



TVET Country Profile Australia

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Compiled in collaboration with the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER)

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TVETipedia Glossary

Words marked in [blue](#) are linked to UNESCO-UNEVOC's online TVETipedia Glossary, which provides definitions and background information from various trustworthy sources on terms commonly used in the area of technical and vocational education and training. Find out more [here](#).

Acknowledgements

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Statistics¹

General information

Category	Indicator	Statistics (2015)
Demographic	Total population (in thousands)	24,498 (2016)
	Population growth (annual %)	1.3
	Median age of population ²	37.5
	Population aged 15-24 years (in thousands)	3,167

Socio-economic	GDP growth (annual %)	2.3
	GDP per capita (current US\$)	45,514
	Unemployment rate (%) ³	5.7
	Youth literacy rate, population 15-24 years, both sexes (%)	-

Participation in education by level and by programme orientation, 2014

Category		Gross enrolment ratio (%)		Percentage of students who are female (%)	
Primary education (ISCED 1)		102.21 (2015)		48.60 (2015)	
Secondary education, all programmes	Lower secondary (ISCED 2)	137.56	111.99	47.0	47.57
	Upper secondary (ISCED 3)		186.43		46.35
Tertiary education, all programmes (ISCED 5-8)		90.31		56.77	

Category		Percentage of students enrolled in vocational programmes, both sexes (%)		Percentage of students in vocational education who are female (%)	
Secondary education, all programmes	Lower secondary (ISCED 2)	33.46	18.59	41.99	42.77
	Upper secondary (ISCED 3)		50.53		41.66

Indicator	Both sexes (%)	Percentage of students who are female (%)
Percentage of students in tertiary education enrolled in short cycle education (ISCED 5)	16.05	60.15

¹ All statistics retrieved from UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) (<http://uis.unesco.org/>) unless otherwise indicated

² UN DESA. World Population Prospects. <https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/Download/Standard/Population/>

³ International Labour Organization. [ILOSTAT - ILO database of labour statistics](http://ilostat.ilo.org/)

Education finance

Category	Indicator	Statistics
Expenditure	Government expenditure on education as % of total government expenditure (%)	13.9 (2014)
	Expenditure on secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary vocational education as % of total government expenditure (%)	0.85 (2014)

SDG thematic indicators related to TVET and skills⁴

Category	Indicator	Statistics
Selected SDG thematic indicators	Participation rate in technical-vocational programmes (15- to 24-year-olds) (%)	11.00 (2013)
	Percentage of youth/adults who have achieved at least a minimum level of proficiency in digital literacy skills (%)	94.00 (2013)

Type of TVET institutions⁵

Type of institution	Education level	Ministry responsible	Number of institutions
TAFE Colleges and Institutes	Tertiary	State training authority	53
Private training Organisations	Tertiary	Private/ACPET	3,099
Community providers	Tertiary	Local government/CCA	468
Universities	Tertiary	Commonwealth	15
Enterprise providers	Tertiary	Company/ERTOA	207
Schools	Upper secondary	State education authority	442

Other useful statistics related to TVET and skills development

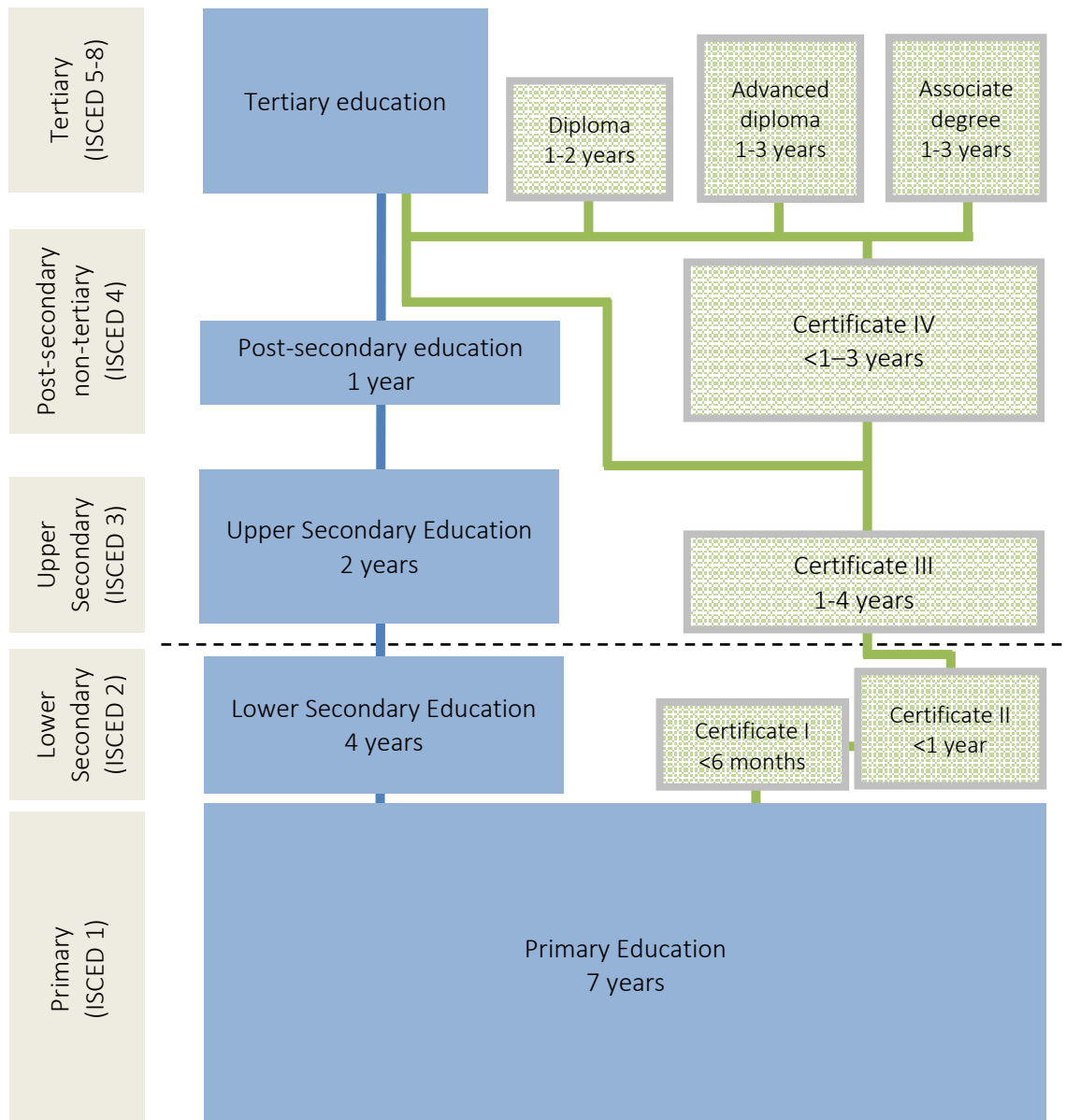
Indicator	Statistic	Source
Participation rate in VET, Australians aged 15-64	26.8% (2015)	NCVER
Percentage of students undertaking VET with private training providers in Australia	66.3% (2015)	NCVER
Percentage of students undertaking VET with TAFE institutes in Australia	20.5%(2015)	NCVER

⁴ Other Sustainable Development Goal 4 thematic indicators at <http://sdg4monitoring.uis.unesco.org/>

⁵ Compiled by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER)

1. TVET formal, non-formal and informal systems

TVET in the Australian education system



Formal TVET system

Certificate I and Certificate II programmes are offered at the lower secondary level (ISCED 2).	
Duration:	Certificate I programmes last approximately 6 months. Certificate II courses last for about 1 year
Admission requirements:	Generally, none except for some rare competitive certificate programmes which may require satisfactory demonstration of reading, writing and numeracy skills by undertaking the Core Skills Profile for Adults (CSPA)
Taught in:	Private training providers, TAFE institutes, schools, community education providers
Graduates from Certificate I and Certificate II courses are able and encouraged to proceed to vocational education and training at higher certificate levels.	
Certificate III courses are offered at the upper secondary level (ISCED 3).	
Duration:	Approximately 1-4 years
Admission requirements:	Generally, none except for some rare competitive certificate programmes which may require satisfactory demonstration of reading, writing and numeracy skills by undertaking the Core Skills Profile for Adults (CSPA)
Taught in:	Private training providers, TAFE institutes, schools, community education providers
Graduates from Certificate III programmes are able to proceed to higher vocational education and training certificate programmes, or academic tertiary education.	
Certificate IV programmes are offered at the post-secondary non-tertiary level (ISCED 4).	
Duration:	1-1 ½ years
Admission requirements:	<u>May</u> require completion of relevant lower-level certificate(s) and/or current employment in the relevant industry and/or satisfactory demonstration of reading, writing and numeracy skills by undertaking the Core Skills Profile for Adults (CSPA)
Taught in:	Private training providers, TAFE institutes, schools, community education providers, enterprise providers and some dual-sector universities
Graduates from Certificate IV programmes are able to proceed to tertiary vocational education and training programmes, or academic tertiary education.	

The Vocational education degree is offered at the tertiary level (ISCED 5).	
Duration:	2-3 years
Admission requirements:	Upper secondary graduates after passing an entrance exam
Taught in:	Vocational education providers accredited to deliver higher education programs (such as some dual-sector universities or TAFE).

The Diploma, Advanced Diploma and Associate Degree are offered at the tertiary level (ISCED 5).	
Duration:	Diploma 1-2 years, Advanced Diploma 2-3 years, Associate Degree 2-3 years
Admission requirements:	May require; completion of relevant lower-level certificate(s) &/or current employment in the relevant industry &/or satisfactory demonstration of reading, writing and numeracy skills by undertaking the Core Skills Profile for Adults (CSPA)
Taught in:	Private training providers, TAFE institutes, enterprise providers and universities.

Non-formal and informal TVET systems

The Australian TVET sector is flexible with multiple pathways to and from Australian Qualification Framework (AQF). Qualifications can be undertaken at school, in the workplace and in registered training organisations (RTOs). **Non-formal** TVET is offered by multiple types of public, private, community and industry sector providers. It can be offered by RTOs who deliver formal TVET qualifications, or industry sector providers who deliver vendor training, in community-based settings, the workplace and through the activities of civil society organizations or staff training and development programmes for enterprises, government agencies and training providers.

Delivery modes can include full-time, part-time, through online, self-paced or distance learning, through apprenticeships and through the [Recognition of Prior Learning \(RPL\)](#). Specifically, individuals can make applications to RTOs to have the skills, knowledge and experiences developed through informal and non-formal learning formally assessed and recognized for nationally accredited qualifications. Typically, they will have to apply for recognition and provide evidence to show that they are able to perform the competencies they claim.

2. TVET strategy and key policy documents

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Australia is known as vocational education and training (VET). It is a form of post-compulsory education and training, excluding degree and higher-level programmes delivered by further education institutions, which provides people with occupational or work-related knowledge and skills. VET covers a wide range of careers and industries, including trade and office work, retail, hospitality and technology.

The following key documents help guide the development of VET in Australia.

Name of document	Skilling Australia's Workforce Act 2005
Date entered into force	24 August 2005
Website link	Link
Key points and objectives	
<p>The Act provides transitional arrangements for transferring responsibilities held by Australian Training Authority (which was repealed by the same Act) to the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.</p>	

Name of document	National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Transitional Provisions) Act 2011
Date entered into force	12 April, 2011
Website link	Link
Key points and objectives	
<p>The Act links state and territory funding to a set of goals and conditions for training outcomes.</p>	

Name of document	VET Student Loans Act 2016
Date entered into force	1 January 2017
Website link	Link
Key points and objectives	
<p>The Act provides for loans to students for vocational education and training, ensuring that loans are provided to genuine students, and for education and training that meets workplace needs and improves employment outcomes.</p>	

Name of document	Australian Technical Colleges (Flexibility in Achieving Australia's Skills Needs) Act 2005
Date entered into force	24 Aug 2005
Website link	Link
Key points and objectives	
<p>The Act provides for the establishment and operation of Australian Technical Colleges in order to provide trade skills training, education and mentoring for young Australians. This includes establishing an industry-led governing council for each Australian Technical College that is to set out strategic directions and performance objectives for the College and select the principal of the College.</p>	

Name of document	Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000
Date entered into force	21 Dec 2000
Website link	Link
Key points and objectives	

The Act regulates providers who provide courses to overseas students. A person who provides a course at a location to an overseas student must be registered to provide that course at that location (or do so in accordance with an arrangement with a provider who is so registered).

There are obligations on registered providers when the provider or an overseas student of the provider defaults, and does not start or finish a course. The provider is required to provide a refund to the student. For a provider default, the provider may instead provide an alternative course for the student at the provider's expense. In the case of a default, a call is made on the Overseas Students Tuition Fund to pay for alternative courses, or to provide refunds to students, if providers have not already done so.

Name of document	Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Act 2000
Date entered into force	19 Dec 2000
Website link	Link
Key points and objectives	
The Act aims to achieve equitable and appropriate educational outcomes for Indigenous people.	

2. Governance and financing

Governance

Australia's VET sector is organized around strong partnerships between governments, VET institutions and industry representative bodies. The **Australian Government Department of Education and Training (national department)**, **State** and **Territory Governments** are responsible for the development of VET policies.

At the national level, Australia's VET system is led by a council made up of Australian state and territory government ministers responsible for industry and skills. The private sector and industry also plays a leading role in the VET system to ensure the sector drives improvements in productivity and competitiveness across the economy. To this end, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and the Industry and Skills Council (AISC) provides leadership and direction for the sector. It provides advice to ensure training in each industry meets the needs of that industry's employers. In addition, a number of new Service Skills Organisations (SSOs) have been established supported by Industry Reference Committees (IRCs) to oversight the development of industry Training Packages.

Financing

The Australian Government Department of Education and Training (national department) and State Government Education Departments are responsible for the financing of formal and non-formal VET.

However, companies and individuals also contribute to the cost of training. Companies contribute by purchasing training for their employees. Other than the government, there are mechanisms mobilizing financial contributions. For example, 'Fee-for-service – other'

revenues are paid by individuals, industries and firms for specific, tendered-for training including any contracting and consulting fees for training purposes. The value of this is estimated to be similar in proportion to overall government spend.

VET in the formal education system is not legally free. Students contribute through the payment of course and administrative fees. Some students pay all their fees without receiving any government subsidies. Actual training purchasing decisions are made by governments usually through the provision of skills in demand lists indicating the priority areas for training provision and indicative costs for courses.

In recent years, Australia has seen significantly increased investment from the national government (Commonwealth) into VET while at the same time investment by State and Territory governments has fallen in real terms since 2012.

From 2011 to 2015, the Australian Government revenues increased by \$2345.7 million (105.2%), while the State and territory government revenue decreased by \$638.6 million (16.1%). From 2014 to 2015 alone, the Australian Government revenues increased by \$1446.0 million (46.2%) to \$4575.1 million, while State and territory government revenues decreased by \$358.5 million (9.7%) to \$3333.4 million.

In 2015, 47% of operating revenue for government-funded VET came from the Australian government, with 34% from State/Territory governments, 11% from fee-for-service, 5% from student fees and charges and 3% from ancillary trading and other.

Total operating revenue for government funded VET increased by \$1925.8 million (24.4%) between 2011 and 2015 and by \$1173.9 million (13.6%) from \$8638.5 million in 2014 to \$9812.4 million in 2015.

4. TVET teachers and trainers

According to the standards set out by the Australian Industry and Skills Committee Authority, all VET trainers and assessors must hold a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and/or a qualification in adult education at a [diploma](#) or higher level, as well as the appropriate current skills/qualifications/knowledge/abilities for their industry.

For those who provide assessment only a certification in the Assessor Skill Set is sufficient qualification instead of the above, with the same industry skills requirements.

Registered Training Organisations (public and private, Universities) that have Certificate IV in Training and Assessment in their scope of delivery can offer [pre-service](#) TVET teacher and TVET trainer training.

The ASQA National Standards for RTOs mandates that all trainers and assessors must undertake relevant professional development in VET, and RTOs must keep evidence of this occurring for their staff as part of their ongoing registration.

Training providers may offer in-service professional development programmes for their own staff or pay for their staff to attend the professional development programs of other

institutions. They may also hire guest presenters to provide professional development activities in specific areas. Professional development for teachers is also provided by specialist professional development centres, teachers' associations, or professional associations. Teachers may also attend conferences and workshops devoted to a variety of teaching and learning functions.

5. Qualification system and Quality Assurance

National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

Australian Government Department of Education and Training monitors and evaluates the NQF. The NQF has ten levels as follows.

Level	Academic qualifications	TVET qualifications
1	-	Certificate I
2	-	Certificate II
3	-	Certificate III
4	-	Certificate IV
5	-	Diploma
6	-	Advanced Diploma
7	Bachelor Degree	-
8	Bachelor Degree(Hons); Graduate Certificate; Graduate Diploma	Vocational Graduate Certificate Vocational Graduate Diploma
9	Master Degree	-
10	Doctoral Degree	-

The Australia Qualifications Framework (AQF) has been in operation since 1995.

Quality assurance

Qualifications and skills recognition ensures quality and relevance of, and recognize learning outcomes related to VET.

Australia has a well-organized model for the assessment and recognition of skills which includes qualification assessment and recognition, license recognition, assessment for skilled migration and trades recognition. A range of agencies are involved in this work including the Commonwealth Department of Education and Training, State and Territory assessing authorities and Trades Recognition Australia (see [here](#)).

Australian Government Department of Education and Training, the Australian Industry and Skills Committee are responsible for the development, updating and quality of VET [curriculum](#).

The formal VET qualifications in Australia fall under their respective Training Packages based on the area of study. A training package is a set of nationally endorsed standards and qualifications for recognising and assessing people's skills in a specific industry, industry

sector or enterprise. These are administered by the Australian Industry and Skills Committee, with the assistance of Industry Reference Committees.

Industry Reference Committees (IRCs) are the formal channel for considering industry skills requirements in the development and review of training packages. Each IRC is made up of people with close links to industry. They are leaders in their own sectors from big business to small enterprise and peak bodies to unions, who understand the skills needs of their sector, industry or occupation. IRCs advise the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) about the skills needs of their industry sector. IRCs ensure training packages meet the needs and concerns of employers, employees, training providers, and people seeking training qualifications.

Skills Service Organisations (SSOs) are independent, professional service organizations that support Industry Reference Committees (IRCs) in their work developing and reviewing training packages. There are six SSOs funded by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training. SSOs support industry engagement while remaining independent from both industry and the training sector. Each SSO provides agreed services to several IRCs.

TVET institutions need to be accredited to teach.

The Australian Skills Quality Authority promotes quality training so that students, employers, and industry have confidence in Australia's training sector. It is responsible for registering institutions as VET providers (except in Victoria and Western Australia which have their own state regulators (Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority and the Training Accreditation Council in WA).

An institution must meet the following requirements in order to become registered:

- compliance with all components of the Vocational Education and Training (VET) Quality Framework:
- cooperation with ASQA—including compliance with general directions and cooperation with compliance monitoring activity
- payment of fees and charges associated with registration
- courses must be registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) in order to offer those courses to overseas students on student visas

There are additional requirements for institutions offering VET courses with additional licensing requirements, and institutions must be registered for at least two years before applying to deliver qualifications or assessor skill sets.

6. Current reforms and policy discussion

The most significant VET reforms have been those on funding and enhancing industry involvement in VET.

The 2012-2017 National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform had four main objectives:

1. more accessible training for working age Australians and, in particular, a more equitable training system, which provides greater opportunities for participation in education and training
2. a more transparent VET sector, which enables better understanding of the VET activity that is occurring in each jurisdiction
3. a higher quality VET sector, which delivers learning experiences and qualifications that are relevant to individuals, employers and industry
4. a more efficient VET sector, which is responsive to the needs of students, employers and industry.

With the implementation of the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform, grants from state and federal governments funded about 75 per cent of total revenues of the publicly subsidised training activity. The remaining 25 per cent or so came from students and employers who pay full fees at a publicly funded training provider, such as TAFE, international activities, such as offshore delivery, and fees for other services such as consultancy service. This agreement is set to be replaced by the *Skilling Australia Fund* during late 2017.

Considerable reform effort has focused on strengthening industry involvement in the VET sector with a view to ensuring Australia has the skilled workforce it needs for economic growth, competitiveness, productivity and providing greater employer confidence in outcomes from training.

In late 2015, the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) was created comprising chief executive officers of major enterprises and industry peak bodies. The role of the committee is to advise government on quality standards and put industry at the centre of training product development. In addition, industry reference committees (IRCs) were appointed by the AISC to represent the needs of particular industry sub-sectors, while service skills organisations (SSOs) were formed to assist the IRCs.

A recent reform has been around a review of the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011. The Australian Government has commissioned Professor Valerie Braithwaite, Professor of Regulatory Studies in the School of Regulation and Global Governance at the Australian National University, to undertake a review of the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 (NVETR Act). The review will assess the suitability of the NVETR legislative framework and its capacity to support a responsive, effective and efficient approach to regulation to ensure the quality of the national vocational education and training (VET) sector into the future.

Challenges

Australia is facing the following challenges to the TVET system:

Low completion rates in VET, especially apprenticeships	With only around half of apprentices and trainees completing their training and with particularly poor completion rates for lower level qualifications, the system is paying close attention
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to the needs of trainees and employers alike through introducing new arrangements for delivering support services to Australian apprentices and their employers. It is the support services (or lack of) that have been identified as one of the most crucial factors in whether a student completes or not.

Engaging industry at all levels of the VET system

Streamlined governance arrangements have been introduced with a single industry-led Australian Industry and Skills Committee to better reflect the voice of and needs of industry. The role of the committee is to advise government on quality standards and put industry at the centre of training product development. In addition, industry reference committees (IRCs) were appointed by the AISC to represent the needs of particular industry sub-sectors, while service skills organisations (SSOs) were formed to assist the IRCs.

Inconsistency in the quality of training provision in the VET sector

Even though the VET Quality Framework lays requirements on trainers and RTOs for meeting certain requirements in training, inconsistencies in training provided do exist. Identifying and removing (or improving) poor quality VET provision is a key focus of the sector and of the national (and in two jurisdictions, state) regulator. The primary purpose of the Australian Skills Quality Agency (ASQA) is to promote quality training in the VET sector through managing risk by identifying and acting on poor quality VET provision. Learners need to have confidence that, no matter what training provider they choose, they will receive quality training and assessment that is responsive to industry goals and to their own needs.

Balancing the initial training of young people with the re-training of older workers

With stubbornly high rates of unemployment for young Australians, the VET sector continues to play an important role in ensuring young Australians (especially those not presently in education, employment or training) are provided with the skills to participate in the modern economy. In addition, the system must continue to be sufficiently flexible to address the impacts on existing workers of structural change in the labour market where traditional industries such as manufacturing is disappearing or being offshored.

Enhancing the relevance

The VET sector is often considered complex due to the shared governance and funding responsibilities of the different levels of government and the mandated strong role for industry. A national VET system which is governed effectively with clear roles and responsibilities for industry, the Commonwealth and the states and territories and efficient government funding that considers inconsistencies between jurisdictions or

disruption to the fee-for-service market have been agreed by Ministers as a key reform goal.

Increasing VET enrolments and maximising completions for students from low socio-economic status circumstances, Indigenous Australians, refugees and Australians with a disability remains a strong focus for governments.

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