

Foreword

Digitalisation, globalisation and demographic change are challenging the adequacy of labour market and training policies to ensure that workers have the skills needed in the labour market. In most countries, many employers complain that they cannot find workers with the skills that their businesses require. At the same time, a number of graduates face difficulties in finding job opportunities matching their qualifications. In light of these challenges, the OECD has launched a new programme of work on how to achieve a better alignment between the skills people acquire and those needed by employers, with a focus on: i) understanding how countries collect and use information on skill needs; ii) investigating cost-effective training and labour market policies to tackle skill mismatch and shortages; iii) studying the incentives of training providers and participants to respond to changing skill needs; and iv) setting up a database of skill needs indicators. This work builds on the extensive programme of work of the OECD in the area of skills, including the OECD Skill Strategy and its follow up national studies, the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) and its rich analytical programme, and several studies in the areas of skills mismatch, vocational education and training, and work-based learning.

Within this area of work, the OECD Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs is carrying out a series of in-depth country reviews to offer a comprehensive analysis of the key areas where policy action is required to spur the development of an efficient system for skills assessment and anticipation to inform policy.

This report on Australia identifies strategies adopted for turning qualitative and quantitative information about skill needs into relevant policy actions. It provides a comparative assessment of: the collection and use of information on skill needs to foster a better alignment of skills acquisitions with labour market needs; and the use of governance arrangements to ensure co-ordination across the key stakeholders.

The work on this report was carried out by Katharine Mullock from the Skills and Employability Division of the Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs under the supervision of Glenda Quintini (Skills Team Manager) and Mark Keese (Head of the Skills and Employability Division). Several colleagues from the OECD provided valuable input and feedback in the development of this report. Special thanks are given to the many Australian stakeholders who participated in meetings in October 2017 and a seminar in April 2018, and provided documentation and comments critical to the production of this report.

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