



SKILLSIQ

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First Aid
Industry Reference Committee
Industry Skills Forecast – 2020 Update



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Introduction

Annual Update to Industry Skills Forecast and Proposed Schedule of Work 2020

In 2019, the First Aid Industry Reference Committee (IRC) submitted a detailed and comprehensive Industry Skills Forecast (ISF) to the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC). A copy is available on the [SkillsIQ's website](#). Detailed ISFs are required once every three years, and annual updates covering key research questions instead are prepared in the intervening years.

The information and evidence provided in this *2020 Annual Update* is based on:

- Consultation with the First Aid IRC members, and their wider networks (see Section B)
- Desktop research (drawing on key government, industry and education publications and statistics)
- Evidence and feedback collected through Training Package review project consultations
- Insights gathered via SkillsIQ's *2020 Future Skills Survey* (conducted during February and March 2020).

Note: The preparation of this document commenced prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and therefore many of the trends and sources shown will not reflect the true impact of COVID-19 on the Australian job market and the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector. Whilst the economic and social impact of COVID-19 is currently unprecedented and unknown, all industries across Australia are being affected. Future *Annual Updates* are expected to capture the impact of the pandemic across Australia as up-to-date sources and databases are made available.

IRC Sign-off

Sign-off of this Annual Update has been confirmed by the First Aid IRC.

Peter LeCornu, Chair, First Aid IRC.

Section A Industry, Workforce and Training Developments

1. Inform the AISC of any new industry workforce, skills developments or trends to emerge since the submission of a full ISF.

Definitions

First Aid: the immediate treatment or care given to a person suffering from an injury or illness until more advanced care is provided or the person recovers.

First Aider: a person who has successfully completed a nationally accredited training course or an equivalent level of training that has given them the competencies required to administer first aid.

Source: Safe Work Australia. First Aid in the Workplace Code of Practice (July 2019)

The First Aid Training Package Products are embedded throughout the qualifications of many industries and address skills that ensure the preservation of life and meet national legislative and industry guidelines. The First Aid Training Package Products give workers and individuals the ability to respond to emergencies and preserve life until professional medical assistance is provided. Immediate intervention through first aid can reduce the need for hospitalisation, increase the chances of the injured person surviving and ensure less complications in recovery.

First aid skills and knowledge can address a range of injury or health conditions,¹ including:

- anaphylaxis
- acute asthma
- bites and stings
- bleeding
- burns and scalds
- cardiac arrest/ heart attack
- choking
- diabetic emergency
- electric shock
- epileptic
- eye injuries
- febrile convulsions
- fractures & dislocations
- heat-induced conditions
- hypothermia
- poisoning
- shock
- concussion
- sprains & strains
- stroke
- head and spinal injuries

Organisations that utilise first aid include a range of public and private, small, medium and large entities spread across the country. The individuals who undertake first aid training may or may not be employed, and could be engaged in any number of fields including:

- first responders: doctors, nurses, paramedics, fire fighters, health care workers etc.
- other industries: office workers, government, tradespeople, factoryworkers etc.
- volunteers: social and sporting events etc.
- general public: grandparents, mums and dads etc.

¹ St John Ambulance Australia. *First Aid Facts* [Available at: <http://stjohn.org.au/first-aid-facts>] [Accessed 15 September 2020]

Many of the workforce challenges and developments raised in the previous 2019 ISF continue to be significant issues. These along with new developments as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic include:

COVID-19 impact

The COVID-19 pandemic, and the subsequent restrictions and increased concerns regarding infection control and sterilisation procedures have impacted first aid training significantly during 2020. On the 25 March 2020, the First Aid IRC issued advice to the AISC regarding training variations, and subsequently the AISC's COVID-19 Emergency Response Sub-Committee issued further advice to Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) on the delivery of first aid training.² The key requirements issued to RTOs delivering first aid training include:

- a requirement to undertake a risk assessment as to whether the training is urgent and essential
- if training delivery is considered essential, RTOs must follow Australian Government advice regarding social distancing, personal hygiene and isolation requirements. This includes delivery of face-to-face training to ensure there is ample space in the classroom between individuals
- RTOs must not allow students to breathe directly into a manikin and instead assess performing breaths to the side of the manikin
- Relevant jurisdictional health authorities should also be checked for any additional requirements for their location.

These recommendations are made to avoid contact and reduce the risk of the spread of infection. The First Aid IRC, along with the AISC, are monitoring the development of the pandemic and health regulations on an ongoing basis and the advice is provided for the period of the COVID-19 pandemic only.

Variations in State/Territory legislative requirements

As noted in the 2019 ISF, Safe Work Australia sets workplace requirements at a national level with the First Aid in the Workplace Code of Practice. However, the regulation of Work Health and Safety (WHS) practices occurs at the state and territory level and there are variations in requirements from one jurisdiction to another. The First Aid Training Package Products aim to encompass these differing requirements across states and territories. However, some employers find it difficult to determine the appropriate qualification or skill set required for their organisation to comply with the Safe Work Australia Code.

Legislation on the amount of training required and the need to keep skills up-to-date can be cumbersome, time consuming and costly for employers, with further confusion due to the differences in requirements in different jurisdictions and across organisation types.

Shortage of skilled staff

A lack of qualified staff is one of the challenges faced in administering first aid in a workplace, with difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff who have the required skills and knowledge. In many cases, the ability to administer first aid is in addition to the employee's primary role, and this may lead to a heavy workload, as well as the need for employees to be flexible and to be

² Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) Communique [Available at: https://www.aisc.net.au/sites/default/files/biographies/AISC%20statement%20on%20the%20delivery%20of%20first%20aid%20training_15%20April%202020.pdf]

able to undertake different types of work as it arises. Furthermore, changes in first aid compliance requirements and increases in record keeping have increased the time required for first aid duties, also increasing the workload of these staff members.

Future skills needs

SkillsIQ's 2020 *Future Skills Survey*, in addition to consultation with sector stakeholders, has revealed that the top five short-to-medium term skills considered extremely important across the workforce involved in administering first aid include:

- Problem solving and critical thinking
- Communication
- Teamwork
- Capacity to learn
- Digital skills.

2. Qualification utilisation:

- Identify circumstances in which employers employ people with VET qualifications
- Identify circumstances in which employers do not employ people with VET qualifications

General cross-industry research and NCVET studies indicate that the main reasons for employing people with VET qualifications are that the qualifications **provide the skills required for the job**, or that the qualifications are **required to meet industry standards**, and/or **legislative requirements**.

Across the health sector, there are minimum qualification requirements for legislative reasons, or minimum industry standards recommended by peak bodies. The First Aid Units of Competency are required for a range of job roles and are also **required to meet industry standards, industrial agreements and Safe Work requirements across Australia**. A first aid qualification is usually an add-on to an individual's current skills and knowledge in a different field of study.

3. Are employers using training outside the national system and if so, why?

Across the Australian workforce, the use of informal and non-accredited training by employers is prominent. The latest national figures available show that in 2019, approximately half (49%) of employers used non-accredited training and 74% provided informal training to their employees. Reasons for using these types of external training (that are not part of a university or VET qualification) include to provide required skills, legislative requirements, to meet industry standards, to meet highly specific training needs, and to improve quality of service.³

³ NCVET (2019) Survey of employer use and views of the VET system 2019 [Available at: <https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/infographics/employers-use-and-views-of-the-vet-system-2019>]

In order to be recognised as a ‘First Aider’ in the workplace, **individuals need to complete nationally accredited first aid training**.⁴ Training may cover general industry-wide first aid theory, principles and practices, or it can represent industry-specific content which is still part of a nationally accredited qualification (e.g. First Aid for Hospitality workers or Mine First Aid which focuses on skills relevant to mining environments⁵). **The majority of first aid training conducted is therefore accredited**, however non-accredited courses are also available to meet specific sector and community needs (e.g. Tiny Hearts offers non-accredited Baby First Aid courses focussed on administering first aid on babies, children and toddlers⁶).

4. Identify qualifications with low and no enrolments. Provide reasons and evidence for the need to retain/delete these qualifications.

The First Aid Training Package Products represent eight Units of Competency. Enrolment levels across all Units have been consistently high across the reported years (see Table 1). In 2019, over 1.5 million enrolments were recorded for the unit *HLTAID001 Provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation* and an additional 1 million were registered for *HLTAID003 Provide first aid*.

Table 1: Total number of enrolments (Total VET Activity [TVA]) by nationally recognised units on scope – First Aid Training Package Products, 2016-2019

Qualification	2016	2017	2018	2019
HLTAID001 - Provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation	1,103,994	1,285,307	1,386,854	1,546,117
HLTAID002 - Provide basic emergency life support	465,784	568,264	588,986	682,745
HLTAID003 - Provide first aid	839,408	911,811	966,031	1,010,519
HLTAID004 - Provide an emergency first aid response in an education and care setting	127,732	132,361	141,344	131,527
HLTAID005 - Provide first aid in remote situations	4,634	4,905	5,527	6,262
HLTAID006 - Provide advanced first aid	16,219	15,308	14,957	14,916
HLTAID007 - Provide advanced resuscitation	31,667	33,610	36,948	39,612
HLTAID008 - Manage first aid services and resources	3,598	5,005	4,877	4,603

Source: NCVER VOCSTATS, accessed September 2020.

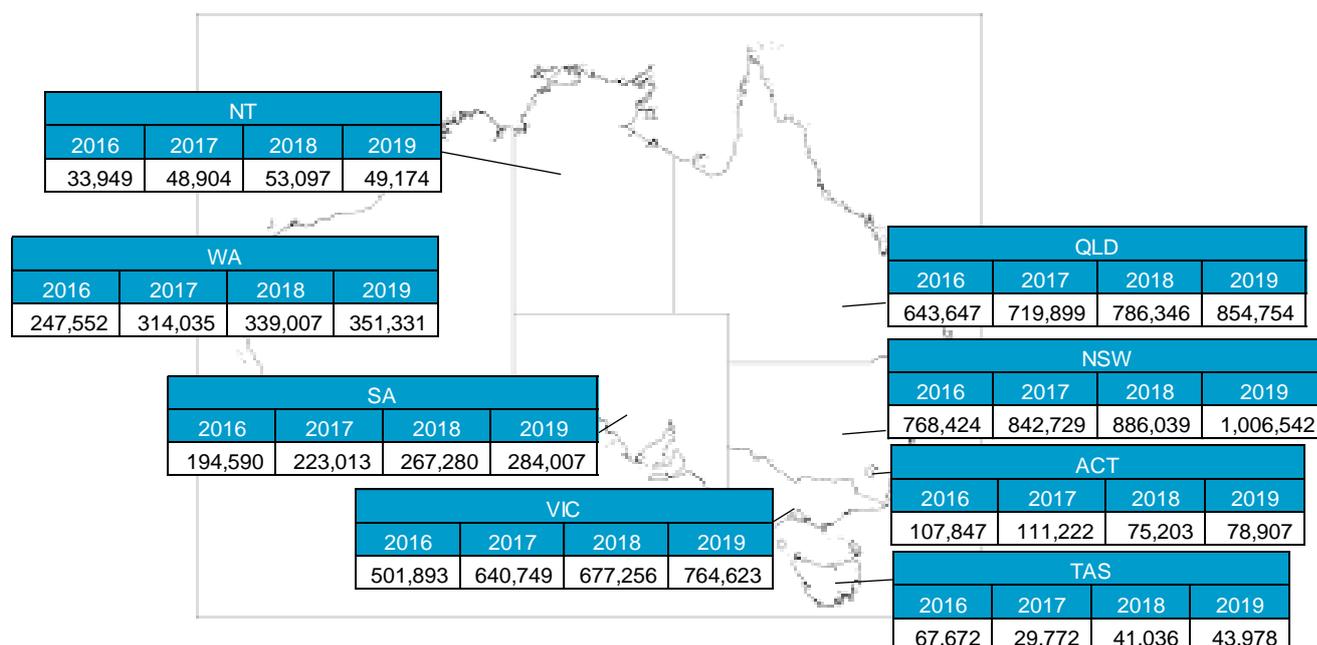
Note: 1. From 2018 onwards, Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) were required to submit enrolment and completion data for all qualifications to NCVER. Thus 2018 and 2019 represent a more complete set of data, compared to previous years where data may underrepresent the true counts of enrolments and completions for a qualification. The 2016 and 2017 data is shown for indicative purposes only. 2. Public RTO and private RTO data is included in the enrolment and completion data.

⁴ Safe Work Australia. *First Aid in the Workplace Code of Practice (July 2019)* [Available at: https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/system/files/documents/1908/code_of_practice_-_first_aid_in_the_workplace_0_0.pdf]

⁵ Mine First Aid. Available at: <https://www.stjohnqld.com.au/getmedia/6d4debbb-ddf9-476b-aa11-ae608f53aca6/minefirstaid.pdf.aspx?ext=.pdf>

⁶ Tiny Hearts education. Babies First Aid. Further information available at: <https://www.tinyheartseducation.com/>

Map 1: Total number of enrolments (Total VET Activity [TVA]) by RTO delivery location - First Aid Training Package Products on scope - 2016-2019



Source: NCVER VOCSTATS, accessed September 2020.

Note: Less than 1% of enrolments were categorised as either 'Other Australian territories or dependencies', 'Overseas' or 'Unknown' locations.

5. Reasons for non-completion of qualifications and skill sets (including micro-credentials).

- Where students complete qualifications or skill sets, what was the purpose of undertaking them (e.g. finding employment, upskilling)?

Note: Completion and non-completion rate (%) data for individual qualifications is not available via NCVER VOCSTATS. The number of completions across qualifications is therefore provided instead however please note they should not be compared to enrolment counts in Table 1. NCVER enrolment counts include first year commencements (new students) and continuing enrolments in their second or higher year undertaking the qualification, and this means the comparison of enrolment to completions in one year may make the completion level look artificially low (for qualifications where the student is likely to be enrolled for more than one calendar year).

Completion levels of first aid courses are in general high. The length of a first aid training course is usually short, ranging from one to two days, and supported by workplaces therefore non-completion is not an issue compared to other courses.

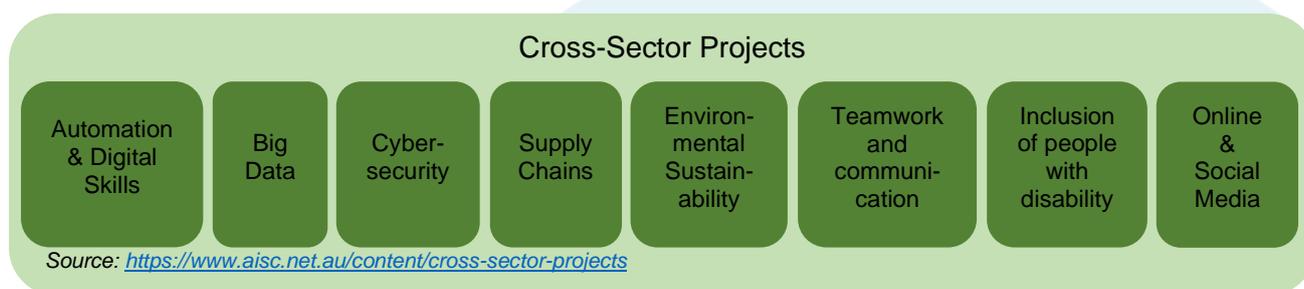
Table 2: Total number of completions (Total VET Activity [TVA]) by nationally recognised units on scope – First Aid Training Package Products, 2016-2019

Qualification	2016	2017	2018	2019
HLTAID001 - Provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation	1,079,419	1,269,997	1,367,786	1,527,786
HLTAID002 - Provide basic emergency life support	458,206	560,136	579,229	673,161
HLTAID003 - Provide first aid	783,267	860,234	917,691	961,719
HLTAID004 - Provide an emergency first aid response in an education and care setting	105,302	115,393	128,419	120,098
HLTAID005 - Provide first aid in remote situations	4,383	4,601	5,221	6,014
HLTAID006 - Provide advanced first aid	13,826	14,269	13,942	13,939
HLTAID007 - Provide advanced resuscitation	30,802	32,653	35,674	38,444
HLTAID008 - Manage first aid services and resources	3,367	4,632	4,555	4,323

Source: NCVER VOCSTATS, accessed September 2020.

Note: 1. From 2018 onwards, Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) were required to submit enrolment and completion data for all qualifications to NCVER. Thus 2018 and 2019 represent more complete sets of data, compared to previous years where data may underrepresent the true counts of enrolments and completions for a qualification. The 2016 and 2017 data is shown for indicative purposes only. 2. Public RTO and private RTO data is included in the enrolment and completion data. 3. The 2019 completion data is preliminary based on what was available at the time of reporting and may not represent final outcomes for the full calendar year.

6. Identify, where possible, opportunities for use of cross-sector units developed by the AISC.



The first aid units have always been cross-sector units, which is demonstrated by their wide adoption across training packages. The HLTAID units are currently imported across a number of different Training Packages in the VET system just not restricted to the Health Training Package.

For example, the recently superseded *HLTAID001 Provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation* is currently included in 86 qualifications across nine Training Packages.⁷

⁷ Australian Government Training.gov.au. *HLTAID001 - Provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation* [Available at: <https://training.gov.au/training/details/hltaid001>] [Accessed 14 September 2020]

7. If there are jobs that have experienced changes in skill requirements, provide evidence for these changes and their impact.

Industries are increasingly introducing and/or expanding the availability of automated external defibrillators (AEDs) and Safe Work Australia's *First Aid Code of Practice* outlines the benefits of having this type of first aid equipment available. The South Australian Government recently accepted the *Automated External Defibrillators (Public Access) Bill 2019* which outlines key requirements for AEDs to be installed and registered in certain buildings, facilities and vehicles. Various Building and Construction Codes are also introducing the requirements of new and refitted buildings to have AEDs installed (including government, commercial and high-rise buildings).

While most AEDs are automated and voice-prompted, appropriate training will need to be made available to help individuals utilise these devices and provide CPR as directed by the AED and/or ambulance communications staff.

8. Identify barriers to employers hiring apprentices and trainees. Are employers using alternative pathways/labour strategies to address these barriers?

Not applicable to the First Aid Training Package Products as they represent Units of Competency and not individual qualifications or Apprenticeships/Traineeships.

9. Other relevant activities.

On the 12 August 2020, the AISC approved the release of eight new Units of Competency and a First Aid Skill Set as listed below.

Eight Units of Competency

- HLTAID009 Provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation
- HLTAID010 Provide basic emergency life support
- HLTAID011 Provide First Aid
- HLTAID012 Provide First Aid in an education and care setting
- HLTAID013 Provide First Aid in a remote or isolated site
- HLTAID014 Provide Advanced First Aid
- HLTAID015 Provide advanced resuscitation and oxygen therapy
- HLTAID016 Manage first aid services and resources.

One Skill Set

- HLTSS00068 Occupational First Aid Skill Set.

Section B Ongoing Consultation

A widespread multi-channel consultation involving the stakeholders tabled below has been conducted to identify key developments across the First Aid sector reported in this *Annual Update*. Stakeholders listed represent members of the First Aid IRC.

Consultation activities involved:

- A. ongoing engagement and validation with industry and stakeholders
- B. collection of industry intelligence
- C. promotion of the VET system
- D. cultivating and maintaining networks and partnerships with industry including engagement in rural and regional areas.

Entity Name	Sector	State	Rural/Regional/Remote (RRR)	Activity
Anthony Cameron	Australian Red Cross - NSW	NSW	RRR	A, B, C, D
Kathryn Clews	St John Ambulance Western Australia	WA	RRR	A, B, C, D
Kylie Douglas	Department of Defence	ACT	RRR	A, B, C, D
Leigh Svendsen	Health Services Union	VIC	RRR	A, B, C, D
Andy Panes	National Institute of First Aid Trainers (NIFAT)	QLD	RRR	A, B, C, D
Pamela Simon	Surf Life Saving Australia	NSW	RRR	A, B, C, D
Shaun Jackson	Royal Life Saving Society Australia	NSW	RRR	A, B, C, D
Peter Le Cornu	St John Ambulance Australia	ACT	RRR	A, B, C, D
Peter Mangles	Paramedical Services	NSW	RRR	A, B, C, D
Phillipa Wilson	Premium Health	VIC	RRR	A, B, C, D
Ray Schroeder	Australian Emergency Care Providers	NSW	RRR	A, B, C, D
Teresa Hunter	TAFESA	SA	RRR	A, B, C, D

Note:

1. 380 stakeholders participated in national consultations for the First Aid Training Package Product review project conducted during 2019 and 2020. Feedback from stakeholders was gathered via multiple channels including SkillsIQ's Feedback Forum, workshops, webinars and email submissions.

2. Over 600 stakeholders participated in SkillsIQ's *2020 Future Skills Survey*, with a small number representing organisations involved in first aid. The survey was administered as a research tool to provide stakeholders with a confidential and anonymised channel to input their views and opinions on the topics questioned. In accordance with the Australian Market and Social Research Society (AMSRS) Privacy Principles regarding anonymity of participation in survey research, the individual names and organisations of respondents are not disclosed.

Section C Proposed New Work

No new projects are proposed in this update.

