



2024-25 ANNUAL REPORT

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VERTO SKILL TO TRANSFORM

VERTO is a not-for-profit organisation and charity registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) under a Public Benevolent Institution (PBI) subtype. We offer employment, training, and community services that positively transform the lives of individuals and the communities in which we operate. Since our beginnings as a community college in Bathurst in Central Western NSW in 1983, we have grown to provide services at more than 60 sites across NSW.

While much has changed in that time, one thing has remained the same: our commitment to making a difference through equal access to employment, education and community services. This includes offering bespoke programs that support vulnerable individuals and communities, including Indigenous services, disability services, tenants' advice and advocacy, and financial counselling.

OUR VISION

We are an industry leader, key influencer and trusted voice for the sectors we serve.

OUR MISSION

We transform lives.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

INTEGRITY

We follow through on our commitments and do what we say we will do. Our customers and clients can rely on us to be trustworthy, honest and to hold true to our mission and guiding principles, which shape all that we do.

SUSTAINABILITY

We are committed to achieving our vision, delivering on our mission, and adhering to our guiding principles so that we can serve our customers and clients for the long term. We are committed to working in partnership with our customers and clients to create a sustainable future for them also.

INSPIRATION

We inspire our employees, our customers and clients by living our vision and mission, and by being role models who lead and advocate on their behalf.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

2024 - 2025



17.600

PARTICIPANTS
SUPPORTED

VERTO supported 17,600 participants through all Employment Services, while maintaining strong relationships with 35,000 employers.



6.800+

STUDENTS
TRAINED

VERTO trained more than 6,800 students this financial year with an 85% completion rate across all programs.



4.012

DISABILITY
PARTICIPANTS

VERTO's Disability Employment Services supported 4,012 participants of which 17% were First Nations and 35% were mature-aged. 126 participants were supported into training.



160+

PARENTS
SUPPORTED

VERTO supported over 160 parents in the Parent Pathways program with 33% being First Nations and 8.5% being a former offender.



297

BUSINESS OWNERS
SUPPORTED

Through The Self-Employment Assistance program, 297 small businesses were assisted. The program achieved 93% of its total allocation.



12.900

WORKFORCE
AUSTRALIA
PARTICIPANTS

12,900 participants supported through Workforce Australia. We engaged with more than 3,700 local employers with more than 2,000 placements generated.



3.800+

TENANCY
MATTERS
SUPPORTED

VERTO clients were assisted in more than 3,800+ tenancy matters including 1,280 termination cases and 300 evictions prevented.



6.291

TRANSITION
TO WORK
PARTICIPANTS

VERTO supported 6,291 youth into more than 1,300 education and employment opportunities with a 4.89 out of 5 satisfaction rating.



176.884

INTERACTIONS
THROUGH CUSTOMER
SERVICE

VERTO managed 176,884 transactions over the financial year including 93,301 calls and 61,719 emails resulting in over 680 interactions per day.



4.440

FINANCIAL
COUNSELLING
SESSIONS

VERTO's Financial Counselling Services assisted more than 390 clients with 4,440 counselling sessions held.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES. TOGETHER

At VERTO, community is at the heart of what we do. Every program, partnership, and service we deliver is designed to create opportunities, build skills, and strengthen the regions where we live and work. From supporting individuals to find their purpose, to working with local organisations on initiatives that bring people together, VERTO is proud to play an active role in shaping stronger, more inclusive communities.

This year, VERTO continued to invest in community through sponsorships and events that made a real difference. Whether supporting local sporting clubs, contributing to cultural celebrations, or hosting inclusive community activities, we focused on building spaces where people feel connected and supported. These initiatives not only bring people together but also provide opportunities for learning, growth, and wellbeing.

Impact Highlights

- Deepened care for families in need through the Ronald McDonald House partnership, providing financial support alongside training and apprenticeship opportunities to assist families during challenging health crises.
- Created inclusive community events such as colour runs and immersive motorsport race days that brought people together, encouraged participation, and fostered a sense of belonging, particularly for people living with a disability.
- Supported grassroots sport and youth development through clubs like Abercrombie Football Club, giving children access to safe environments to build confidence, teamwork, and healthy habits.
- Actively participated in regional award and recognition events, including the NSW Training Awards and the Mid and North Coast Training Awards, to acknowledge excellence and uplift local role models.

Community engagement is more than a commitment. It is part of who we are. VERTO will continue to invest in people, partnerships, and programs that deliver meaningful change and lasting benefits across the communities we serve.





PRESIDENT'S REPORT

ANDREW ABEL

When the organisation rebranded 15 years ago it landed on the name VERTO. In Latin VERTO means 'to change' or 'transform' and transformation is at the heart of what we do. We provide pathways to enable individuals to transform their future. As our reach, influence and impact has grown so too has our ability to transform futures of people and of communities.

That is true of VERTO and that is true more broadly of The VERTO Group.

As we reflect on the 2024/25 financial year it would be accurate to say whilst the year was one of significant shifts in the external environment, in many ways it has been a year of consolidation across The VERTO Group with an eye firmly focused on the future. There has been substantial focus on getting back to basics, optimising performance, and ensuring we are achieving the best possible outcomes for our clients and stakeholders, because by meeting client needs, we secure our ability to continue to facilitate transformation well into the future.

2025 marks another significant milestone in the story of VERTO, securing a contract to deliver Inclusive Employment Australia across an expanded footprint. This program replaces the Disability Employment Services Program and continues VERTO's legacy of securing employment opportunities for people with a disability for more than 25 years. This contract is a six-fold increase on current client caseload and promises to deliver more than \$75 million in funding over five years, across ten Employment Services Areas (ESA). This program will expand VERTO's presence into Queensland and the ACT with more than 57 offices added to our existing 63 offices.

The growth in Inclusive Employment Australia also firmly positions VERTO as a key provider of services across three key employment areas funded by the Federal Government: Inclusive Employment Australia, Workforce Australia and Transition to Work.

It was also a significant milestone to achieve re-registration as a Registered Training Organisation until 2032, which is essential to deliver our accredited training programs to both learners and jobseekers. Looking more broadly across the VERTO Group we have had a truly transformative year.

Having completed its second year in The VERTO Group, Campbell Page continued its bold reform agenda, touching every part of the organisation from governance to operations, with the clear aim of building a more resilient, future focused organisation, delivering better outcomes for their clients and communities. This year marks a turning point for Campbell Page, securing contracts to deliver Parent Pathways and to deliver Inclusive Employment Australia.

The Inclusive Employment Australia outcome is a significant milestone for the organisation, making Campbell Page the sixth largest generalist provider by ESA in the country. This outcome is an almost four-fold increase in the client caseload and aims to deliver over \$120 million in funding over five years. In total, Campbell Page will deliver Inclusive Employment Australia across fourteen ESAs with a significant expansion into Queensland in addition to its operations in Victoria, South Australia, and New South Wales.

Collectively The VERTO Group now has a significant operational presence in Queensland and will be delivering Inclusive Employment Australia across twenty-four employment regions from November 1.



As I reflect on this success and that of VERTO in securing contracts to deliver Inclusive Employment Australia, it is not lost on me that this tender was the first time the two organisations came together to develop an outstanding offering for clients and stakeholders in the inclusive employment space. The coordination, professionalism and focus on performance is an absolute credit to the leadership of both organisations and the expertise of our tender team.

Riverina Community College has also had a very productive year. The primary focus was to secure re-registration as a Registered Training Organisation. With strategic leadership from VERTO and a significant project load at a local level I extend my thanks and congratulations to all involved in successfully re-registering until 2032.

At a leadership level Riverina Community College said goodbye to General Manager, Kirby Perry, and following a restructure welcomed Chief Executive, Phillip Wilson to lead the organisation forward. It also gives me immense pleasure to welcome Sydney Community College as the newest addition to the Group. Sydney Community College is one of the most prominent and respected community colleges in the sector having had a presence for almost 40 years.

Sydney Community College are experts in delivering accredited and non-accredited training to their local community and are a key resource the community looks to. They have recently secured re-registration as a Registered Training Organisation for a further seven years.

Sydney Community College retains their Board and their operational independence and will draw on the expertise and resources of VERTO, at both a governance and operational level, to help project them into the future.

The future of VERTO and the broader group of companies is bright, and with continued focus on meeting the needs of our clients, we are well positioned to deliver transformative outcomes far into the future.

I extend my gratitude to all the Directors across The VERTO Group for their diligence and invaluable contributions in advancing their organisations and acknowledge and thank the Directors of VERTO for their wise counsel and expertise in providing oversight and guiding the strategic direction of VERTO and the Group.

I would like to thank our Chief Executive Officer, Ron Maxwell, for his expertise and tireless contribution to this organisation and its mission. I would especially like to congratulate Ron as the 2025 winner of the 'Outstanding Service to the Employment Services Sector Award' at the 2025 National Employment Services Association Awards for Excellence.

As always, a final word of acknowledgement and thanks to our people who make all this success a reality. You have all made a tremendous impact this year in the lives of our clients and communities.





CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

RON MAXWELL

As I reflect on the 2024–25 financial year, I am incredibly proud of what VERTO and our people have accomplished. This year has been one of significant transition, strategic growth, and sector-wide change. Despite ongoing economic pressures, labour market shifts, and natural disasters impacting several of the regions we serve, VERTO has remained focused on our commitment to creating opportunity, promoting equity, and helping communities thrive.

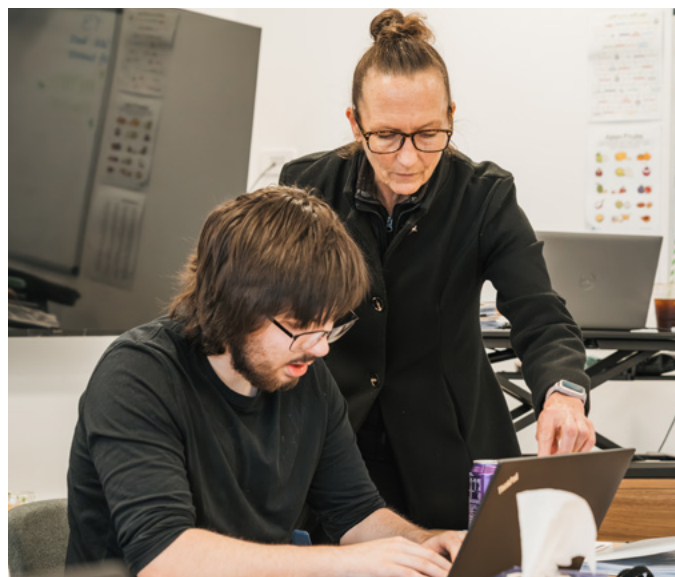
Performance Through Change

The last 12 months have been marked by important national reforms across employment, training, and community services. In the employment space, the announcement of the new Inclusive Employment Australia program replacing Disability Employment Services represented one of the most significant sector changes in over a decade.

VERTO responded with professionalism and agility, submitting a strong tender that secured contracts in key Employment Service Areas including the Queensland growth corridors of Ipswich, Logan, and Toowoomba as well as securing larger caseloads in NSW regions of the Nepean and the Central Coast. While we acknowledge the loss of some regions previously held under Disability Employment Services, these new contracts represent a net expansion and mark VERTO's evolution from a regional provider to a rising national presence in disability employment.

In preparation for the Inclusive Employment Australia transition, our Disability Employment Services team has continued delivering strong outcomes for over 900 participants, maintaining high satisfaction scores and 100% compliance with quality standards. They continue to set new benchmarks in commitment, care, and focus on quality service delivery.

Our Workforce Australia team also had a standout year. We supported over 12,900 participants in 2024–25, many of whom faced significant barriers including disability, homelessness, or previous incarceration. The team provided tailored services to build confidence, employability, and pathways into meaningful work. We also thank the 3,700+ employers who worked with our team to facilitate more than 2,000 job placements.



Expanding Programs with Purpose

The year also saw VERTO successfully transition from delivering ParentsNext to launching the Parent Pathways program in the Central West. While short timeframes and new premises posed early challenges, the program is now fully operational and exceeding performance targets. Engagement rates remain high and participant outcomes reflect the success of a more flexible, development-focused model that empowers parents to build pathways to employment and stability.

Our Transition to Work program delivered strong results across the Hunter and North Coast, with over 3,600 young people supported in 2024–25. Key outcomes include a participant satisfaction rating of 4.89 out of 5; more than 1,300 education and employment placements; and strategic employer engagement aligned to labour market demand. Transition to Work continues to be a cornerstone of our youth engagement strategy.

In Self-Employment Assistance, we saw growth across the Hunter, Mid North Coast and Murray Riverina, with strong demand for coaching, mentoring, and business advice. The introduction of new support models, like our Elevated Entrepreneur Program, demonstrates our commitment to innovation and to helping Australians build self-reliant futures.

Training Services: Empowering Through Education

Training Services had a transformative year, marked by sector reform, contract growth, and student success. We were proud to launch the Skills for Education and Employment program across six sites, supporting close to 100 learners, 40% of whom identify as First Nations. Trainers and Participant Support Officers delivered more than education; they provided holistic support, including basic needs like food, transport, and even reading glasses.

We also introduced the Laptop to Launch digital inclusion program, reaching over 120 students in remote communities with digital tools and skills to access training and employment. With a 98% completion rate, the program is already delivering lasting impact.

Our Registered Training Organisation achieved re-registration for seven years with the Australian Skills Quality Authority – another strong endorsement of our training quality, governance, and outcomes. Enrolments grew by 10%, with 94% of students studying for work-related reasons. Across all programs, we supported approximately 6,800 students with an 85% completion rate and student satisfaction exceeding 91%.

Community Services: Supporting Those Most at Risk

Our Community Services team continued to deliver vital services in the face of rising housing and cost-of-living pressures. This included over 3,800 tenancy support cases, 390 clients supported through financial counselling, and prevention of over 300 evictions, often through early intervention, advocacy, and education.

The Aboriginal Youth Leadership Program continued to thrive with the Junior Tidda Tradies program. The program also expanded to new schools and launching new activities, including Buther Biran groups, empowering young First Nations students through hands-on learning. The Wula Gurray Indigenous Choir, now involving 60 students across 10 schools, was also awarded Highly Commended in the Australian Rural Education Awards.

Our Commitment to Inclusion and Safety

In 2024–25, VERTO strengthened its Reconciliation Action Plan, launching a Cultural Learning Strategy, growing our partnerships with Indigenous organisations, and participating in Reconciliation Australia's Reconciliation Action Plan Barometer to guide our third Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan.

We also embedded child-safe principles across our operations, updating policies, procedures, and staff training to maintain full compliance with the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework.

Looking Ahead

As we prepare for 2025–26, our focus remains clear: to deliver responsive, inclusive, and high-impact services that help individuals and communities thrive. We will continue to grow our footprint, strengthen our partnerships, and pursue innovation guided always by our values and our mission to transform lives.

To our staff, board, partners, and communities, thank you. Your support and shared commitment are what make VERTO's work not only possible, but powerful.





CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER'S REPORT

ALYSSA BENNETT

Delivering Impact with Purpose

At VERTO, our purpose is clear: to make a meaningful difference in the communities we serve. That purpose continues to drive everything we do from supporting individuals into sustainable employment to strengthening families through education and social connection.

As we reflect on the past year, I am proud to share the strategic developments and operational achievements that have further strengthened VERTO's impact. Our unwavering commitment to quality, innovation, and client-centred delivery continues to generate life-changing outcomes and improve performance across every area of the organisation.

Resilience Through Challenge

This year brought significant external pressures, including ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred in March 2025 and widespread flooding in the Hunter and Mid North Coast regions in May. Despite these disruptions, our staff and program participants demonstrated exceptional resilience and service continuity never wavered. I commend our teams for their dedication, professionalism, and client focus throughout.

Employment Services: Driving Outcomes at Scale

Our Employment Services team supported over 17,600 participants in 2024-25, delivering more than 216,000 appointments across programs. We maintained strong relationships with over 35,000 employers and community organisations and facilitated over 2,200 employment outcomes.

The Australian labour market remained tight, with historically low unemployment in April 2025. However, signs of upward movement reinforce the growing importance of tailored, participant-focused support, particularly for those facing barriers to employment. As demand grows our work becomes even more vital.

Disability Employment Services: A Strategic Transition

In March 2025, the Department of Social Services confirmed an extension of the current Disability Employment Services program through to 31 October 2025, ahead of the transition to Inclusive Employment Australia. VERTO's Disability

Employment Services team remains focused on delivering strong outcomes during this period and preparing for the transition.

We were successful in securing Inclusive Employment Australia contracts in several key regions, including Ipswich, Logan, Toowoomba in Queensland and the Nepean and Central Coast in NSW. While not all previously held regions were retained, this outcome represents a net expansion for VERTO and strengthens our national footprint. We are now focused on ensuring a smooth transition and maintaining service excellence under the Inclusive Employment Australia model.

Training Services: Quality and Growth

Our Training Services team continued to deliver high-quality education and vocational support throughout the year. A key milestone was the successful rollout of the Skills for Education and Employment program in the Hunter and Murray Riverina regions. Additionally, VERTO's Registered Training Organisation achieved re-registration with the Australian Skills Quality Authority for a further seven-year period. This is a significant endorsement of our training quality, systems, and outcomes.



2024-2025 Highlights

This year our teams delivered results through strong partnerships, innovative programs, and community-focused collaboration. Highlights include:



Sustainable employment outcomes in the Far West Orana region through partnerships with Coonamble Shire Council and Nguumambiny Indigenous Corporation.



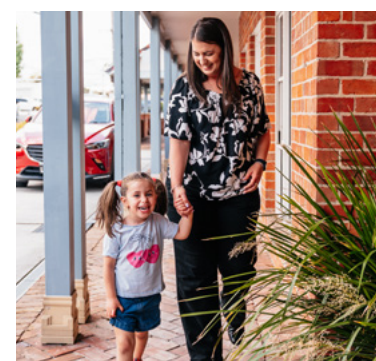
National recognition for West Orange Motors and VERTO case manager Allison Dean as finalists in the Disability Employment Australia Erin Carey Partnership Award.



West Orange Motors also named finalist in the NESA Champion Employer of the Year Award.



Sector leadership recognised, with CEO Ron Maxwell and Julie Burgmann awarded 10-year medals by Disability Employment Australia.



Successful delivery of the new Parent Pathways program across the Central West, supporting parents with tailored, pre-employment services.



Launch of VERTO's Disability Inclusion Action Plan, developed in partnership with our Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee.



Cultural Exchange Program delivered to Workforce Australia staff to enhance Indigenous cultural capability.

Thank You

To all VERTO staff, thank you. Your ongoing dedication, resilience, and commitment to our mission have been the foundation of another successful year. Together, we continue to create better futures for individuals, families, and communities.



DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT SERVICES REPORT

JULIE BURGMANN

VERTO has been delivering the current Disability Employment Services since 2018 under contract with the Department of Social Services, supporting people with injury, illness, or disability to prepare for and secure sustainable employment.

In March 2025, the Department confirmed an extension of the Disability Employment Services program through to 31 October 2025, ahead of the national transition to Inclusive Employment Australia from 1 November 2025. VERTO remains focused on delivering strong results under the current contract while ensuring a seamless, participant-centred transition to the new model.

Performance and Outcomes

In 2024–25, VERTO supported 925 participants across 18 sites in the Central West and Mid North Coast, bringing total program engagement to 4,012. Despite economic challenges, satisfaction remained high:

- VERTO achieved an average satisfaction rating of 4.27 out of 5 across all indicators.
- 99% of participants said their rights were respected
- 97% would recommend the service to others.

During the year, 126 participants secured employment or education opportunities, while 21% received ongoing post-placement support. More than \$1.4 million in funding was accessed to support workplace modifications, training, and other employment-related assistance.

Quality, Compliance, and Capability

VERTO maintained strong performance against Disability Employment Services contractual requirements, receiving a 'Meets' rating across all categories of the Disability Employment Services Quality Assessment, and achieving 100% compliance in the DES Assurance Program. These outcomes reflect the team's consistent focus on service quality, accountability, and alignment with the Disability Employment Services Performance Framework.

Tailored Response

The Disability Employment Services caseload reflects a broad range of lived experiences and support needs:

41%
live with a psychiatric disability

38%
have a physical disability

12%
are neurodiverse

17%
identify as First Nations

35%
are mature-aged

46%
identify as women

This diversity highlights the complexity of the caseload and highlights our delivery of tailored, person-centred support. Our ability to respond to these varied needs continues to be a clear strength, and positions us well to deliver under the more flexible Inclusive Employment Australia model.

Workforce Development and Community Engagement

Workforce capability remained a priority throughout the transition period. Staff completed targeted professional development in:

- disability-specific support strategies
- workplace modifications
- financial counselling
- career planning for participants with intellectual disability.

Community engagement also remained strong, with staff attending local schools, expos and community

events to promote direct registrations and support eligible school leavers. The appointment of Disability Inclusion Officers in both the Central West and Mid North Coast has further enhanced employer relationships and community partnerships laying strong foundations for the transition to Inclusive Employment Australia.

We enter this next phase of disability employment services both excited and well-positioned to continue delivering inclusive, high-quality and participant-focused support under the new Inclusive Employment Australia service model.





PARENT PATHWAYS REPORT

JULIE BURGANN

Program Transition and Continued Impact

From July to October 2024, VERTO delivered the ParentsNext program across 16 locations in the Central West and North Coast regions under contract with the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. The program supported parents in preparing for work before their youngest child started school and consistently achieved strong outcomes, meeting five out of six Key Performance Indicators.

Over the life of the contract VERTO supported more than 3,150 individuals, 40% of whom identified as First Nations. More than \$950,000 in government funding was administered to deliver tailored support, training, and engagement services.

In July 2024, VERTO responded to a change in provider arrangements on the North Coast, taking on an additional 50 active participants across the Grafton and Ballina sites. This transition required a coordinated response to ensure continuity of support.

Engagement steadily increased, reaching 60%, supported by the introduction of participation incentives, approved activity plans linked to childcare access, and personalised case management. VERTO's mentors were commended for their proactive and supportive approach, which was subsequently reflected in high levels of participant satisfaction.

Parent Pathways: A New, Flexible Model

Following the conclusion of ParentsNext on 31 October 2024, VERTO commenced delivery of the new Parent Pathways program as the sole provider in the Central West region. While sharing similar objectives, Parent Pathways introduces a more modernised and participant-led model, with increased flexibility and an emphasis on personal development, community engagement, and employment readiness. Delivery commenced from newly sourced premises in line with the Department's requirements to operate independently of Employment Services locations.

Since commencement, the program has supported strong engagement, with 93% of the caseload (more than 160 participants) commencing in the

first six months and attendance rates consistently above 80%. Referrals have been steady, with 72% originating from Services Australia and 28% through direct registration, signalling growing community trust and awareness. Participants have engaged in a wide range of personal development and employability activities, including assistance with driver licensing, accredited training in community services and education support, and short courses designed to build skills and confidence.

Community engagement has been a key focus, with mentors attending events such as the Bathurst Show, Bowenfels Family Fun Day, and the opening of the Whaluu Health Aboriginal Corp in Kelso. Promotional efforts have included distributing "Parent Pathways Go Bags", launching a Mother's Day colouring competition, and conducting presentations to organisations such as the Benevolent Society, Binaal Billa Family Violence Prevention Legal Service, Cowra Information and Neighbourhood Centre, and Community Plus. These initiatives have generated overwhelmingly positive feedback and increased referrals.

Feedback from the Department has also been overwhelmingly positive, with all performance indicators met and outcomes exceeding national benchmarks. With solid Parent Pathways foundations now in place, VERTO is well positioned to continue supporting parents through tailored, community-based employment services.



WORKFORCE AUSTRALIA REPORT

LINDSAY BULL

Creating Meaningful Employment Pathways

VERTO's Workforce Australia team is committed to delivering high-quality, outcome-focused employment services that connect participants and employers across regional communities. Since the contract commenced, VERTO has supported 23,700 participants, providing tailored services to help individuals build the skills, confidence, and qualifications required for meaningful and sustainable employment.

Over the past year, 12,900 participants received support through our Workforce Australia programs. The participant caseload continues to reflect a highly diverse demographic with structural barriers to employment:

- 24% identifying as First Nations
- 16% as former offenders
- 19% as mature-aged job seekers.
- 31% of participants live with a disability
- 14% are experiencing homelessness

Our team played a vital role in helping this cohort achieve stability, social connection, and economic opportunity.

Targeted Support and Tailored Interventions

In response to the varying needs within the caseload, VERTO provided non-vocational activities to 1,498 participants, alongside 714 intensive interventions for those requiring additional support. These services are designed to build foundational skills, improve job readiness, and remove barriers to employment. The team utilised available resources to support participants into training and employment, drawing on \$3.46 million in Employment Fund allocations. More than \$1.5 million was invested in education, licensing, and vocational training to ensure participants had the necessary qualifications to enter priority industries.

Collaborating with Employers to Meet Workforce Needs

A strong focus on employer engagement has been critical to VERTO's success in creating opportunities. The team worked with 3,775 employers throughout the year, co-designing pre-employment programs



to address local skill shortages and prepare participants for industry-specific roles. Notably, the BOOTS program in Dubbo supported women into non-traditional trades and contributed to a significant local trend in VERTO's Central West and Far West regions and female placement rates now exceed those of male participants. This unique result is unmatched in any other employment region nationally.

Driving Employment Outcomes

In 2024–25, VERTO's Workforce Australia team supported 1,984 participants into over 2,000 unique job placements across a broad range of sectors. These outcomes were further supported by the delivery of 453 wage subsidies, paid directly to employers to encourage sustainable hiring.

Lastly, I would like to extend my gratitude to the Workforce Australia team for their commitment in ensuring meaningful outcomes for our participants. VERTO continues to play a pivotal role in transforming lives and communities through training, non-vocational support and sustainable employment.



COMMUNITY SERVICES REPORT

JACINTA RYAN

Supporting Vulnerable Communities Through Change

Over the past 12 months, VERTO's Community Services team has provided critical support to individuals and families facing complex and persistent challenges. Rising housing pressures, financial stress, and limited access to essential services have continued to impact community wellbeing. In response, our team has delivered compassionate, responsive, and culturally safe services, helping clients navigate adversity with dignity and support.

Through targeted advice and advocacy, VERTO has remained focused on empowering clients and strengthening community connections. Looking ahead, our priority remains to deepen this support, adapting to changing needs, and driving positive change for those most at risk.

Aboriginal Youth Leadership Program

VERTO's Aboriginal Youth Leadership Program continues to thrive with strong engagement across schools in the Orange region. The program now operates in four schools, with the addition of Orange High School in 2024-25. Initiatives such as the Junior Trades Groups, including Junior Tidda Tradies and Buther Biran, have empowered students through practical skills development in welding and barbering, fostering confidence and future career pathways.

VERTO also remains a proud partner of the Wula Gurray Indigenous Choir, which now includes 60 students from 10 schools and received a Highly Commended award at the Australian Rural Education Awards. Core program activities continued throughout the year, including cultural groups for Years 5 and 6, NAIDOC Gala Day celebrations, and transport support for students.

Tenants' Advice and Advocacy

In 2024-25, VERTO supported more than 3,800 tenancy matters, including 1,280 termination cases, and prevented over 300 evictions. Our team represented tenants in more than 500 Tribunal hearings and delivered over 26,000 client sessions. This work coincided with major reforms to NSW tenancy legislation including the end of no-grounds evictions and limits on rent increases.

VERTO continues to play a key role in supporting renters through these changes, as part of a statewide network responding to more than 30,000 requests annually.

Financial Counselling Services

VERTO's Financial Counselling Service continued to provide essential support to individuals and families experiencing financial stress, particularly private renters affected by rising housing costs and cost-of-living pressures. In 2024-25, the team assisted more than 390 clients, including 200 referrals from other VERTO programs, and delivered 4,440 counselling sessions, helping clients stabilise their finances and avoid crisis.

While the sector experienced funding uncertainty during the year, interim support from the Financial Counselling Foundation enabled uninterrupted service delivery. VERTO welcomed the extension of funding through to June 2025 and remains optimistic about future funding outcomes that will support the long-term sustainability of this vital service.



SELF-EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE REPORT

MATTHEW ESCHLER

As part of VERTO's commitment to building economic independence in the communities we serve, the Self-Employment Assistance program has supported aspiring business owners to develop, launch, and grow their own enterprises for the last three years. The Self-Employment Assistance program empowers individuals to build viable small businesses through tailored support, expert coaching, and practical workshops. The program plays a vital role in providing participants with the tools and confidence to turn ideas into sustainable self-employment opportunities.

In 2024-25, the program achieved full utilisation of its business advice sessions, workshops, and business health checks across all delivery regions. Small business coaching places were filled in three out of four regions, highlighting strong demand and relevance. Notably, the Hunter and Murray Riverina regions saw utilisation increase by more than 30%, while the Mid North Coast achieved full coaching placement, supported by strong referrals from local providers.

The Self-Employment Assistance team has continued to strengthen referral networks and manage provider relationships effectively, ensuring a consistent flow of enquiries and participant engagement. While early-stage engagement remains strong, maintaining participation beyond the eight-month mark has proven challenging, primarily due to the cessation of the Self-Employment Assistance Allowance.

Program Enhancements and Innovation

To address retention and further enhance outcomes, VERTO introduced two key initiatives in 2025:

- **Mentor Model Skillset** – participants will engage directly with Self-Employment Assistance facilitators to complete a Micro Business Skillset, combining formal competencies with real-world mentorship.
- **Elevated Entrepreneur Program** – designed to support established participants beyond the 12-month mark, this initiative will offer additional tailored coaching to help scale and sustain business growth.

Digital improvements are also underway, including a refreshed program landing page and feasibility work on a dedicated participant resource hub on VERTO's

website. These enhancements aim to improve accessibility, strengthen engagement, and further align services to participant needs.

Performance and Impact

VERTO achieved 93% of its total placement allocation, contributing to an improved provider ranking under departmental performance metrics. Plans for the year ahead include refining service delivery and exploring program expansion into new regions.

Participant Spotlight: Al's Lawns, Gardens & Small Landscapes

Earlier this year, VERTO proudly featured Al, the owner of Al's Lawns, Gardens & Small Landscapes in Newcastle. Al launched his business using only a pushbike and trailer, servicing local clients with dedication and innovation. His inspiring journey was highlighted during a departmental site visit, where he shared how the Self-Employment Assistance Program helped him grow both personally and professionally.

Al recently returned to share the next phase of his journey. He has now upgraded to an e-bike, allowing him to service more customers efficiently. His story reflects the power of small business and the impact of targeted, person-centred support.





TRAINING SERVICES REPORT

DARREN FOSTER

Delivering Skills for the Future

In 2024–25, VERTO's Training Services team delivered strong outcomes while navigating a period of significant growth and change across the sector. Despite economic pressures and increased demand for accessible education, we remained focused on delivering inclusive, high-quality training that supports both individual development and community wellbeing.

Foundation Skills at the Core

A major highlight was the rollout of the Skills for Education and Employment program across six sites in NSW, including four in the Hunter and two in Murray Riverina. Designed to improve language, literacy, numeracy, and digital literacy, the program supports close to 100 active students, many with complex needs. The cohort of students consists of:

- 40% of participants identifying as First Nations
- 24% from culturally diverse backgrounds
- 97% in initial or basic learning streams

The Skills for Education and Employment program continues to build learner confidence, foster a sense of belonging, and improve everyday life skills. Our Trainers and Participant Support Officers worked closely with students, not only on their learning goals, but also with day-to-day challenges, from securing a driver's licence to accessing food or new glasses. The impact of this program has been deeply felt, with student satisfaction at 93% and trainer satisfaction at 90%.

Complementing the Skills for Education and Employment program, we also launched our first National Skills Agreement-funded Language, Literacy and Numeracy program in the Central West and Far West, expanding access to foundational education for disadvantaged learners.

Innovation and Program Growth

Our accredited training programs saw a 10% increase in enrolments, with strong demand across care-related and business qualifications, which made up around 60% of all enrolments. The Laptop to Launch digital literacy program was

Key outcomes this year included

6.800+

students trained in 2024-25

85%

completion rate across all programs

97%

engagement rate, combining completions and active students

91%

student and employer satisfaction

another standout initiative, supporting over 120 participants across the Central West and Far West. With a 98% completion rate, this program provided essential skills and technology to communities often excluded from digital access, enabling pathways into further education and employment.

We also recorded early and full utilisation of Adult and Community Education Community Service Obligation funding, underscoring high demand and program efficiency.

Compliance, Capability and Future Readiness

VERTO was awarded seven year re-registration as a Registered Training Organisation by Australian Skills Quality Authority.

Over 20 qualifications were actively managed, with five newly added to our scope, enabling progression from pre-Foundation to Diploma-level training.

A new compliance management system was rolled



out, replacing spreadsheets with a centralised platform to streamline documentation, align with updated Registered Training Organisation standards, and strengthen quality assurance.

QR codes were introduced across all Training Services certificates to enhance verification, and we continue to respond to sector changes, including qualification updates within Community Services and the incoming Registered Training Organisation standards, set to take effect from July 2025.

Looking Ahead

As we prepare for the changes ahead, Training Services is focused on learner progression, digital inclusion, and regional equity. With 94% of training delivered in regional or remote NSW, and 25% of students identifying as First Nations, our commitment to access and community impact remains strong.

We look forward to extending our footprint in 2025–26 and continuing to support individuals, employers, and industries through flexible, responsive training.





TRANSITION TO WORK REPORT

PAUL RICHARDS

Now in its third year of delivery, VERTO's Transition to Work program continued to deliver strong outcomes across the Hunter and North Coast regions, supporting young people aged 15–24 to build the skills, confidence, and pathways needed to transition into education or employment.

Since the contract began, the program has supported 6,291 participants, including 3,640 this year. It's a diverse cohort with 32% identifying as First Nations, 19% living with disability, and 46% identifying as female. The program maintained a participant satisfaction rating of 4.89 out of 5, with 100% of respondents reporting that their Case Manager delivered a person-centred service that understood their needs.

Support was delivered through 12 youth-focused sites, each designed to provide safe, welcoming, and developmentally appropriate spaces. Consultants worked alongside young people to create individualised career action plans, informed by career profiling and skills assessments, ensuring that services were tailored to their goals and aspirations.

Driving Employment and Education Outcomes

VERTO achieved strong performance across key program modules, including Employment and Education, Progress to Employment, and Quality of Service. Monthly performance reporting via Power BI enabled real-time tracking of outcomes and informed program responsiveness.

Over the reporting year, more than 1,300 young people transitioned into employment or education. The most common placement industries included Accommodation and Food Services (29%), Retail (18%), and Construction (10%). To support these outcomes, VERTO administered over \$920,000 in direct participant funding. Employer engagement remained a critical focus, with 1,451 employers engaged across the year to provide tailored placement opportunities.

Results from Continuous Assessment of Payment Integrity Sample 33 confirmed full compliance with employment claims, reflecting enhanced internal processes and a continued commitment to quality and integrity.



Community and Employer Engagement

In 2024–25, the program further embedded a youth-centred approach, supported by Youth Advisory Committees, community partnerships, and employer co-design. VERTO's engagement with schools and local organisations ensured services remained relevant, responsive, and aligned with regional needs.

Updated performance methodologies, wage subsidy guidelines, and alignment with the 2024–25 Labour Market Strategy further strengthened strategic focus. These enhancements ensured that services addressed regional workforce gaps while continuing to prioritise participant readiness and wellbeing.

Looking Ahead

As we move into 2025–26, VERTO remains committed to expanding access to meaningful education and employment pathways. Our team's dedication, combined with the resilience of the young people we support, continues to drive the success of the Transition to Work program.



NEW ENERGY APPRENTICESHIP MENTORING PROGRAM REPORT

MATTHEW ESCHLER

VERTO's New Energy Apprentice Mentoring Program was a strategic initiative aimed at fostering the next generation of skilled professionals in the renewable and emerging energy sectors. The program connected apprentices with experienced mentors to accelerate learning, build industry-relevant skills, and support career development in a rapidly evolving new energy landscape.

The mentoring program's tailored approach helped apprentices build confidence, gain industry-specific knowledge, and create important professional connections that will continue to serve them well throughout their careers.

The VERTO New Energy Apprentice Mentoring Program's main objectives were to:

- provide structured mentoring to support technical and professional growth with skill development opportunities
- build a sustainable talent pipeline aligned with future energy needs
- strengthen industry collaboration and knowledge transfer
- attract and retain apprentices in the new energy sector.

The program was delivered across multiple states within Australia, hosting and attending many engagement activities including careers days, trade days and employer hosted events. VERTO collaborated with TAFE on a national level to boost engagement with the program and to procure experienced mentors. Over 450 single point engagements were completed to promote the program on a national level.

VERTO also successfully held peer supported events in the new energy space. This was where mentors and apprentices were encouraged to collaborate by sharing knowledge on new energy infrastructure projects, network with others in the field, reduce isolation and promote events that showcase apprentice achievements.

The positioning of the program in the market proved challenging due to the changing landscape of the Apprentice Connect Australia Provider Contract. The program faced competition from Clean Energy

Specialists, new providers, and general confusion around the classification of what constituted new or clean energy. Through feedback and consultation with the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, VERTO assisted in releasing updated fact sheets. These resources provided clearer guidance for employers and apprentices, helping to build a stronger understanding of the program.

VERTO also established a new energy resource hub and calendar of events to inform, connect and support apprentices, employers and mentors. This initiative proved highly successful, with many Apprentice Connect Australia Provider providers adopting the resources to support apprentices and employers in the new energy industry.

In conjunction with Training Services, VERTO developed a mentoring skillset to support the retention of apprentices in the New Energy Apprenticeship Mentoring Program. The skillset included three units of competency, focused on building strong communication skills, understanding diverse backgrounds, and supporting young people. More than thirty mentors undertook this training during the program's lifespan.

On 31 March 2025, the New Energy Apprenticeships Mentoring Program officially concluded.

We would like to thank the team for their dedication and support throughout the program. Your efforts played an essential role in its success and in strengthening opportunities for apprentices, employers and mentors in the new energy sector.





RECONCILIATION AND CHILD SAFETY COMMITMENTS

PAMELA HUNTER

Reconciliation Action Plan

In 2024–25, VERTO continued to strengthen its commitment to reconciliation through meaningful action, community engagement, and culturally responsive service delivery. Guided by our Reconciliation Action Plan, we deepened partnerships, expanded cultural learning initiatives, and delivered programs that support economic empowerment and long-term change.

Partnerships and Community Collaboration

Throughout the year, VERTO worked alongside six Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations across NSW to co-design and deliver impactful initiatives. Programs such as Sista's in Trade and Wake Up, Shake Up created tangible employment outcomes and strengthened community connections.

We proudly participated in a range of National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week activities, including the inaugural Bathurst NAIDOC Ball, and supported community Family Fun Days in Muswellbrook and Maitland. These events reflect our ongoing commitment to cultural celebration, visibility, and respect. Our Reconciliation Action

Plan Working Group played a central role in shaping our policy and practice. This included advising on anti-discrimination strategies, reviewing internal processes, and helping guide our cultural capability priorities.

Building Cultural Capability

In 2024–25, VERTO launched a Cultural Learning Strategy to embed cultural understanding across the organisation. Key initiatives included:

- a two-day leadership gathering on Wiradjuri Country
- cultural mentoring and awareness training for 17 employment services staff
- ongoing internal engagement to strengthen cultural safety across all sites

These actions supported the creation of a more inclusive workplace while enhancing our ability to deliver culturally safe services to Indigenous clients and communities.

Economic Empowerment and Indigenous Procurement

VERTO continued to support Aboriginal economic development through sustainable procurement and supplier relationships. As a member of Supply Nation, we remain committed to engaging

Indigenous-owned businesses. The implementation of our Indigenous Procurement Strategy enabled stronger collaboration and the formalisation of key relationships to ensure long-term impact.

Listening, Learning and Future Action

As part of our continuous improvement, VERTO participated in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace Reconciliation Action Plan Barometer. The insights gained helped shape the development of our third Innovate RAP, launched in 2025. This new plan reflects the voices and lived experiences of our staff, ensuring our reconciliation journey remains relevant, accountable, and grounded in genuine partnership.



Commitment to Child Safety

VERTO is committed to promoting and upholding the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in all areas of our operations. In alignment with the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework, we completed our annual child safety risk assessment, identifying a low risk rating based on our limited direct interaction with children. Mitigation strategies, including updated child safety policies, staff training, and Working with Children Check compliance, were reviewed and strengthened during the reporting period.

We remain fully compliant with the Framework and continue to embed the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations in our culture and practices.

In 2024–25, we introduced online refresher training for all new and existing staff, updated our complaints handling procedures with child-friendly elements, and ensured child safety clauses were included in relevant third-party contracts.

We are committed to continuous improvement to maintain a child safe culture and environment.



VERTO 2024 EMPLOYEE EXCELLENCE AWARDS

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL AWARD WINNERS

- EXCELLENCE IN CROSS SERVICE SUPPORT
John Tull
- EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATION
Nathaniel Dalgleish
- EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP
Jodie Dare
- EXCELLENCE IN INDIGENOUS OUTCOMES
Maddie Mullington
- EXCELLENCE IN TEAM PERFORMANCE
RTO Compliance
- SERVICE STAR (COMMUNITY SERVICES)
Karla Evans
- SERVICE STAR (CORPORATE SERVICES)
Demi Quibell
- SERVICE STAR (EMPLOYMENT SERVICES)
Alison Dean
- SERVICE STAR (EMPLOYMENT SERVICES)
Robyn Cameron
- SERVICE STAR (TRAINING SERVICES)
Matthew Woodcock
- GARY LOWE MEMORIAL AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING TEACHER, TRAINER OR ASSESSOR
Renae Dobson
- EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR (RCC)
Sarah Adams
- EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR
Aimee McMillan



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