

FSO and Microsoft join forces to accelerate AI upskilling across the vocational education sector

New FSO Skills Accelerator-AI aims to reach learners and 30,000 VET educators and administrators in inaugural pilot

CANBERRA – 13 August 2025 – Future Skills Organisation (FSO) and Microsoft today announced the launch of the *FSO Skills Accelerator-AI*, a new strategic partnership between employers, industry and training providers to help close Australia's AI skills gap. Microsoft is founding partner to this initiative, which aims to deliver scalable, inclusive, and high-impact skilling programs nationwide through the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system.

Announced at FSO's National Forum in Canberra, *the FSO Skills Accelerator-AI* will target learners and over 30,000 VET educators and administrators, with the goal of equipping Australians with the capabilities needed to thrive in an AI-driven economy. This 12-month pilot will test a scalable, sustainable model that strengthens how industry and training collaborate. It will focus on collaboration and resource sharing; direct engagement between industry and educators; delivery of content and activities at scale and peer learning, practice sharing, and support.

Federal Minister for Skills and Training Andrew Giles welcomed the initiative, saying "Australia's future prosperity depends on our ability to equip our workforce with the skills they need for a rapidly changing world. The *FSO Skills Accelerator-AI* is a great example of how industry and the training sector can come together to meet that challenge and develop practical, scalable training."

The launch of this initiative also has the support of more than a dozen industry and training stakeholders including TAFE QLD, TAFE SA, Commonwealth Bank, Adobe, VCCI, Business NSW, National AI Centre, Canberra Institute of Technology, Chisholm Institute, Amazon Web Services, Lumify Learning, St George and Sutherland Community College, Swinburne University of Technology, Deloitte and Tech Council of Australia.

Future Skills Organisation is a Jobs and Skills Council funded by the Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. Its role is to partner with industry and the vocational training sector to fast-track innovative training solutions which meet the demand for the most important skills.

A Once-in-a-Generation Opportunity for National Workforce Transformation

Generative AI is set to transform how Australians work, with the potential to contribute [\\$115 billion](#) annually to the national economy by 2030. To seize this opportunity we must provide our workforce with the skills to harness AI's opportunity at speed and scale.

While AI offers tremendous benefits for employers and employees alike, it requires an education and training system that prepares the workforce for an AI-driven future. Australia's VET sector, which reaches over 5 million learners annually, is central to this effort.

"AI is already transforming how we work and unlocking new levels of productivity across industries. To fully realise its potential, we must work at pace to empower our educators and learners with the skills and confidence to thrive in this AI-enabled world," said **Patrick Kidd OBE OAM, CEO of Future Skills Organisation**. "This partnership with Microsoft, industry and leading training providers is about turning ambition into action: building a workforce that is ready for the future, today."

Introducing the *FSO Skills Accelerator-AI*

The new *FSO Skills Accelerator-AI* is being rolled out in partnership with industry, educators and trainers in a collaborative approach to co-design AI training and share resources to help us move quicker.

With a goal to reach learners and more than 30,000 VET educators and administrators, the *FSO Skills Accelerator-AI* is looking to drive a new benchmark for nationwide AI capability. The program's integration of AI training into national standards will empower Australians to keep pace and prosper in an AI-driven future.

“From pilot to policy, this partnership sets a bold blueprint for national workforce transformation. By harnessing the collective expertise and leadership of industry, we're not only preparing Australians for the jobs of tomorrow — we're actively shaping the future of work itself,” said **Rachel Bondi, Corporate Vice President SME Microsoft Asia and Independent Director at FSO**. “Microsoft is proud to support and enable this industry-led collaboration with Future Skills Organisation, helping to ensure every educator and learner gains access to practical, job-ready AI skills.”

Alongside [Microsoft Elevate](#) — Microsoft's \$4 billion global commitment to inclusive AI skilling — this partnership advances the company's goal of empowering 1 million Australians and New Zealanders with AI skills by 2026.

Future Skills Organisation and Microsoft are inviting government, industry, training providers, and community partners to join this initiative. More information on how to get involved can be found on the [FSO website](#).

Supporting Quotes from Partners:

Nick Clare, General Manager Commercial Development, VCCI: “We're excited to contribute to this initiative and the upcoming National Forum. Our AI skilling agenda is progressing rapidly, and we look forward to deepening our collaboration with FSO and other partners to help scale and enable this important work—especially for small and medium businesses where practical AI capabilities can unlock real productivity gains.”

TAFE SA: “The VET system is uniquely positioned to deliver the scale, agility and industry alignment needed to equip Australians with AI skills. We support the FSO Skills Accelerator-AI and its focus on strengthening collaboration between VET and industry to help empower learners with the skills they need to succeed in an AI-enabled economy.”

Lee Hickin, Executive Director, National AI Centre: “Australia's AI future depends on a national workforce that's ready to adapt, learn and lead. By embedding AI learning into vocational education, this project ensures educators have the support to deliver practical, job-ready AI knowledge and skills.”