

2 March 2023

House Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

via email: ee.reps@aph.gov.au

Dear Committee Secretary,

RE: INQUIRY INTO THE PERCEPTIONS AND STATUS OF VET

The Australian Retailers Association (ARA) welcomes the opportunity to provide comments to the Committee regarding its inquiry into the perceptions and status of Vocational Education and Training (VET).

The ARA is the oldest, largest and most diverse national retail body, representing a \$400 billion sector that employs 1.3 million Australians – making retail the largest private sector employer in the country. As Australia's peak retail body, representing more than 120,000 retail shop fronts and online stores, the ARA informs, advocates, educates, protects and unifies our independent, national and international retail community.

We represent the full spectrum of Australian retail, from our largest national and international retailers to our small and medium sized members, who make up 95% of our membership. Our members operate in all jurisdictions and across all categories - from food to fashion, hairdressing to hardware, and everything in between.

The ARA also oversees the ARA Retail Institute: Australia's leading provider of education, vocational training and professional development for the retail industry. With over 30 years of experience as a Registered Training Organisation (RTO), the ARA Retail Institute provides accredited and non-accredited training across Australia, including diplomas, certificates, skill sets, short course workshops, online micro-courses and customised in-house training programs.

As a member of the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), the ARA is heavily engaged in the development of cross-industry policy in relation to vocational training through ACCI's advisory committees. As such, we endorse their submission to the Committee.

However, we would also like to take the opportunity to suggest that the Committee consider how the structure of VET packages could be improved. Our observation is that training packages are often siloed into separate industries and difficult to navigate between occupations, even those that share similar skills and competencies, such as hospitality and retail.

We recommend that VET packages are streamlined so that such synergies can be leveraged in a way that provides better access and more options to students.

Any queries in relation to this submission can be directed to our policy team at policy@retail.org.au.

Yours sincerely,



Paul Zahra
Chief Executive Officer