Community



Anthea is a Year 10 student attending Denison College's Kelso High Campus and was a participant in the Training Services NSW Girls Can Too! program. In collaboration with Training Services NSW, Skillset organised a work tour for female students at Johnson's Towing and Mechanical in Bathurst as part of Skillset's Connecting Women to Trades program.



Chairman's Report

David Cooke

The last 12 months has been a significant period of change for Skillset. In addition to a new state and federal government; an overhaul of the apprentice incentive system; record low unemployment rates; and rising demand for youth services, there have also been changes within.

The most significant of these has been the appointment of Skillset's new CEO, Narelle Stocks. Narelle brings senior management experience from several community-based organisations in Western NSW. She is highly effective and passionate, and we are delighted to have Narelle leading Skillset's next chapter.

We are also excited to announce the acquisition of a commercial property in Bathurst. This purchase will allow us to relocate our Bathurst team to the CBD and will enable Skillset Senior College to repurpose our facilities in Havannah Street to accommodate expanded school enrolments.

Given the amount of change, I would like to extend the Board's thanks to the Skillset team who have persevered throughout the year, making an important impact in our region and delivering a positive financial result. Thank you also to my fellow directors for their support. I would like to note the contribution of Cr Graeme Hanger and thank him for his years of service.

Finally, I would also like to acknowledge and thank our outgoing CEO, Craig Randazzo. Skillset's sound financial position is a credit to Craig's leadership, dedication and commercial focus. Craig's other legacy is Skillset Senior College, which he was instrumental in establishing in 2015. We wish Craig every success in the future.

With so much change, now is a good time for a reset, reflecting on Skillset's vision of 'creating life-changing opportunities'. There is a further opportunity for Skillset to leverage its skills, networks and relationships to bring solutions to the region's workforce challenges and add value to our communities. There is much to do!

Board of Directors



David Cooke



Alan Ward



Craig Hort



Cr Graeme Hanger OAM



Ian Tooke



Jacqueline Woods



Cr Maree Statham



Reg Kidd



Simone Corby

Member Organisations

- Bathurst Business Chamber
- Bathurst Regional Council
- Blayney Shire Council
- Lithgow Shire Council
- Orange Business Chamber
- Orange City Council
- Parkes Shire Council

Lucas Payne, past Skillset apprentice and Moolarben Coal Operations Electrical Supervisor; Nicole Lees, Skillset Senior Workforce Consultant; and Betty Dray, First Year Electrical Apprentice.



“Apprentices are our future. Training them today is an investment, as they are the future workforce.”

Luke Smith - Electrical and Infrastructure Superintendent at Yancoal Australia Limited Moolarben Coal Operations



Chief Executive Officer's Report

Narelle Stocks

I would like to thank the Skillset Board for the trust they have placed in me to lead this incredible organisation as the first female CEO in its history. As a long-term resident of the Central West, I am passionate about working with organisations that are committed to strengthening regional communities and I am excited about the role that Skillset plays in creating life-changing opportunities for people and communities in regional NSW.

Skillset was established as Central West Group Apprentices by local councils and business chambers across Western NSW more than 40 years ago to address critical skills shortages in the region. Today, with record low unemployment and workforce issues significantly impacting businesses in all sectors and communities, Skillset's expertise in education, skills and employment is more relevant than ever.

In the year ahead, Skillset will continue to play a key role in promoting awareness and take up of trade careers, and supporting organisations who need staff, through our Group Training, Connecting Women To Trades program, and our Recruitment and Labour Hire services. We will also deliver programs that help community members improve their educational outcomes, boost their employability, define career paths, develop their skills and find jobs. Our Land Works, Youth Connect, and school-based trainee (SBAT) programs, as well as our role as the Employment Facilitator and Support Services for Workforce Australia's Local Jobs Program, will be central to this strategy.

As an organisation that has constantly evolved to meet the changing needs of the region, we are enthusiastic about the coming year. We take our role in the region seriously and remain steadfast about pursuing opportunities where we can add value, developing strategic partnerships, and continuing to offer programs and services which are aimed at generating career and employment outcomes to support the economic growth of the community.



Chief Financial Officer's Report

Emma Thomas

Reflecting on 2022/23, we are proud of the resilience and dedication of the Skillset team in navigating another dynamic year. Financially, we have again delivered strong results with a continued operating surplus and positive cash flows from operating activities.

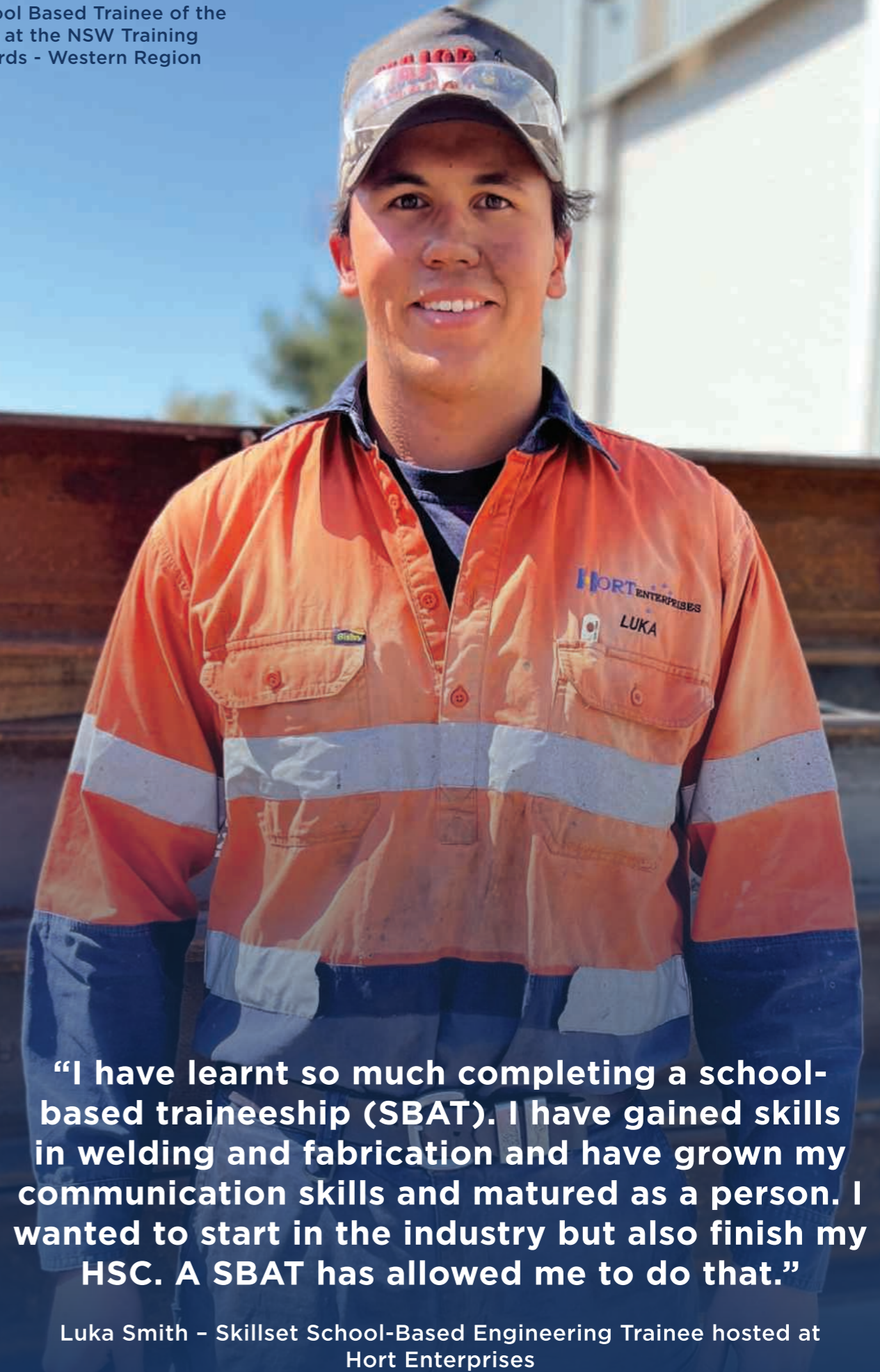
Maintaining a stable financial position for a number of years has enabled us to grow our asset base. In June 2023, Skillset acquired a commercial building in the Bathurst CBD to house our corporate staff, allowing Skillset and Skillset Senior College to expand. Additionally, our continued focus on innovation and quality outcomes has led to the introduction of new accounting software, resulting in increased operational efficiencies and improved internal control processes which should assist the business deliver sustainable growth into the future.

To safeguard the integrity of the information entrusted to us, Skillset proactively implemented the Australian Government's Right Fit For Risk (RFFR) framework during the financial year. As we negotiate an increasingly interconnected operating landscape, where collaboration with external providers and the integration of external IT systems are increasingly commonplace, Skillset remains dedicated to upholding the principles of transparency, confidentiality and security.

During the year, the Australian Government overhauled the structure and scope of the Australian Apprenticeships Incentives program. These modifications are a positive step towards addressing skill shortages in our region. While further refinements may be necessary, the program's changes emphasise a commitment to inclusiveness and recognise the evolving nature of apprenticeships and traineeships.

Looking ahead to 2023/24, we understand that challenges will persist, however we are confident in our ability to adapt and thrive. By staying true to our core values, fostering innovation, and nurturing the talents of our team, we are well-positioned to take advantage of opportunities and overcome potential obstacles in our path.

Luka Smith was named 2023 School Based Trainee of the Year at the NSW Training Awards - Western Region



“I have learnt so much completing a school-based traineeship (SBAT). I have gained skills in welding and fabrication and have grown my communication skills and matured as a person. I wanted to start in the industry but also finish my HSC. A SBAT has allowed me to do that.”

Luka Smith - Skillset School-Based Engineering Trainee hosted at Hort Enterprises

Building a brighter future, one career step at a time.

Skillset's services have been developed to support all stages of the career lifecycle.



skillset youth connect

Youth Connect helps young people aged 15 to 19 who have disengaged from school or finished school to take the next step in employment or education.



skillset senior college

Skillset provides alternative secondary schooling options for students who have experienced barriers to their education through its special assistance school, Skillset Senior College.



skillset CONNECTING WOMEN TO TRADES

The Connecting Women To Trades program encourages women to consider and explore trade careers, as well as gain practical experience via a work placement, apprenticeship or traineeship in a non-traditional trade.



skillset LAND WORKS

Land Works gives young people the opportunity to gain experience and training, as well as develop employability skills whilst providing professional natural environment maintenance and project management services to local organisations and businesses.



skillset GROUP TRAINING

Skillset recruits, employs, mentors and manages apprentices and trainees on behalf of host organisations who provide important 'on the job' training across a range of trades and industries.



skillset RECRUITMENT

Skillset offers end-to-end recruitment services which are tailored to the workforce requirements and goals of each client. Our services include permanent recruitment, labour hire and apprentices and trainees.



Skillset's UpSkill program aims to maximise the value of an organisation's workforce. UpSkill assists existing qualified workers obtain additional skills and qualifications which gives them the opportunity to work across multiple trade competencies.



skillset SCHOOL2TRADE

School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships

The School-based Apprenticeship and Traineeships (SBATs) program places Year 10, 11 and 12 students with a host employer to complete an apprenticeship or traineeship whilst at high school.

Workforce Australia

Local Jobs
Central West

As the Employment Facilitator and Support Services for Workforce Australia's Local Jobs Program, Skillset leads the Central West local Jobs and Skills Taskforce, focusing on encouraging collaboration amongst stakeholders, providers and local infrastructure projects to achieve skills and employment outcomes that meet local business needs.

Funding Acknowledgements

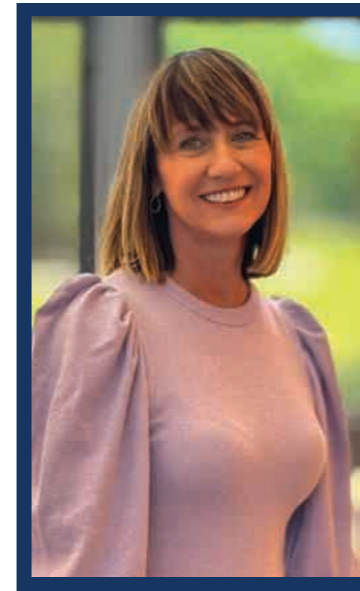
- Connecting Women to Trades project is funded under the grant program by Trade Pathways Program - Training Services NSW
- Youth Connect is a Get Back in the Game program funded by the NSW Department of Education
- Workforce Australia Local Jobs is funded by the Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations



Sarah Lane is a participant in Skillset’s Connecting Women to Trades program. She is completing a Project Management Traineeship with Hines Constructions.

“I want to break down barriers for women in non-traditional industries. Carpentry was something I grew up with and I always wanted to work in a field that mixes indoor and outdoor tasks. Skillset has been a huge support in helping me find my current role and I’m very grateful for that.”

Sarah Lane - Project Management Trainee at Hines Constructions



General Manager’s Report

Jane McWilliam

The past twelve months has reinforced Skillset’s unique position within the ‘for purpose’ sector.

Skillset’s Vision and Purpose could not be clearer – taking advantage of life-changing opportunities at any age and any stage of the career lifecycle requires access to quality career advice, information and guidance. These services are necessary to ensure that individuals are empowered and supported to make well-informed decisions about their careers, and can access education, skills development and employment.

Record low unemployment is currently a feature of the regional communities Skillset serves. In addition to this, a new set of challenges have emerged – competition for labour and a significant disincentive to engage in skills development, taking advantage of inflated wages, coupled with the burden of escalating living costs.

With Group Training remaining at the heart of what Skillset does, we welcome the NSW Government’s Vocational Education and Training (VET) Review. We understand the review is focused on identifying strengths, gaps and opportunities for improvement in skills development and training to support our communities.

Due to funding uncertainties that come with a change of government at both a state and federal level, Skillset has invested in the expansion of our Land Works program. This program engages and trains local people to improve and maintain the natural environment whilst building vital foundational skills required for the ‘world of work’. New energy initiatives, net zero targets and environmental restoration projects are key elements of this program.

As a final point, a big thank you to our Skillset staff who are driven by a passion and commitment to career development support and its enduring, life-changing influence. We salute our outgoing CEO, Craig Randazzo, and thank him for the foundations he established for our future. We also welcome our new CEO, Narelle Stocks as she embarks on a new era for the business.

Partnering with Local Government

Skillset has maintained strong relationships with local councils in Western NSW since our establishment in 1982. Local councils provide the essential programs and services that our communities use to function successfully and thrive. Partnering with councils across the region to support local communities is consistent with Skillset's values - working together to help others, change lives and make a difference.


In 2022/23, Skillset provided a range of employment, education and skills development services to these local government entities:




Skillset achieved the following outcomes in partnership with local councils in our region during the financial year:

Hosting 72 apprentices and trainees to local councils across the following trade specialisms:





34 individuals placed into labour hire



97 landscape maintenance, revegetation and environmental restoration projects completed



Lachlan Meath commenced his journey with Skillset in the Youth Connect program. He then became part of the Land Works team and is now an apprentice at Bathurst Regional Council.

“I really enjoy the satisfaction of standing back at the end of the job and looking at what I have done. And of course, I love seeing games of cricket and football being played on the grounds I have worked on throughout the week. I just really love what I do.”

Lachlan Meath - Skillset Sports Turf Management Apprentice hosted at Bathurst Regional Council



Head of Skillset Senior College Report

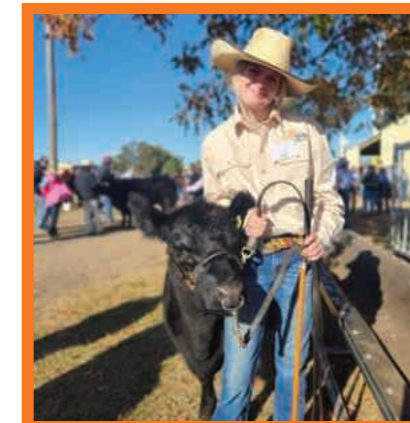
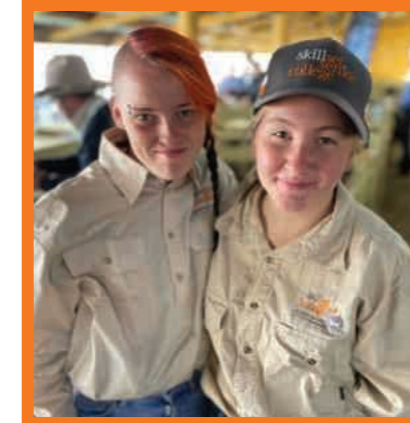
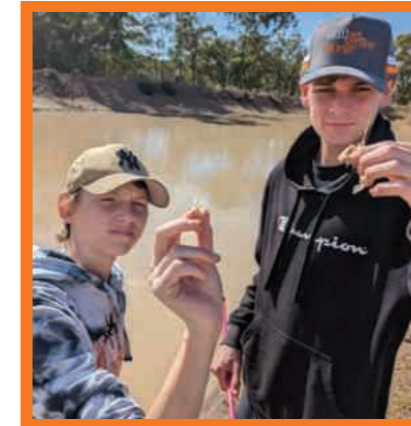
Abbey Barrett

Over the last financial year, Skillset Senior College has experienced many remarkable achievements, marking a period of growth, innovation, and continued 'engagement through relationships' for our students. At the forefront of these accomplishments was the hosting of the 2022 Alternative Education Conference. Attracting educators from diverse independent schools across NSW, the conference was a testament to the College's commitment to experiential learning. In particular, this event showcased Skillset's pioneering approach to education using student-centred, strengths-based teaching and solution-focused methodologies.

Another major achievement for the College over the last year was the outstanding success of its students. In 2022, 24 students completed their Higher School Certificate (HSC) - our largest cohort since the school's establishment in 2015. We also celebrated 71 students attaining their Record of School Achievement (RoSA), highlighting the school's profound impact on students in an alternative setting.

The Skillset Senior College Research Institute continued to make substantial contributions to educational research during the year. The completion of the grant-funded AIS NSW Schools-Based Research Project underscored the College's commitment to advancing educational practices. Significantly, this study demonstrated that school-based interventions can have a positive impact on adolescent mental health. The results of this landmark study are currently being shared throughout the independent school community, with the prospect of bringing fundamental change to mainstream educational approaches.

Reflecting on the last year, we acknowledge the collective effort and enthusiasm of students, families, staff and community partners in the College's success. Together, we have fostered an environment that nurtures individual growth and accomplishment, ensuring we continue to provide opportunities that achieve the 'best future imaginable' for our students.



Skillset and Denison College of Secondary Education have been long term partners and offer opportunities for high school students to explore employment and education pathways when they finish school.



“Kids are leaving Year 12 and you ask them what they want to do and they are still unsure. We know that we can reach out to Skillset and get support immediately. Enter Skillset and exit with a brighter future.”

Ken Barwick - Principal of Denison College, Bathurst High Campus

Year in Review

7,349

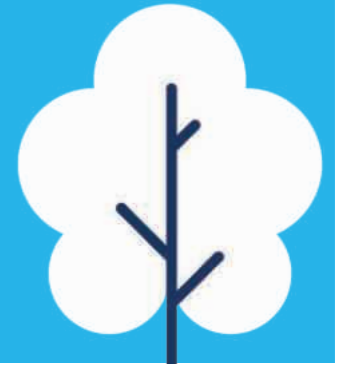
individuals supported by Skillset services



587 women completed job readiness training through the Connecting Women to Trades program

16,300 trees planted

skillset
LAND WORKS



578

outcomes achieved for youth through education, employment and training

skillset
youth connect



completion rate for Skillset Apprentices and Trainees

55% for directly employed apprentices and trainees

13%

of Skillset apprentices and trainees identify as First Nations

skillset.
senior college

168 students enrolled at Skillset Senior College in 2022



Imogen Green previously attended Skillset Senior College and is now a member of the Skillset Land Works crew completing landscape maintenance works for Bathurst Regional Council which will enhance the habitat for flying foxes along the Macquarie River.

“My introduction to the Land Works crew came through Skillset’s Connecting Women to Trades program, and it has been a fantastic journey. I like working in the environment and my co-workers make it a great place to work.”

Imogen Green - Land Works Crew Member

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