

# Skills Impact ANZSCO Survey Response: Consultation Round 1

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# Details of occupations that are not accurately described

Considering the occupations that are separately identified in ANZSCO with a unique 6-digit code ([www.abs.gov.au/anzsco](http://www.abs.gov.au/anzsco)):

Are there any occupations in your industry, business or workplace that are not accurately described?

For each inaccurately described occupation:

- a) Provide your proposed new title, alternative title, definition, specialisations, licensing and/or registration requirement (whichever apply). Refer here for more information on title, alternative title, definition, specialisations, licensing and/or registration requirement.
- b) Provide one or two unique tasks which distinguish this occupation from others included in ANZSCO.
- c) Include any evidence to support your proposed changes, such as industry workforce surveys, workplace awards, job vacancy data, industry workforce planning documents, or job descriptions.
- d) Describe how the inaccurate description affects your industry, business or workplace.

The occupation 234311 Conservation Officer includes the specialisation 'Landcare Facilitator' but this is no longer a common job specialisation title.

Industry consultation for the qualification associated with the occupation Conservation Officer (*AHC31421 Certificate III in Conservation and Ecosystem Management*) indicated that its specialisations include:

- Lands, Parks and Wildlife Officer
- Land Rehabilitation Worker (including mined land)
- National Parks Worker
- Soil Conservation Specialist
- Indigenous Lands Worker
- Revegetation Worker
- Conservation Earthworks Assistant

Individuals with this qualification perform a range of conservation and ecosystem management activities, including site restoration, rehabilitation and renewal, and management of rural and natural landscapes, degraded sites, and marine environments. They contribute to the preservation and maintenance of wildlife and their habitat in the natural ecosystem, parks and reserves. Activities frequently involve working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to preserve cultural and heritage sites.

For more information, see: <https://training.gov.au/Training/Details/AHC31421>

## Occupations which do not accurately reflect the skill level (1 to 5)

Are there any occupations in your industry, business or workplace for which ANZSCO does not accurately reflect the skill level (1 to 5)?

For each such occupation:

- a) Outline the skill level (1-5) that should be applied to the occupation.
- b) Include any evidence to support the change, such as changed education, training or licensing requirements, occupation data, industry workforce surveys, job vacancy data, or workplace awards.
- c) Describe how the inaccurate skill level affects your industry, business or workplace.

The following recommendations for changes in Skill Level are due to the vocational education and training (VET) qualifications commensurate with these occupations being at a lower Skill Level. Skills Impact acknowledges that some stakeholders may consider these occupations to operate at higher Skill Levels than proposed below, but this submission is to provide information relevant to the industry-defined occupational skills standards within the scope of Skills Impact. The 'grey area' of defining Skill Levels will likely be addressed as part of the reformed VET system, with the new Jobs & Skills Councils tasked with undertaking a more collaborative approach to defining skills across all educational pathways (including universities).

The qualifications detailed below include the highlighted occupations as 'occupational outcomes', meaning that, on completion of the relevant qualification, the learner has been assessed as demonstrating the consistent application of knowledge and skill to the standard of performance required in the workplace (i.e. they have achieved 'competency'). Workplace awards, which directly determine pay and employment conditions by setting the standard for enterprise agreements, are often determined with reference to VET qualifications because they are a crucial resource designed through consultation with industry experts.

### **234311 Conservation Officer**

- Currently identified Skill Level: 1
- Should be Skill Level 3
  - AHC31421 Certificate III in Conservation and Ecosystem Management

## **234314 Park Ranger**

- Currently identified Skill Level: 1
- Should be Skill Level 2
  - AHC51120 Diploma of Conservation and Ecosystem Management
  - AHC60422 Advanced Diploma of Conservation and Ecosystem Management

The following two occupations can be 'mapped' to the qualifications highlighted by virtue of their occupation taxonomies on the National Training Register, training.gov.au. At the Diploma and Advanced Diploma levels, graduates are typically considered for management, consultant, paraprofessional, and highly skilled occupations.

## **234312 Environmental Consultant (alternative title: Environmental Officer)**

- Currently identified Skill Level: 1
- Should be Skill Level 2
  - AHC51120 Diploma of Conservation and Ecosystem Management
    - Qualification occupation taxonomies include: Environmental Officer (Lands, Parks and Wildlife)
  - AHC60422 Advanced Diploma of Conservation and Ecosystem Management
    - Qualification occupation taxonomies include: Environmental Officer (Lands, Parks and Wildlife)

## **139912 Environmental Manager**

- Currently identified Skill Level: 1
- Should be Skill Level 2
  - AHC51120 Diploma of Conservation and Ecosystem Management
    - Qualification occupation taxonomies include: Landcare Manager, Land Management Unit Supervisor, Natural Resource Manager
  - AHC60422 Advanced Diploma of Conservation and Ecosystem Management
    - Qualification occupation taxonomies include: Natural Resource Manager, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Manager, Land Management Unit Supervisor, Landcare Manager

There are also occupations that operate at multiple Skill Levels. While the following two occupations operate at Skill Level 1, there are also relevant 'environmental scientist' roles that operate from Skill Level 3, and this may be worthy of further consideration.

## **234313 Environmental Research Scientist (Alternative Title: Environmental Scientist)**

- Currently identified Skill Level: 1
- Should be Skill Level 3
  - AHC40920 Certificate IV in Conservation and Ecosystem Management
    - Qualification ANZSCO Identifier: 234300 Environmental Scientists

## **234399 Environmental Scientists nec**

- Currently identified Skill Level: 1
- Should be Skill Level 3
  - AHC40920 Certificate IV in Conservation and Ecosystem Management
    - Qualification ANZSCO Identifier: 234300 Environmental Scientists

## **What impacts do inaccurate skill levels have?**

### **Industry attraction**

Strategies to attract new workers rely on accurate information about the level of education required for entry to these occupations and associated industry sectors. Erroneously equating skill levels with those developed through completion of a bachelor degree can be off-putting for people without the financial means to enrol, or learning style required, in universities. It can also exacerbate barriers for under-represented people and cohorts, including potentially vulnerable groups, First Nations peoples, and people living in rural, regional and remote areas.

Inaccurate ANZSCO occupation skill levels mean that government-supported services, such as careers websites (e.g. National Careers Institute) and national industry and occupation data providers (e.g. ABS), are providing inadvertently misleading information to potential career seekers, which can make certain jobs seem unattractive or unobtainable, which only adds to the difficulties already being experienced in attracting workers (including those displaced from other industries).

### **Workforce Planning mismatches**

The 2022 Skills Priority List developed by the National Skills Commission (and now Jobs and Skills Australia) indicates shortages/future demand in the following occupations:

- 234314 Park Ranger
  - Shortages in NSW and NT
  - Moderate future demand

- 234312 Environmental Consultant
  - Shortages in NT
- 234313 Environmental Research Scientist
  - Shortages in NSW and NT
- 234311 Conservation Officer
  - Shortages in NT
- 234399 Environmental Scientists nec
  - Shortages in NSW and NT
- 139912 Environmental Manager
  - Strong future demand

Inaccurate ANZSCO occupation skill levels mean Workforce Planning strategies are acting on erroneous data. This potentially causes misalignments between advertised job roles and the actual skill levels required of job candidates. This may reduce the number of candidates for vacant job positions, or lead to successful candidates being over- or under-qualified. As research by Skills IQ concluded, “Persistently high levels of skills mismatch – the gap between workers’ skills and the demands or requirements of their jobs – have become a significant cost to individuals and employers. Skills mismatch can result from over-qualification, under-qualification or qualifications and skills that are possessed but are not related to, or required by, a job role.” Employers often seek people with the higher levels of qualification to ‘filter’ for candidates who they think will be most effective; however, this can cause mismatches whereby workers possess formal qualifications but lack the practical skills to perform the job role, potentially leading to lower productivity and higher staff turnover. Alternatively, the higher qualifications workers have acquired may turn out to be superfluous, causing job dissatisfaction through under-utilisation of their skills and knowledge and, ultimately, higher likelihood of them leaving the position. For the employer, replacing employees is costly and time-consuming.

### **Identifying skills and training gaps**

Accurately representing skill levels can remove barriers to labour mobility, especially important during times of widespread skills shortages. It also aids the identification of skills and training gaps present in an industry, business or workplace, making it easier to address any gaps with the provision of appropriate workforce training delivery.

# Occupations to classify under a different ANZSCO category

Are there any occupations which we should consider classifying under a different ANZSCO category (e.g. sub-major, minor or unit group)?

- a) Include any evidence to support the change (such as skill transferability with minimal retraining required)
- b) Describe how the current placement affects your industry, business or workplace.

Consideration should be given to classifying the following occupations under a different ANZSCO category:

- 139912 Environmental Manager
- 234311 Conservation Officer
- 234312 Environmental Consultant
- 234314 Park Ranger

The category should include the following two occupations if their details or Skill Level are modified in line with those above:

- 234313 Environmental Research Scientist
- 234399 Environmental Scientists nec

Government climate change mitigation policies and strategies, as well as recognition of First Nations Peoples' custodianship of Australia's lands and waters, means there is an imperative to recognise the emergence of occupations focussed on conservation and ecosystem management (including ecological restoration). In the past, these occupations were considered primarily to support sustainable practices in other occupations and industries, but, with the Australian Government's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and achieving net zero emissions by 2050, they now constitute a focus area in their own right. Accordingly, the recommendation is to create a new Minor Category called 'Conservation and Ecosystem Management Workers' to house these occupations.

While these occupations undoubtedly make contributions to scientific data collection and analysis, this is but part of their roles. What distinguishes them from other occupations in the Scientific Research Services focus area is their pronounced social and cultural responsibilities and outcomes, including for ecotourism and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage activities, which directly enhance the wellbeing of Australia's population. People in these occupations carry out services for Local, State and Federal Government departments and agencies, the Mining Industry, Carbon Offset contracts, and Private Landholders.

Creating a new Minor Category for 'Conservation and Ecosystem Management Workers' would also help align these ANZSCO occupations with vocational education and training (VET) training package products in Conservation and Ecosystem Management, which are designed to provide career pathways and facilitate skills transferability with minimal retraining.

The Minor Category for 'Conservation and Ecosystem Management Workers' may be appropriately classified under the Major Group 'Technicians and Trade Workers' (Skill Levels 2 and 3) to reflect that they are not exclusively Skill Level 1 occupations (unlike in the Major Group 'Professionals', where most of these occupations are currently classified).

The occupations Park Ranger, Environmental Manager, and Environment Consultant/Officer (at ANZSCO Skill Level 2) need the skills and knowledge required for skilled and paraprofessional work in conservation and ecosystem management. Workers perform in operational managerial and/or technical positions often with specialist skills and knowledge in a range of sectors, including Indigenous land management, ecosystem restoration, rehabilitation and renewal, conservation works, parks management and/or administration, wildlife management, marine and/or coastal management, and water and catchment management. At more senior levels, individuals in these occupations are often accountable for the overall performance of a conservation and ecosystem management workplace/site.

Similarly, people in the occupation Conservation Officer (at ANZSCO Skill Level 3) must have the skills and practical knowledge for work or further learning in the conservation and ecosystem management industry, potentially undertaking a range of activities, including rehabilitation, renewal and management of rural and natural landscapes, degraded sites, and marine environments. They contribute to the preservation and maintenance of wildlife and their habitats in the natural ecosystem, parks and reserves. Activities frequently involve working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to preserve cultural and heritage sites.

Environmental Scientists (at ANZSCO Skill Level 3) generally must have the practical skills and theoretical knowledge for specialised or skilled work in the conservation and ecosystem management industry. This involves a broad range of conservation and ecological work, including in Indigenous land management, pest control and fire management.

Recognising the significance of these occupations' roles in ecosystem management, climate change mitigation strategies, cultural heritage and wellbeing through a new Minor Category for 'Conservation and Ecosystem Management Workers' would facilitate greater recognition of them and ensure alignment with government policies and strategies, as well as vocational education and training opportunities.



# Occupations that should be separately identified

Are there any occupations that should be separately identified with a unique code?

For each such occupation:

- a) Describe the occupation as fully as possible, including the tasks involved; its relationship to other occupations; any registration or licensing requirements; the education and experience requirements; its skill level (1 to 5), and any other titles used to describe the occupation.
- b) Indicate the number of people that undertake the occupation in your industry, business or workplace. Estimate the number of people that will be required to undertake the occupation in 5 years' time in your industry, business or workplace. Where possible, use evidence to support the estimates you provide.
- c) Identify where you think this occupation sits within ANZSCO.
- d) Would adding this occupation as a specialisation of an existing ANZSCO occupation category meet the needs of your industry, business or workplace? Why? / Why not?

We have not identified any occupations that should be separately identified.

# Occupations that are emerging

Are there **occupations that are emerging**, or that you anticipate will emerge, in the next 5 to 10 years in your industry, business or workplace?

For each emerging occupation:

- a) Describe the occupation as fully as possible, including the tasks involved, its relationship to other occupations, any registration or licensing requirements, the education and experience requirements, its skill level (1 to 5), and any other titles used to describe the occupation.
- b) Indicate the number of people you expect will undertake the occupation in your industry, business or workplace in the next 5 to 10 years. Where possible, use evidence to support the estimates you provide.
- c) Explain what is driving the emergence of the occupation.
- d) Identify where you think this occupation sits within ANZSCO.

## Conservation and Ecosystem Management Planner

An emerging occupation is 'Conservation and Ecosystem Management Planner', which has alternative titles including:

- Environmental Planner
- Conservation Planner
- Ecologist in Environment and Planning

This emergence was identified through stakeholder engagement and desktop research, including on job advertisement websites. The emergence of this occupation is due to the growing capacity – backed by government policies and strategies – of conservation and ecosystem management operations.

An example of a job is advertised as part of the work unit for Parks and Wildlife, Park Development and Strategic Projects by the Northern Territory Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security. Key duties and responsibilities include:

- Prepare and contribute to the preparation of statutory park management plans, policy and high-level government documents.
- Support and manage strategic projects and programs relating to protected area management and development.
- Professionally represent the Parks, Wildlife and Heritage and consult effectively with stakeholders in the management and planning of parks, including government agencies, Aboriginal people and organisations, the tourism industry, community groups and general public.
- Operate within a strong safety culture and implement defined Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) policies and procedures while delivering services.

This job could be a specialisation of 139912 Environmental Manager or 234312 Environmental Consultant, and accordingly would be at Skill Level 2. The proposed specialisation would be appropriate under the recommended new Minor Category 'Conservation and Ecosystem Management Workers'.

It is difficult to predict the number of people we expect will undertake the occupation in the next 5 to 10 years, but there are 5,126 Environmental Consultants and 2,827 Environmental Managers employed in Australia (Census 2021 data). Environmental Managers are rated by the National Skills Commission as being in strong demand (2022 Skills Priority List data).

# Other information to support submission

Is there any **other information** to help support your submission?

Please consider:

- a) Any impacts if the proposed changes are not made to the ANZSCO.
- b) Alignment of your proposed changes to policy, program or statistical/data needs.

## **Skilled Migration Visas**

The changes proposed would ensure greater visibility for these occupations and their critical role in facilitating climate change mitigation strategies, policies and programs through conservation, ecosystem management and restoration activities. This would better enable governments to approve visa applications for people who are qualified to work or train in these skilled occupations, which would help to address skills shortages, especially in NSW and NT, as detailed in our answer to Question 2.

# Any other issues not already covered

Please provide information on any other issues in relation to ANZSCO that have not already been covered in this survey.

## Vocational Education and Training Alignment

The relationship between the ANZSCO and VET qualifications is worthy of greater consideration. In its role as a Skills Service Organisation from 2016 to 2022, Skills Impact followed government approved standards in designing qualifications. Under this system, only one ANZSCO occupation could be allocated to each qualification. However, there are many ANZSCO occupations that are not designated to a VET qualification, even when one or more qualifications do qualify people for those roles. In fact, most qualifications support learning across multiple occupations, as indicated by occupation taxonomies on the National Training Register ([training.gov.au](http://training.gov.au)).

A single ANZSCO occupation designation contradicts government priorities for qualifications to support multiple job roles and to facilitate skills transferability across occupations and industry sectors. It also serves to obscure the broad value of qualifications and sustain stakeholders' sense that information about appropriate skills and training are hard to determine. As a result, it is recommended that government and supporting agencies support a change to allow multiple ANZSCO occupations to be designated to any single qualification.

Without this change, potential solutions to address skills shortages cannot be enacted. For example, the Skills Priority List is based on ANZSCO occupations, which are designated as 'in shortage' or 'not in shortage' according to various measures, including whether there is training available. Where there are no qualifications directly aligned with that ANZSCO occupation, questions are raised as to whether that occupation even requires skills commensurate with any qualification attainment, or whether visa workers can be appropriately trained while undertaking roles in Australia (as per the conditions of certain visas). This jeopardises opportunities for alleviating skills shortages through skilled migration, but also impacts on whether a qualification is eligible for government funding and subsidies; and, in turn, the likelihood of it attracting the enrolments that would help develop the pipeline of skilled workers.