



**Australian Government**

**Department of Education and Training**

# **Trades Recognition Service Applicant Guidelines**

May 2018

## Document particulars

|  |  |                 |   |
|--|--|-----------------|---|
| TRIM ID  | ED17/018841  | File            | Trades Recognition Service Applicant Guidelines.doc |
| Content last updated   | May 2018   | Document status | FINAL   |
| Due for review   | May 2019   |                 |   |
| Point of contact   | Trades Recognition Australia (TRA)                       |                 |   |
| Approval authority   | Mr Kevin Brahim<br>Branch Manager, State Network and TRA |                 |   |
| Date of first approval to publish  | 1 October 2014   |                 |   |
| Note: This is a controlled document in its electronic form only. Paper copies of this document are not controlled and should be checked against the electronic version before use.   |  |                 |   |
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# The Trades Recognition Service

## Section 1 Applicant Information

Terms explained in the [Glossary](#) are **bolded** when they first appear in this document.

### 1.1 Introduction to Trades Recognition Australia

**Trades Recognition Australia (TRA)** is an Australian Government business unit attached to the **Department of Education and Training**. It is the relevant assessing authority for nominated occupations under the *Migration Regulations 1994*.

TRA engages **TRA-approved registered training organisations (TRA-approved RTOs)** to perform aspects of the skills assessment process on its behalf under certain programs. The skills assessments are for people who have gained trade skills overseas or in Australia for the purpose of migration and skills recognition.

### 1.2 Service objective

The objective of the **Trades Recognition Service (TRS)** is to determine whether applicants have the skills and experience necessary to work in Australia at the required skill level for their nominated occupation.

The TRS is a **skills assessment** pathway for applicants seeking a skills assessment for employability and/or to access occupational licensing.

The service is open to people who are in Australia who have gained their skills outside a formal apprenticeship pathway, including people who have undertaken their trade training overseas.

Successful skills assessments under the TRS may also be used for migration purposes where required by the **Department of Home Affairs (Home Affairs)** ([www.homeaffairs.gov.au](http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au)).

### 1.3 Applicant Guidelines

These guidelines describe the TRS and outline the requirements in applying for a skills assessment.

You must read the eligibility requirements for the TRS before starting an application (see [Section 2.1](#) and the [TRS Eligibility page](#) on the TRA website). If you do not understand any part of the eligibility requirements, please contact TRA through the [TRA website](#) ([www.tradesrecognitionaustralia.gov.au](http://www.tradesrecognitionaustralia.gov.au)).

These guidelines do not provide specific information on visa or points requirements for migration. All enquiries regarding migration requirements must be directed to Home Affairs.

TRA reserves the right to amend these guidelines as needed. Information about changes to the guidelines will be documented in the recent document change history table in [Section 8](#) and posted as a news item on the TRA website.

## Section 2 Assessment Process

### 2.1 Eligibility

The TRS is open to applicants who:

- are in Australia
- do not hold an Australian vocational education and training (VET) qualification for their trade who seek formal recognition of their skills and experience, including applicants who undertook their trade training overseas.

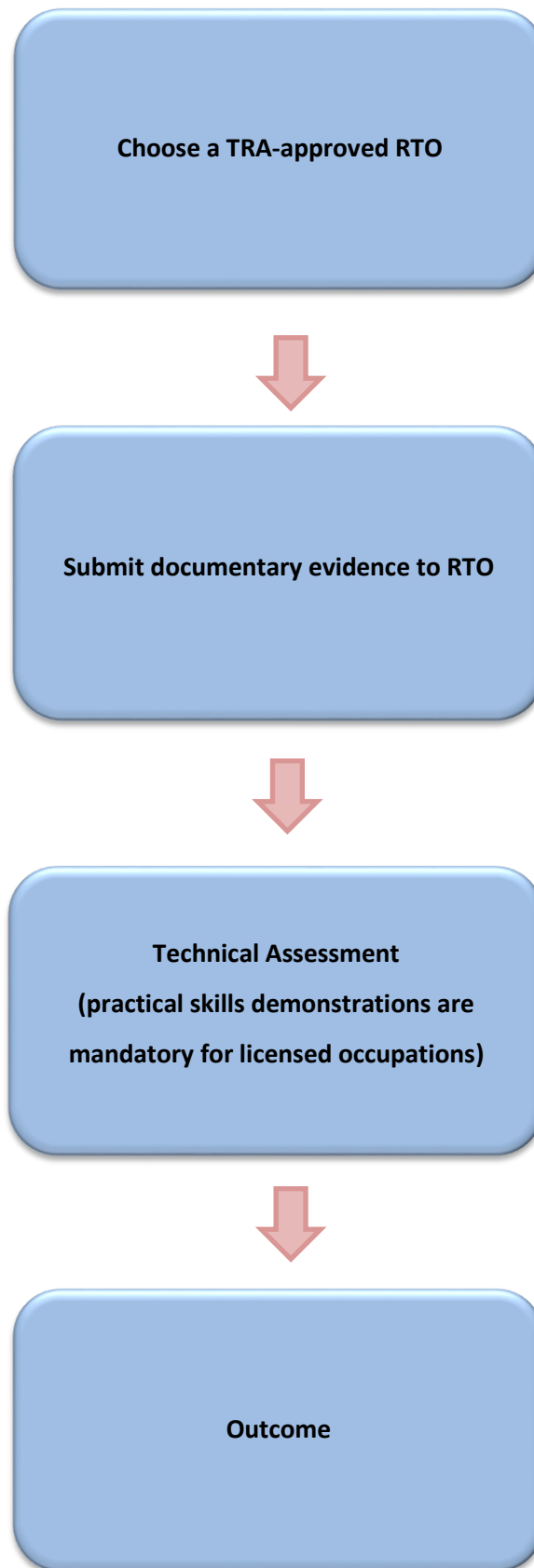
TRS assessments are conducted in Australia.

### 2.2 Nominated occupations

The nominated occupations for the TRS are listed on the TRS Eligibility page on the TRA website:

<http://www.tradesrecognitionaustralia.gov.au/Programs/TRS/Pages/Eligibility.aspx>.

## 2.3 Steps in the assessment process



## Choose a TRA-approved RTO

You are required to select an RTO to conduct your skills assessment. This is completed through the [TRS RTO Finder](http://tradesrecognitionaustralia.gov.au/Programs/TRS/Pages/TRS-RTO-Finder.aspx) (<http://tradesrecognitionaustralia.gov.au/Programs/TRS/Pages/TRS-RTO-Finder.aspx>) located on the TRA website by:

- selecting your nominated occupation from the list available
- reviewing the list of TRA-approved RTOs.

## Submit documentary evidence

You must submit **decision ready** documentary evidence of your identity, skills and employment experience to a TRA-approved RTO for assessment. The RTO will advise you about the documentation that must be provided which may include:

- recent passport-sized photographs
- a copy of the biographical identification page of your current passport
- evidence of skills and experience including, but not limited to, training documents, evidence of employment and employment statements
- copies of each document in original language accompanied by a copy of the English translation.

If the evidence provided indicates you have the necessary skills and experience relevant to your nominated occupation, you will be invited to participate in a technical assessment with one of the RTO's assessors.

If the documentary evidence does not sufficiently demonstrate skills and experience relevant to your nominated occupation, the RTO will forward a recommendation to TRA that you be found unsuccessful. Following TRA's review of the RTO recommendation, the RTO will notify you of the outcome. If you have an unsuccessful outcome confirmed, the RTO will advise you of any identified skill gaps.

## Technical Assessment

You will be required to participate in a technical assessment of your skills and knowledge, conducted by a qualified assessor who will be an Australian qualified tradesperson in your nominated occupation.

The assessor will focus on collecting evidence to determine if you meet the requirements of the relevant **VET qualification** in the **Australian Training Package** for your nominated occupation. This will involve a technical interview and may involve a practical demonstration of skills and/or gathering evidence from any nominated employers or other referees.

If you are applying for one of the **licensed occupations** of Airconditioning and Refrigeration Mechanic, Electrician (General) or Electrician (Special Class), a practical demonstration of your skills is compulsory.

The RTO will discuss the assessment requirements with you before conducting the assessment.

All technical assessments will be conducted in English without assistance. Interpreters are not permitted.

Once your technical assessment is complete, the RTO will forward either a successful or unsuccessful recommendation to TRA for the final decision. Following TRA's review of the RTO recommendation, the RTO will notify you of your outcome and issue you with the final documentation.

## Outcome

The TRA-approved RTO will notify you of the outcome of your assessment.

You will have met the standards set by TRA under TRS if:

- all evidence you have provided can be verified by the TRA-approved RTO as meeting the requirements for a successful skills assessment
- you were successful in meeting the requirements of the technical assessment.
- TRA agrees with the RTO's recommendation for a successful outcome.

Successful applicants in the non-licensed occupations will be awarded the relevant Australian VET qualification.

Successful applicants in the licensed occupations will be issued with an **Offshore Technical Skills Record (OTSR)**. The OTSR is sufficient evidence to apply for a provisional licence with Australian state and territory licensing authorities.

For OTSR holders who wish to progress to a **current, identified Australian occupational licence** and be awarded the relevant Australian VET qualification, Australian context gap training and a period of supervised employment will be required. The training covers Australian-specific knowledge such as workplace health and safety regulations, codes of practice and other Australian standards. For further information refer to the [Licensing](http://tradesrecognitionaustralia.gov.au/Programs/Pages/GainLicence.aspx) (<http://tradesrecognitionaustralia.gov.au/Programs/Pages/GainLicence.aspx>) page on the TRA website.

If successful, you will also receive an outcome letter which can be presented to Home Affairs with your visa application, if applicable.

You will **not** have met the standards set by TRA under the TRS if:

- the documentary evidence provided to the TRA-approved RTO is not decision ready
- the documentary evidence provided to the TRA-approved RTO is not relevant to your nominated occupation
- the documentary evidence provided contains insufficient detail to meet TRS requirements
- the documentary evidence is found to contain false or misleading information
- you were unsuccessful in meeting the requirements of the technical assessment.
- TRA agrees with the RTO's recommendation for an unsuccessful outcome.

If unsuccessful, the RTO will advise of any gaps identified in your skills and experience.



## 2.4 Review

If you disagree with an assessment outcome, you may lodge an application for assessment **review** with the TRA-approved RTO that conducted the skills assessment. The RTO may charge a review assessment fee.

Refer to the RTO's website for details about how to apply and the costs involved.

## 2.5 Fees

Fees for a skills assessment are paid directly to the TRA-approved RTO selected by the applicant to conduct the skills assessment.

For detailed fee information, visit the individual RTO websites using the links on the TRS RTO Finder, located on the TRA website.

## 2.6 Timeline

The TRA-approved RTO can advise how long the assessment process will take. Typically, an assessment will be completed within 13 weeks from the date of submitting the required documentary evidence.

## 2.7 Use of agents or representatives

You are not required to nominate an agent or representative for the TRS. However, if an agent or representative is nominated to act on your behalf during the skills assessment process, notification must be provided to the chosen TRA-approved RTO. The TRA-approved RTO cannot write or speak to a third party regarding the skills assessment without written approval from you as the applicant.

If you choose to use an agent or representative, you must provide the chosen TRA-approved RTO with a signed nomination form from this person. Nomination forms are available on the TRA-approved RTO's website. A new form must be completed and submitted to the TRA-approved RTO if you change your agent or representative. Information provided on these forms will replace any previous agent details held by the TRA-approved RTO.

Home Affairs provides advice about the use of migration agents in Australia. Visit [www.homeaffairs.gov.au](http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au) for more information.

## **Section 3     Applicant responsibilities and documentary requirements**

### **3.1     Applicant roles and responsibilities**

As an applicant you must:

- accurately and honestly complete the required skills assessment application and declaration forms issued by the TRA-approved RTO conducting the skills assessment
- provide authentic and current evidence to the TRA-approved RTO to enable the skills assessment to be conducted
- ensure the documentary evidence submitted is complete and decision ready
- participate in the assessment process as advised by the TRA-approved RTO
- pay all skills assessment fees to the TRA-approved RTO.

### **3.2     Documentary evidence**

TRA-approved RTOs must be able to verify the content and validity of all documents you provide to support your application. Therefore, the following minimum quality control standards apply to documents submitted electronically:

- scans must be of original documents; scans of copies will not be accepted
- scans must be in colour; black and white copies will not be accepted
- the minimum scan resolution is 150 dpi (dots per inch).

TRA-approved RTOs can ask you to present original documents for verification, and will discuss these arrangements and any additional requirements with you.

### **3.3     Employment statements**

All statements provided to a TRA-approved RTO that relate to your employment or work experience must be signed by your employer or their representative who is authorised and capable of making the statement. All employer statements must be on letterhead used by the employer's business.

Every employment statement provided to a TRA-approved RTO must include:

- start and end dates of employment
- the business address of your workplace
- normal hours of work
- the nature of employment (full-time, part-time)
- your job title (occupation)
- a detailed description of the tasks you undertook, along with the machines, tools or equipment used
- the name, position, contact details and signature of the person authorised to make the statement and the length of time they supervised you.

TRA-approved RTOs may contact an employer to verify information provided in an employer statement. A contact telephone number is required for every person who supplies an employer statement. A mobile telephone number will not be sufficient as a primary contact number unless the TRA-approved RTO can independently verify that the mobile telephone number is linked to the organisation.

## Section 4 Service administration

### 4.1 TRA roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of TRA in relation to the TRS include (but are not limited to):

- make the final decision on an applicant's skills assessment outcome following a review of the RTO recommendation
- ensuring the objectives of the program are met
- providing up-to-date information about program processes and procedures
- contract management and monitoring of TRA-approved RTOs
- responding to enquiries about the service
- policy development and advice
- developing and maintaining appropriate IT systems to support the service
- liaising with program stakeholders about the service
- responding to complaints that cannot otherwise be dealt with by the TRA-approved RTOs
- managing evaluations of the service
- undertaking compliance and investigative measures as required.

### 4.2 TRA-approved RTO roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of TRA-approved RTOs to deliver the assessment services include (but are not limited to):

- meeting their obligations under the VET Quality Framework
- meeting quarterly with an RTO-Advisory Group, consisting of RTO and industry representatives, to confer on the skills assessment process, quality assurance, industry changes and integrity matters
- conducting an assessment of the evidence an applicant provides in accordance with the RTO's documented processes and procedures
- making a recommendation to TRA about each applicant's final outcome
- notifying applicants of the assessment outcome including issuing the appropriate documentation
- liaising directly with applicants in response to enquiries, acknowledging applications and payment of fees, managing the assessment and review processes and complaint handling.

### 4.3 Privacy

The collection, use and disclosure of personal information by TRA is subject to the *Privacy Act 1988* (Privacy Act). Schedule 1 of the Privacy Act contains the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs), which outline the rules for handling personal information.

The Privacy Act defines ‘personal information’ as:

*“Information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable:*

*(a) Whether the information or opinion is true or not; and*

*(b) Whether the information or opinion is recorded in a material form or not.”*

## **Privacy information**

Under the APPs, the Department of Education and Training (Department) is required to have a clearly expressed and up to date policy about the way the Department manages personal information. This policy contains information about how you may access the personal information the Department holds about you, and how you may correct any inaccuracies in that information. We will correct your personal information if it is inaccurate (subject to restrictions on such access/alteration of records under the applicable provisions of any law of the Commonwealth).

It also includes information as to how you may make a complaint about a breach of the APPs, and how the Department will respond to such a complaint.

A copy of the Department’s privacy policy is available on the Department’s website at:

<https://www.education.gov.au/privacy-policy>.

More information about the Privacy Act, including a copy of the full text of the APPs, can be obtained from the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner’s website at:

[www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au).

## **Collection**

TRA collects applicants’ personal information for the purposes of:

- verifying skills assessment outcomes under the *Migration Regulations 1994*
- quantitative and qualitative research to inform policy and program management
- conducting investigations and ensuring compliance with relevant laws, awards or standards
- ensuring compliance with the *Commonwealth Fraud Control Guidelines (2011)*.

Personal information collected by the Department will only be used for the purposes outlined above.

In the course of assessing your application, TRA may receive unsolicited personal information about the applicant from a third party. If TRA would normally have been able to collect that information or it forms a part of a Commonwealth record, it will be treated in accordance with the APPs. If not, TRA will destroy or de-identify that information.

## **Disclosure**

TRA may give some or all of the information it collects from the applicant or a third party to the Department of Home Affairs, the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, the Australian Federal Police, TRA approved registered training organisations, the Australian Skills Quality Authority, contractors, the Fair Work Ombudsman and other Australian and state/territory government agencies.

TRA may disclose the applicant's personal information to these entities for the reasons that are listed above in the Collection section.

## Privacy Complaints

Please note that applicants are responsible for ensuring the accuracy and validity of all information provided to TRA.

Complaints about breaches of privacy should be referred to:

Privacy Contact Officer  
Legal and Compliance Group  
Department of Education and Training  
GPO Box 9880  
CANBERRA ACT 2601  
AUSTRALIA  
Email: [privacy@education.gov.au](mailto:privacy@education.gov.au)

## 4.4 False or misleading information

TRA-approved RTOs will take reasonable steps to verify the validity of information received throughout the skills assessment process.

The applicant is responsible for ensuring the accuracy and validity of all information provided to the RTO chosen to conduct the skills assessment.

If TRA or a TRA-approved RTO determines that information previously supplied is false, misleading, non-factual or incorrect information, and that by relying on that information the applicant has been incorrectly assessed as successful, TRA will notify Home Affairs.

TRA may refer matters to the appropriate authorities for investigation where information that has been provided to support an application is known or believed to be false.

NOTE: Penalties apply under the *Crimes Act 1914* and the *Criminal Code Act 1995* may apply for making false or misleading statements and providing false or misleading information or documents.

## 4.5 Relevant legislation

TRA is the relevant assessing authority for a range of trade and associate professional occupations under the [Migration Regulations 1994](#).

Under Subregulation 2.26B(2) of the *Migration Regulations 1994*, TRA sets the standards against which a person's skills are assessed.

## Section 5 Contact Details

### 5.1 Locate a registered training organisation to conduct a skills assessment

To locate an RTO to conduct a skills assessment, please use the [TRS RTO finder](#) located on the TRA website by:

- selecting the nominated occupation from the list available
- reviewing the list of TRA-approved RTOs.

### 5.2 General enquiries about the TRS

Contact Trades Recognition Australia.

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| <b>Phone</b> | Monday to Friday: 10.00 am – 12.00 pm and 1.00 pm – 4.00 pm<br>Australian Eastern Standard Time, excluding public holidays (GMT +10 hours)<br>Outside Australia: +61 2 6240 8778<br>Within Australia: 1300 360 992 |
| <b>Email</b> | <a href="mailto:traenquiries@education.gov.au">traenquiries@education.gov.au</a>   |
| <b>Web</b>   | <a href="http://www.tradesrecognitionaustralia.gov.au">www.tradesrecognitionaustralia.gov.au</a>   |
| <b>Post</b>  | Trades Recognition Australia<br>Department of Education and Training<br>GPO Box 3022<br>CANBERRA ACT 2601<br>AUSTRALIA   |

## Section 6    Glossary

| Term used in Guidelines                             | Definition  |
|---|---|
| applicant   | A person who submits an application to the Trades Recognition Service.  |
| Australian training package                         | A set of nationally endorsed standards and qualifications developed by industry to ensure quality training outcomes and to meet current and emerging vocational skill needs.  |
| current, identified Australian occupational licence | The registration, certificate or other form of authorisation required under law to perform work that has been issued by the appropriate Australian licensing authority and is relevant to the nominated occupation.   |
| decision ready                                      | Means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>all <b>documents</b> requested by the TRA-approved RTO are provided when an application is lodged and conform to the format requested</li> <li><b>employment</b> statements conform to the requirements set out in Section 3.3.</li> </ul>  |
| Department of Education and Training                | The department is responsible for national policies and programs that help Australians access quality and affordable early childcare and childhood education, school education, higher education, vocational education and training, international education and research.  |
| Department of Home Affairs                          | Home Affairs has responsibility for administering the <i>Migration Act 1958</i> and associated Regulations.<br><br>Home Affairs works in conjunction with the Department of Education and Training to deliver skilled trades/technical people and professionals to Australia through the skilled migration program.               |
| licensed occupations                                | The occupations of Airconditioning and Refrigeration Mechanic, Electrician (General) and Electrician (Special Class).   |
| migration agent                                     | In Australia, people who want to provide immigration assistance must be registered with the Office of the Migration Agents Registration Authority.<br><br>A registered migration agent can use their knowledge of Australia's migration procedures to offer advice or assistance to a person wishing to obtain a visa to enter or |



| Term used in Guidelines                       | Definition   |
|---|--|
|   | remain in Australia. They can also assist people who are nominating or sponsoring prospective visa applicants.   |
| nominated occupation                          | One of the occupations listed on the TRS Eligibility page on the TRA website.  |
| Offshore Technical Skills Record              | <p>The document that is issued when an applicant in a licensed occupation has been found to have partially met the technical competencies to be awarded a Certificate III Australian VET qualification. An OTSR holder can apply for a provisional licence to work in their occupation in Australia.</p> <p>To be awarded the VET qualification for a licensed occupation, the OTSR holder must complete Australian context gap training and a period of supervised employment in Australia in their nominated occupation.</p> |
| review  | A request to re-examine an application when the applicant does not agree with an unsuccessful assessment outcome.  |
| skills assessment                             | The process of collecting evidence and making judgments on whether an individual can work to the standard expected in an Australian workplace.   |
| Trades Recognition Australia                  | An assessing authority that provides skills assessment services for people with trade skills gained overseas and in Australia for the purpose of migration and skills recognition.   |
| TRA-approved registered training organisation | A registered training organisation approved by TRA to assist in delivering skills assessments for the Trades Recognition Service. They also issue nationally recognised qualifications in accordance with the VET Quality Framework.   |
| VET qualification                             | A certificate, relating to an Australian VET course, given to a person confirming they have achieved learning outcomes and competencies that satisfy the requirements of a qualification.  |

## Section 7    Acronyms

| Acronym     | Meaning                           |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>APPs</b> | Australian Privacy Principles     |
| <b>OTSR</b> | Offshore Technical Skills Record  |
| <b>RTO</b>  | registered training organisation  |
| <b>TRA</b>  | Trades Recognition Australia      |
| <b>TRS</b>  | Trades Recognition Service        |
| <b>VET</b>  | vocational education and training |

## Section 8 Recent document change history

| Version | Date published  | Authors | Summary of change  | Authorised by  |
|---------|-----------------|---------|--|--|
| 1.0     | 01 October 2014 | TRA     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publication</li> </ul>  | Scott Neil<br>A/g General Manager<br>TRA                         |
| 2.0     | February 2015   | TRA     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Change to responsible department logo</li> <li>Departmental references updated.</li> </ul>  | Dr Melissa McEwen<br>Branch Manager<br>Skills Engagement Branch  |
| 3.0     | June 2016       | TRA     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update to privacy notice.</li> <li>Minor amendments to text and major format changes.</li> <li>Removal of references to certification of documents.</li> <li>Change for introduction of electronic submission for documentary evidence (Section 3.2).</li> <li>Replace eligibility table with referral to TRS Eligibility page on TRA website.</li> </ul> | Mr Kevin Brahim<br>Branch Manager<br>State Network and TRA       |
| 4.0     | July 2017       | TRA     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removal of references to TradeSET</li> <li>Minor amendments to text</li> </ul>  | Ms Anne Flynn<br>A/g Branch Manager<br>Foundation Skills and TRA |
| 5.0     | January 2018    | TRA     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update information to reflect the new Department of Home Affairs (formerly the Department of Immigration and Border Protection)</li> </ul>  | Ms Anne Flynn<br>A/g Branch Manager<br>State Network and TRA     |
| 6.0     | May 2018        | TRA     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update the skills assessment process to include an RTO recommendation to TRA about an applicant's final outcome</li> </ul>  | Mr Kevin Brahim<br>Branch Manager<br>State Network and TRA       |