

Workforce Plan 2024

Consultation Draft



Skills Insight acknowledges that First Nations peoples have been living on and caring for country for thousands of years.

This is respected in our values and the way we work.



Jobs and Skills Council
Agribusiness, Fibre, Furnishing, Food, Animal and Environment Care
An Australian Government Initiative

Skills Insight is a Jobs and Skills Council funded by the Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

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1 Guiding Workforce Solutions

As a Jobs and Skills Council, Skills Insight works to understand current and emerging work challenges and opportunities across the agribusiness, fibre, furnishing, food, animal and environment care industries.

This encompasses a vast array of industries that are crucial to Australia's communities, ecosystems and prosperity. The Workforce Plan is the strategic centrepiece of our JSC activities. It is a key output of our workforce planning activities, providing advice to the Department of Employment and Workforce Relations (DEWR) on workforce challenges and skill opportunities, and paving the way for the DEWR's approval of projects to explore ways to address the challenges.



What we do

Workforce Planning

To identify workforce challenges and skill opportunities and proposes strategies to address them.

Training package and research projects

To investigate possible solutions for current and emerging skills needs and workforce challenges.

Strategic advice to the Government

On industry skills and training needs and national training system policies.



Who we engage with

Industry (employers, employer associations, employees, unions)

Governments

Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA)

Other Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs)

RTOs and their representatives

Regulators

Nonregistered training providers

Learners

Research collaborators



What we've achieved

Initial Workforce Plan published in October 2023, approved by the Department of Workplace Relations (DEWR)

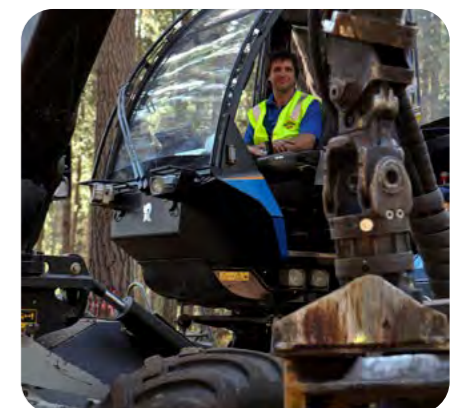
Strategic Plan, Activity Schedule and Stakeholder Engagement Plan developed to guide operations

Established JSC Stakeholder Forum to provide governance functions and oversee industry stewardship

Established and connected Stakeholder Networks with representation across all industries and sectors we work with

Twelve projects to investigate skills and training solutions. Three are in the final stages.

Supported industry input into the review of the ANZSCO

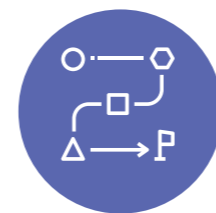




2 Executive Summary

Workforce Planning is the strategic centrepiece for Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs) and establishes essential context for all strategies and activities undertaken.

This Workforce Plan presents an update to Skills Insight's Initial Workforce Plan, which was published in October 2023. The Initial Workforce Plan took stock of existing data and information and set a path for prioritising and diagnosing workforce challenges during the first year of Jobs and Skills Council operations. This 2024 Workforce Plan builds on the Initial Workforce Plan by reflecting industry stakeholder feedback and validation of preliminary findings. It also updates data and analyses on the challenges and opportunities faced by 13 industry groups (which, following stakeholder feedback, has been refined to 16 industry sector scans presented in the Initial Workforce Plan). Based on this work, and the broader functions of the JSC, there is an update on current and prospective workforce planning activities, identification of gaps in national data collections, mapping of industry and workforce strategies (including collaboration progress updates and the identification of newly-released strategies), and an updated consultation plan.



Methodology

This 2024 Workforce Plan builds upon the data and evidence presented in the Initial Workforce Plan by using new and updated data sources released by Jobs and Skills Australia and others in the intervening period, notably the 2023 Skills Priority List. This quantitative data, with respect to identified evidence gaps, has been triangulated with qualitative evidence from multiple sources, including direct stakeholder engagement, published research, and applied research undertaken by Skills Insight. These multiple methods of data collection and analysis are triangulated to corroborate findings, enhance validity, and improve the reliability of information presented. At the same time, workforce challenges are contextualised within a whole-of-economy perspective, with the mapping of national and global trends and drivers, as well as national and jurisdictional differences, enabling insights on both current and emerging skills needs and investment challenges (for example, training delivery in thin markets and housing), or the identification of opportunities to validate diagnoses through further research and analysis.



Key workforce challenges

This Workforce Plan summarises Skills Insight's workforce planning priorities, which are updated from the Initial Workforce Plan, and approved by our JSC Stakeholder Forum. These priorities retain the strategic imperatives detailed in the last version, but are updated to reflect the language of, and so align with, the Australian Government's White Paper on Jobs and Opportunities. All activities and strategies in the document that follow are mapped back to these workforce planning priorities to demonstrate that they are evidence-based and designed to address identified symptoms exhibited by a workforce. An overview of the industries within Skills Insight's coverage is presented, including a summary of the key workforce and skills challenges and opportunities identified by stakeholders, as well as snapshots of the top employed occupations in each industry group and their Skills Priority List ratings. Providing context for this jobs and skills ecosystem is a description of the drivers of change, including climate change adaptation and mitigation, biosecurity, digital and automation practices, and workplace safety and risk management, and the research and strategies being carried out by Skills Insight to consider approaches to address them. There is then a focus on the 13 newly-refined industry sector groups that share explicit knowledge, skills and jobs commonalities. Each scan includes key data and insights, as well as industry updates, which stakeholders have defined as most significant since the Initial Workforce Plan, along with prevalent challenges and opportunities. There are a multitude of labour market dynamics and workforce challenges experienced across these industry groups, including labour shortages, an ageing workforce, challenges in attracting and retaining diverse workers (including young people, women, First Nations peoples, people with disabilities, and skilled migrants), a need for leadership development to support decision-making, human resource management and succession planning. A key issue is the lack of access to skilling opportunities and training supply for existing and new workforces (especially in rural, regional and remote Australia).



Workforce planning activities

There is an update on activities Skills Insight are currently undertaking or scoping for further research and potential implementation. All current or prospective activities are mapped to relevant workforce planning priorities, the labour market dynamics being addressed, and the relevant industry and/or workforce that is experiencing supply and/or demand issues.



Gaps in evidence identified

This section aims to support and inform continuous improvement of data collections used for government and industry workforce strategies. It is an abridged version of the evidence gaps documented in the Initial Workforce Plan, including descriptions of their nature, extent, and impact, with commentary added to describe additional gaps or challenges encountered by Skills Insight and our stakeholders in the intervening period that may be a hindrance to workforce planning. There is also an update on relevant JSC activities to support addressing these gaps.



Existing workforce and skilling strategies

This section builds on the identification of existing workforce strategies and initiatives in the Initial Workforce Plan. The list is not exhaustive but indicative of the many government, workforce, skills, national, and regional strategies that are, and will be, considered in ongoing JSC workforce planning activities. This mapping of high-level workforce strategies includes descriptions of their owners, objectives, timing, how they relate to workforce planning priorities, and relevant collaborations that further the strategic goals of Skills Insight and these partners, whether associated with implementation, collaboration or influencing activities.



Planned and ongoing engagement

This section outlines Skills Insight's ongoing and diverse consultative strategies that underpin all workforce planning and associated stakeholder engagement and activities. It defines timing and opportunities for collaboration associated with different groups and the identified activities for which they are key stakeholders.



Towards a 2025 Workforce Plan

This 2024 Workforce Plan finishes with a mission statement for the 2025 Workforce Plan, which will be a more comprehensive document, that diagnoses and prioritises the greatest workforce challenges and opportunities across Skills Insight's industry coverage. This will include concern for current, emerging and future labour supply and demand, including skills gaps and shortages, with attention paid to small, niche and regional sectors, and to developing effective strategies for the greater inclusion of priority cohorts. There will also be enhanced collaboration with other JSCs, especially where jobs, skills and value chains overlap, and with Jobs and Skills Australia to refine data collection and analysis processes.



James and Clara McCormack working with cattle at their property near Mansfield



Diana McNaughton with stud owner Jo Duncan at Forest View Farm



Apprentice cabinet maker Karen Suze at TAFE NSW Lidcombe Campus

How we navigate evidence

Our approach for ongoing and future data collection and analysis

Knowledge gaps

Identifying data and evidence gaps to consider limitations in what we know and what we will try to find out.

Stakeholder engagement

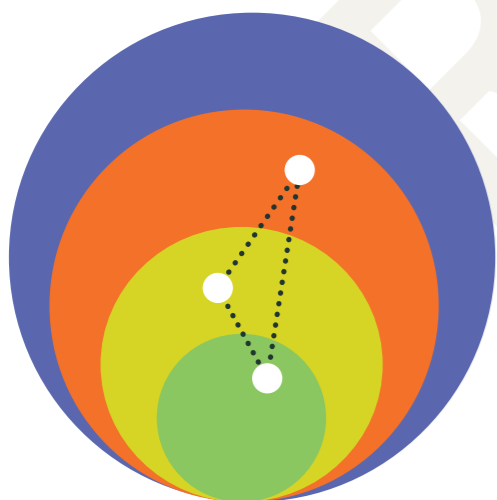
Understanding the experiences and needs of industry employers, training providers and learners.

Quantitative data analysis

Systematic examination of numerical workforce and skills data to interpret relationships and trends.

Qualitative data analysis

Systematic examination of non-numerical workforce and skills data to develop place-based insights that illustrate wider issues.



Workforce Plan

These multiple methods of data collection and analysis are triangulated to corroborate findings, enhance validity, and improve the reliability of information presented in the Workforce Plan and the priority strategies that are defined.

Our data scope



Industry Statistics

- Structural information related to each industry.
- Size, composition, and economic output



Workforce Statistics

- Structural data about the labour force by region and nationally.
- Employment by geography, size and demographics (e.g. age and gender)



Industry Dynamics

- Fluid data on current workforce demands and future projections
- Trends such as hours worked, type of work (e.g. seasonal/casual), and wage dynamics



Education & Training

- Information on processes and programs designed to impact skills, knowledge, and qualifications
- VET enrolment/completions, apprenticeships, and higher education, if relevant



Under-represented Groups

- Demographic segments not adequately or proportionally represented in the labour market
- Priority cohorts include First Nations peoples, people with disabilities, unemployed youth, and women in male-dominated industries

Following a triangulation research strategy

We triangulate to form robust, evidence-based narratives that inform Skills Insights's initiatives and key deliverables.





3 Our Workforce Priorities

Revising our strategic priorities in line with stakeholder feedback, and the Australian Government’s White Paper on Jobs and Opportunities.

The workforce planning priorities and associated strategies in our [Initial Workforce Plan](#) have been updated following stakeholder consultation and to align with the five objectives identified in the Australian Government’s White Paper on Jobs and Opportunities (‘The Working Future’), which provide a roadmap to position the Australian labour market for the future. The revised priorities have been approved by Skills Insight JSC’s Stakeholder Forum, who have ongoing responsibility for shaping and approving workforce planning strategies.

These workforce planning priorities guide the strategies and planning of the JSC. They form the basis of proposed activities that address cross-industry challenges and opportunities within Skills Insight’s coverage, with examples provided in Appendix A. References are made throughout the document to relevant challenges that are being monitored through further data and evidence collection, which relate to current or proposed activities.

Key    



Improve data and evidence to inform delivery of sustained and inclusive full employment

- a. Support data improvement: Work with key agencies and partners to improve the evidence base, including national data assets, that informs forward strategies and decision-making.
- b. Promote place-based approaches: Develop workforce planning methodologies wherein the power of national data collections may be complemented by nuanced, local data and information to address shortages and supply/demand issues.
- c. Holistic workforce planning: explore challenges from all angles, including how broader issues, often beyond the remit of JSCs, enterprises and the VET sector, contribute to jobs and skills issues in, for example, regional, rural and remote Australia.



Support workforce leadership and continuous capabilities development to help improve access to secure, fairly paid jobs

- a. Support industry skills and workforce leadership development.
- b. Support industry strategies to promote, and raise the profile of, careers, education and learning pathways.
- c. Support industry and VET sector decision-making skills for adopting innovations, including digital technologies.
- d. Promote upskilling opportunities for the current and prospective workforce.
- e. Promote succession planning, especially in small and niche industries with an ageing workforce.



Addressing skills needs and building our future workforce

- a. Support the appropriate skilling of the workforce by developing flexible training and education products and pathways that are industry-led and responsive to current and emerging trends.
- b. Promote re-skilling opportunities for the current and prospective workforce.
- c. Support industry in attracting skilled migrant and seasonal workers to address shortages.
- d. Support relationship building and collaboration between employers and training organisations, including to connect national training products with delivery of training ‘on the ground.’
- e. Monitor the outcomes of skilling strategies and adapt strategies where necessary.



Overcoming barriers to employment and broadening opportunities

- a. Support industry to attract a diverse workforce, including by supporting work with priority cohorts to understand and address workforce imbalances.
- b. Develop resources to support training and assessment practices, including for workplace-based learning and training delivery in small or ‘thin’ regional, rural and remote markets.
- c. Support the delivery of foundation skills, including Language, Literacy, Numeracy, & Digital (LLND) Skills, to increase training participation and retention, and enhance workforce capabilities for the adoption of new systems and approaches.



4 Industry overview

Our industries comprise a vast array of sectors, jobs and skills, and produce food, fibre, furnishing and textile products essential for Australia's homes, health and wellbeing.

The agribusiness, fibre, furnishing, food, animal and environment care industries directly employ **544,000** people, accounting for around **8%** of total employment nationally, and are responsible for working with and protecting Australia's environmental assets, now valued at more than **\$5.7 trillion**.

34%
are women

42%
of the workforce
are over 50 years
of age

2.5%
of the workforce are
people living with
disabilities

Activities across our industries



Working with Animals

- Animal breeding and growth
- Animal health and welfare
- Animal training, retraining, rehoming and end-of-life
- Animal biosecurity and WH&S



Working in processing

- Processing animals for food
- Processing plants and trees for fibre (including pulp and paper)
- Producing timber and wood products
- Producing textiles, clothing, footwear, furnishing and upholstery



Working with plants and trees

- Forest and plant cultivation and growth
- Cropping and harvesting
- Plant biosecurity and WH&S



Leadership and business management

- Business leadership and management (value chain logistics, technology adoption)
- Ecosystem and land management (soils, water and land care)
- Regulatory and legislative compliance
- Export and trade

Our labour context

Business context

There are around 247,000 individual industry businesses, which operate and trade in all states and territories, and comprise a variety of small, medium and large enterprises. Collectively, these operators form a sophisticated value chain with a total revenue of almost \$215 billion and contribute \$66 billion to overall GDP.

Australia's extreme variety of climactic, geographic and geological conditions results in highly diversified production and products, including in niche and specialist sectors and a predominance of jobs in regional, rural and remote Australia. This involves working with and protecting Australia's environmental assets, now valued at more than \$5.7 trillion.

Social context

ABARES highlights that Australian agriculture accounts for 55% of Australian land use, 74% of water consumption and 13.6% of goods and services exported in 2022–23 (these figures do not include other industries under the coverage of Skills Insight, such as timber production). This is in the context that there is formal recognition of First Nations peoples' rights and interests in over 50% of Australia's land. According to the 2021 Census, almost 4% of the total population of Australia identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, but this group only accounts for 2% of the agribusiness, fibre, furnishing, food, animal and environment care workforce (though this proportion is higher in specific industries: please see the Industry sector scans below). The participation of, and collaboration with, First Nations peoples in agribusiness, fibre, furnishing, food, animal and environment care industries must be promoted to help Close the Gap, apply appropriate skills and knowledge, and address workforce shortages.

Education and Skill levels

For 48% of the workforce, secondary education is the highest level of educational attainment.

35% have vocational education and training-level qualifications, and 17% have a degree in higher education.

This shows an education gap, with a greater proportion of the workforce in occupations at ANZSCO Skill Level 1 (commensurate with a bachelor degree or higher) than who have formally attained that level of education – see Figure 1.

It may also suggest a high prevalence of on-the-job learning.



Source: Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (2022) Commonwealth Biosecurity 2030



Figure 1: Education and Occupation Skill Levels

Source: ABS Census (2021)

Education and training

There are a variety of ways in which the agribusiness, fibre, furnishing, food, animal and environment care workforce develops skills for industry jobs. This includes informal and on-the-job training, unaccredited learning, higher education, and vocational education and training (VET) qualifications and micro-credentials (including skill sets and stand-alone units of competency) that may be undertaken through an apprenticeship, traineeship, subsidised or fee-for-service enrolment. In 2022, there were over 122,000 enrolments in agribusiness, fibre, furnishing, food, animal and environment care related training package qualifications, generally sustaining the upward trend shown in 2021, including from pre-COVID. Further research is required to understand the drivers and contexts around qualification completion and non-completion figures (this is the subject of NCVET research, described in the Existing workforce and skilling strategies section).

Workforce

Challenges

- According to [JSA](#), occupations that have a strong gender imbalance were more likely to be in shortage.
- Ageing workforces may exacerbate labour shortages, health and safety concerns, knowledge loss, and succession planning pressures.
- Negative community perceptions of careers make it challenging to attract new workers, especially when there are comparative advantages in adjacent sectors.
- Low housing availability in regional areas makes accommodating new and returning labour an ongoing challenge.

Opportunities

- Increasing workforce diversity and skilling opportunities and recognition are key [pull factors](#) in attracting new workers.
- Promoting non-traditional (e.g. off-farm) roles helps the public reimagine industry careers.
- By value-adding and diversifying, businesses can attract new workers and revenue streams.

Skills, education & training

Challenges

- Low language, literacy, numeracy and digital (LLND) skills can be a barrier to attracting and retaining learners in formal education.
- There is an imbalance in the supply of and demand for the delivery of VET, especially in rural, regional and remote areas.
- Less than half of students who start a nationally recognised VET qualification will complete it.

Opportunities

- Skills ministers have advanced [initial changes to the Standards for RTOs 2015](#) that will allow a wider range of people to deliver training and so ease pressure on the VET workforce.
- Greater utilisation of recognition of prior learning (RPL) or recognition of current competency (RCC) could better enable the identification of skilling, upskilling and reskilling pathways and opportunities, pave the way for learner supervisors in the workplace, and articulate skills gained outside of formal credentialing (a key challenge for the proposed [National Skills Passport](#)).
- Implementation, promotion and monitoring activities by JSCs may support training by RTOs where it would otherwise not be delivered.

Top employed occupations

Below is a list of the top five ANZSCO 'unit groups' of occupations reported to be within each industry under Skills Insight's coverage, based on the number of workers recorded in the 2021 Census. These unit groups are denoted by 4-digit codes in the ANZSCO structure.

Shortage (SPL)

Where a unit group includes occupations that are considered for inclusion in the **Skills Priority List (SPL)**², its rating is provided

NS No Shortage

R Regional Shortage

S National Shortage

For example, 2 x S indicates 2 occupations on the SPL that are in shortage within the unit group.

Future Demand

This classification is based on JSA's employment projections³ (at, below or above economy average), which are indicative of current trends and feedback, but will be considered carefully as part of any analyses due to known evidence gaps (as identified in the section below), which may cause data projection volatility and under-appreciation of regionally-based jobs.

✓ Below average

– Average

▲ Above average

Trend (LFS)

The trend for the **Labour Force Survey (LFS)**⁴ by ABS is determined based on each unit group's employment time-series trend since 2020.

Industry	No. of workers	Shortage (SPL)	Future demand	Trend (LFS)
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Horticulture



Crop farmers	20050	NS	✓	Declining
Crop farm workers	17781			Declining
Garden and nursery labourers	4504			Steady
Packers	3244			Volatile
Agricultural, Forestry and Horticultural Plant Operators	2939	R	✓	Increasing

Ecosystem Management, Conservation, Landscaping, and Gardening



Gardeners	23719	2xS NS	–	Increasing
Garden and nursery labourers	10387			Increasing
Handypersons	3533			Volatile
Environmental Scientists	1916	R 4xNS	–	Increasing
Animal Attendants and Trainers	1442	S 5xNS	–	Increasing

Industry	No. of workers	Shortage (SPL)	Future demand	Trend (LFS)
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Livestock Farming

Livestock Farmers	57318	S 10xNS	✓	Steady
Livestock Farm Workers	18431	NS	✓	Volatile
Mixed Crop and Livestock Farmers	16881	NS	✓	Volatile
Mixed Crop and Livestock Farm Workers	2639			Volatile
Crop Farmers	2358	10xNS	✓	Volatile



Forest Management and Harvesting

Forestry and Logging Workers	1149	3xNS	–	Volatile
Agricultural, Forestry and Horticultural Plant Operators	941	R	✓	Increasing
Other Farm, Forestry and Garden Workers	938	NS	–	Volatile
Agricultural and Forestry Scientists	726	2xS NS	–	Volatile
Gardeners	511	2xS NS	–	Increasing



Animal Care and Management

Veterinary Nurses	12089	S	✓	Volatile
Veterinarians	9524	S	✓	Increasing
Receptionists	1314	4xNS	–	Volatile
Practice Managers	1083	2xNS	–	Increasing
Animal Attendants and Trainers	880	S 5xNS	–	Increasing



Broadacre Cropping

Crop Farmers	11680	10xNS	✓	Declining
Mixed Crop and Livestock Farmers	3639	NS	✓	Volatile
Crop Farm Workers	2276			Declining
Agricultural, Forestry and Horticultural Plant Operators	1475	R	✓	Increasing
Mixed Crop and Livestock Farm Workers	540			Volatile

Industry	No. of workers	Shortage (SPL)	Future demand	Trend (LFS)
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Aquaculture and Wild Catch

Deck and Fishing Hands	2396	2xNS	⊖	Volatile
Aquaculture Farmers	1514	S 5xNS	⊖	Volatile
Marine Transport Professionals	664	S 5xNS	⊖	Volatile
Aquaculture Workers	641			Volatile
Meat, Poultry, and Seafood Process Workers	493			Volatile



Textile, Clothing and Footwear

Laundry Workers	7229			Declining
Sewing Machinists	3460	NS	⊖	Declining
Clothing Trades Workers	2410	4xNS	⊖	Volatile
Other Cleaners	1854	NS	⊖	Volatile
Manufacturers	1207	NS	⊖	Steady



Furnishing and Other Manufacturing

Cabinetmakers	8989	S	⊖	Steady
Carpenters and Joiners	2069	3xS	⊖	Increasing
Production Managers	1103	3xNS	⊖	Increasing
Upholsterers	1101	S	⊖	Volatile
Clay, Concrete, Glass and Stone Processing Machine Operators	927	5xNS	⊖	Increasing



Racing and Breeding

Livestock Farm Workers	4277	NS	⊖	Volatile
Animal Attendants and Trainers	2399	S 5xNS	⊖	Increasing
Livestock Farmers	1067	S 10xNS	⊖	Steady
Sports Coaches, Instructors and Officials	502	2xS 9xNS	⊕	Increasing
Greenkeepers	492	NS	⊖	Volatile

Industry	No. of workers	Shortage (SPL)	Future demand	Trend (LFS)
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Timber, Wood Processing, and Building Solutions

Cabinetmakers	4390	S	⊖	Steady
Timber and Wood Process Workers	2117			Increasing
Paper and Wood Processing Machine Operators	1905	3xNS	⊖	Steady
Carpenters and Joiners	1702	3xS	⊖	Increasing
Production Managers	1092	3xNS	⊖	Increasing



Meat, Poultry, and Seafood Processing/Manufacturing

Meat, Poultry and Seafood Process Workers	14271			Volatile
Packers	8738			Volatile
Meat Boners and Slicers, and Slaughterers	6704	2xS	⊖	Declining
Butchers and Smallgoods Makers	1584	S	⊖	Declining
Forklift Drivers	1492	NS	⊖	Increasing



Pulp, Paper, Packaging, and Hygiene

Paper and Wood Processing Machine Operators	1325	3xNS	⊖	Steady
Printers	1072	2xNS	⊖	Steady
Other Stationary Plant Operators	890	NS	⊖	Steady
Forklift Drivers	835		⊖	Increasing
Packers	652			Volatile



5 Drivers of change and skills needs

A multitude of skills are required to traverse roles across agribusiness, fibre, furnishing, food, animal and environment care value chains.

As local and global trends evolve, along with emerging consumer demands, value chains also adapt and transform. Consequently, the skills needed by workers, as well as the industries they represent, change. Businesses are adapting to dynamic shifts in physical, economic and regulatory landscapes, necessitating the adoption of new practices and business structures⁵.

Workforce planning must consider the diversification of roles and skills in these industries, where the types of occupations required by industry often change over time. Examples include greater requirements for higher-skilled roles due to increasing adoption of digital technologies, as well as off-farm roles following business consolidation⁶.

Forces such as technological changes, value/supply chain issues, biosecurity and climate change issues are reshaping work within the industries under Skills Insight's coverage. The following pages provide a summary of drivers and skills needs, [mapped to strategies that Skills Insight is implementing based on the workforce planning priorities](#). These drivers, which are inherently linked to industry megatrends, and their implications, have been validated and updated through extensive stakeholder engagement.

Key    



Interconnected value chains

Challenges / Skills needs

- Agribusiness, fibre, furnishing, food, animal and environment care value chains is highly complex, requiring management of end-to-end systems.
- Recent disruptions in supply chains exposed the need for connection, responsibility and risk strategies across all businesses.
- Skilled and agile workers are needed to comply with regulations and lead complex operations.
- To attract new workers, industries need to reframe perceptions of work as multifaceted and modern roles that are concerned with sustainability and data-driven product tracking⁷.
- To promote their credentials, industries are using environmental, social and governance (ESG) criteria and traceability systems to ensure quality, safety and welfare standards⁸.

JSC Led Strategies

- Support and provide input into Jobs and Skills Australia's Food Supply Chain Capacity Study.    
- Collaborate with other JSCs to map cross-industry value chains, including skills and skilling pathways, career pathways, and relevant legislation.    
- Promote modern career roles and pathways to attract new entrants.  
- Work with stakeholders to improve national data classifications and collections, including the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO), to ensure fit-for-purpose data and trend tracking across sectors and industries. 













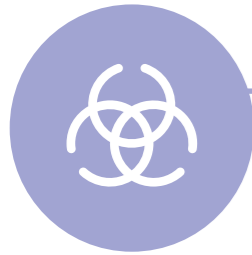
Digital and automation practices

Challenges / Skills needs

- Innovation and technology can help increase productivity, especially where there are labour or skills shortages¹³.
- Some industries in regional, rural and remote areas experience barriers to adoption, with capital investment and connectivity issues preventing the rollout of new technologies and associated workforce skills development¹⁴.
- The Agricultural Workforce Digital Capability Framework projects that 41% of industry jobs (31% by automation and 10% by augmentation) will be transformed by digital technologies and associated skill needs¹³.

JSC Led Strategies

- Build upon the Agricultural Workforce Digital Capability Framework to support technology adoption and upskilling.   
- Collaborate with other JSCs, especially Future Skills Organisation, to review digital skills in high-use qualifications, using the Australian Digital Capability Framework and Agricultural workforce digital capability framework.  
- Update skills standards in training products as necessary. 
- Upskill and reskill the existing workforce to bridge digital skills gaps.  
- Promote industry careers to attract new and adjacent workforces with appropriate skills.  









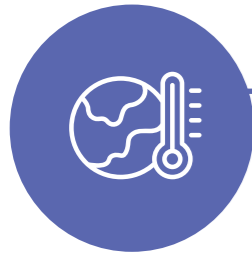
Biosecurity and contamination

Challenges / Skills needs

- Climate change, disruptive events (e.g. pandemics) and the global movement of people and products increases biosecurity and contamination risks in Australia¹².
- Skills are needed to prevent, detect, eradicate and manage outbreaks for human and animal health, food and fibre production, and environmental protection.

JSC Led Strategies

- Research cross-sector biosecurity alignment to identify priority activities to help businesses prepare and respond to threats across their value chains.  
- Update skills standards in training products as necessary. 
- Support systematic upskilling and reskilling of the workforce to address any biosecurity and contamination skills and knowledge gaps (with potentially significant collaboration with other JSCs).   










Climate change adaptation and mitigation

Challenges / Skills needs

- Australia has committed to target net zero emissions by 2050, which is supported by industry leaders, such as the National Farmers' Federation (NFF)⁹.
- Industry operators require support to navigate the many policy, business and skills challenges and opportunities that will be presented.
- Planning for and investing in a low-emissions future is critical, including changing land use and practices¹⁰ (e.g. businesses are looking for value-add opportunities to offset projected production declines across the cropping, livestock and fisheries sectors).
- Business leadership and management skills, supported by place-based data and metrics, are required to assess and invest in natural capital (soils, water, agroforestry, animals) based on value proposition.
- There are increased employment opportunities for First Nations peoples, especially in conservation and ecosystem management occupations¹¹.

JSC Led Strategies

- Support the development of data sources that provide industry leadership with evidence of the value proposition of adopting sustainable, climate-smart and natural resource management practices (including to improve soil health, protect natural capital, and participate in carbon and biodiversity markets).  
- Work with stakeholders to support updating the ANZSCO to ensure that new and emerging environmental occupations are recognised. 
- Support and promote partnerships between First Nations peoples and industry to address collective workforce and skills challenges. 
- Support systematic upskilling and reskilling of the workforce to address any climate change adaptation and mitigation skills and knowledge gaps (with potentially significant collaboration with other JSCs).   




Product safety, quality assurance (QA) and regulatory compliance

Challenges / Skills needs

- Tight regulatory environments entail difficulties for new and emerging sectors to access and compete for domestic and export market share¹⁵.
- Australia's food security and products' status as 'clean and green' requires consistent monitoring, record-keeping, quality assurance, auditing and certification¹⁶.
- There are skills shortages for roles, including leadership positions, inspectors, compliance officers and auditors across industries¹⁷.

JSC Led Strategies

- Support food security by working with industry leadership to understand and navigate the complexities of our food system, including regulation, input costs, freight and supply disruptions, and labour shortages, which may impact on businesses' practices and capacity. 
- Support systematic upskilling and reskilling of the workforce to address any product safety, QA or regulatory compliance skills and knowledge gaps (with potentially significant collaboration with other JSCs).   






Sustaining plants, trees, animals and materials

Challenges / Skills needs

- Upholding animal welfare is essential for market access, certification and consumer satisfaction¹⁸.
- Plants must be actively managed to prevent losses and protect their vital role in sustaining oxygen, food, clothing and building materials.

JSC Led Strategies

- Promote quality education and training delivery strategies, including apprenticeships and traineeships, that enable hands-on, workplace-based experiences for working with living and organic materials.   







Workplace safety and risk management culture

Challenges / Skills needs

- Agriculture is a high-risk industry with exposure to many hazards. In 2021, it had the second highest death rate of Australian industries, and each injury cost six weeks of work, further exacerbating labour shortages¹⁹.
- Growing an industry-wide safety culture requires awareness induction and training, which can benefit both employers and workers
- Improvements in safety data and policy are required to inform analyses of labours' skills transferability from adjacent sectors and occupations²⁰.

JSC Led Strategies

- Work with Jobs and Skills Australia to explore how workforce safety data, including from SafeWork Australia and state/territory bodies, can be integrated with existing datasets. 
- Support systematic upskilling and reskilling of the workforce to address any workplace safety and risk management skills and knowledge gaps (with potentially significant collaboration with other JSCs).   



6 Industry sector scans

This section updates the industry scans in the Initial Workforce Plan, using recently published data and evidence where appropriate.

Notably, stakeholder feedback led to the 16 industry groups in the Initial Workforce Plan being condensed to 13 to more accurately cluster industries with a high degree of shared skills, knowledge and workforce transferability.

These 13 industry groups are reflected in the creation of 13 of Skills Insight's Stakeholder Networks, which will be a key source of intelligence for workforce planning, information dissemination, and stakeholder validation. Each industry group has distinct labour market dynamics and skills contexts that guide stakeholder engagement on each group's unique circumstances as much as cross-industry commonalities (detailed in the previous section).

For each industry group, there is a brief description of activities, highlights of significant data for workforce planning, an update on notable events or trends, and summary of the opportunities and challenges faced in relation to the workforce. At the end of this section is a summary of Skills Insight's priority workforce planning activities and how they relate to the identified challenges and opportunities.

All data and evidence on labour force dynamics presented for industry groups has been through a validation process with stakeholders, whose feedback has informed articulation of updates, trends and challenges faced. Stakeholders' input on data limitations is selectively acknowledged in these industry scans and then explored in greater depth in the following section.

Notes on data

- As shown in '[Top employed occupations](#)', several occupations are employed across multiple industries based on data from the 2021 Census of Population and Housing²¹. As a result, occupations such as Animal Attendants and Trainers may be discussed in more than one industry scan.
- Employment figures presented in the highlights indicate the number of people employed in occupations within the specific industry group only. However, occupational data from the Labour Force Survey does not distinguish between workers from different industries.
- It is acknowledged that data from the quarterly Labour Force Survey⁴, whilst timely, can be highly volatile from its limited sample size. As such, the extent of any trends identified in the data summary may be over- or under-represented.
- The most recent employment projection figures released by JSA cover '5 years to 2028'.
- The industry sector scans below are intended to present consistent snapshot of data. For some industries, notably agriculture (which is often grouped with forestry and fishing), key agencies publish data that may not align with the figures presented; for example, ABARES is generally considered to be the dominant source of information for Australian agricultural commodities, but, for the purposes of consistency and accuracy, this Workforce Plan presents datasets with industry-wide coverage, with other sources used to supplement gaps and add analytical depth.



Horticulture

A diverse industry that plants, grows and harvests fruit, nuts, vegetables and nursery products on a large scale, in both under-cover (hydroponics/ greenhouse) and outdoor (field) systems.

Key updates

Decline in overall horticulture farm labour use

Data from the ABARES' farm survey²² reported a decrease of 20% in total labour use since 2020, including both domestic and migrant workers. This is consistent with the declining number of Australian workers in key occupations (crop farmers, crop farm workers, and packers) in the ABS's Labour Force Survey.

Robust growing conditions are heralding high labour demand

The industry has seen minimal frost events and good rainfall from the latest La Nina cycle, leading to reports of record crop volumes²³. However, data from the ABS' Labour Force Survey in Nov 2023 suggest insufficient labour, as the number of hours worked per person rose to an all-time-high for some key occupations (e.g. crop farmers and crop farm workers at 86.5 hrs/week).

Seasonal labour supply boosted by increase in Pacific Australia Labour Mobility Scheme (PALM) workers.

Despite challenges in domestic labour supply, Migration Statistics showed that the number of PALM workers increased from 4,629 in 2022 to 30,350 in 2023²⁴.

Opportunities

Job mobility: Regional differences in horticulture labour use can enable greater mobility throughout the year²².

Technological advances: Adoption of computer-controlled production systems have enabled growers to consistently grow quality products, whilst limiting costs and environmental concerns²⁵.

Policy changes: From 2025, intentional wage underpayments by employers will be a criminal offence. In addition to higher minimum wages and piecework rates in the Horticulture Award in 2022, these are positive catalysts for improved working conditions²⁶.

Challenges

Skills shortage: Parts of the industry remain highly reliant on seasonal and migrant labour needs. Where return rates are low, this generates high training and administration costs that can negatively impact workforce efficiency²⁷.

Input costs/output prices: Whilst the value of commodities are forecasted to fall in 2023-24, farm input costs remain high that may impact work attractiveness and workforce development²⁸.

Impact of Trade Agreements: The recent trade agreement with the UK, has resulted in a lack of UK backpackers, which has raised concerns about labour availability in the industry²⁹.

Labour shortages

High

Seasonal & migrant labour needs

High

Workforce diversity

Medium

75,892
workers

2021 Census

↑ 6,600

Projected growth
of workers (2028)

JSA Projections

36%
female workers

2021 Census

1.9%
First Nations

2021 Census



Ecosystem Management, Conservation, Landscaping, and Gardening

This workforce cares for vast natural areas and bushlands, Indigenous Protected Areas, coastal landscapes, national and state parks, private and public gardens, sporting grounds, and green spaces. Demand for skills and labour across these industries is growing as climate change mitigation becomes a global priority, such as to sustain biodiversity, and to restore and rehabilitate landscapes with ecological and cultural importance.

Key updates

Passing of the The Restoring Our Rivers Bill

The Water Amendment Bill 2023 was passed in November, with scope for more funding, time and options for projects to improve the management of the Murray-Darling Basin³⁰. This may be a positive catalyst for occupations in Environmental Restoration, Monitoring and Research, some of which were already featured as being in shortage on the 2023 Skills Priority List (e.g. Arborist, Landscape Gardener).

Steady growth in workers within key occupations

The Labour Force Survey has seen a surge of workers as Gardeners (5-yr-change: 13%), Garden and nursery labourers (24%), Environmental Scientists (14%) and Animal Attendants and Trainers (44%), which may reflect an increased focus on robust environmental protections and ecological management.

Opportunities

Growing Industry: Native protection has grown to 19.8% of Australia's terrestrial land over the past decade, pinpointing demand in ecological protection³¹.

Increasing representation of women: Women only accounted for 22% of this sector in 2021, rising 8% since 2016. There may be opportunities for a greater participation of women.

Low barrier to entry: The 2021 Census showed that the industry comprises many owner-operated entities (45.73% of workers), with 40.75% of all workers having an education attainment at the Year 10 equivalent.

Challenges

Extreme Weather: Whilst climate change can trigger demand for work in environmental stewardship, the nature of outdoor work in this industry may attract OHS and business viability concerns³².

Sensitive to changes in government funding: Nature Reserves and Conservation Parks are highly reliant on government investment. Changes to environmental policies may affect funding in this industry³¹.

Labour shortages

High

Potential new skills requirements

Medium

Workforce diversity

Medium

58,374
workers

2021 Census

↑ 12,300

Projected growth
of workers (2028)

JSA Projections

22%
female workers

2021 Census

3.8%
First Nations

2021 Census



Forest Management and Harvesting

The workforce is responsible for the management and logging operations of industrial plantation estates, native forests and farm forests. Expert skills are required to meet the various challenges of managing forests sustainably and mitigating the effects of disasters, such as bushfires, as well as utilising data and digital technologies to undertake planning and certification activities.

Key updates

End of native timber harvesting creating uncertainties.

Despite the state governments' commitment to increase support for further development of plantation forestry, the decision to end native timber logging in Victoria and Western Australia from 2024 raised widespread industry concern³³. This includes its impact on future timber supply, regional businesses across the value chain, and on regional communities linked to forestry value chain operations³⁴.

Challenging operating conditions in recent years.

The industry has seen weakening harvest volumes and downstream demand across key markets³⁴, which can be observed through a gradual declining trend in the cumulative hours worked for occupations such as Forestry and Logging workers in the Labour Force Survey, from 469000 hrs in 2016 to 246000 in 2023.

Opportunities

Potential for skills shortage alleviation: Some occupations within the native timber industry, such as Truck Driver are classified as being in shortage on the Skills Priority List.

Increasing representation of First Nations: Participation by First Nations peoples has risen by 1.4% between 2016 and 2021.

Digital and automation practices: The industry has been readily adopting technology such as drones, scanners, block-chain applications and big data analytics, which are changing industry skills requirements³⁵.

Challenges

Extreme Weather: Following severe bushfires during 2020-2021, excess rainfall from the recent La Nina cycle led to flooding and damage in some plantations³⁴, further constraining supply.

Impact from legislations: Introduction of the Ending Native Forest Logging Bill 2023 into Parliament will see further actions to halt logging³⁶, which will further impact employment.

Reskilling of workers: Machinery and operations used in native timber harvesting are not readily interchangeable with that used in plantation forestry³⁷, requiring further investment for transition.

Labour shortages

High

Challenging operating conditions

High

Workforce diversity

Medium

9,891
workers

2021 Census

↑ 1,400

Projected growth
of workers (2028)

JSA Projections

21%
female workers

2021 Census

6.8%
First Nations

2021 Census



Textile, Clothing and Footwear

This industry consists of businesses that process and manufacture natural (e.g. wool, cotton and leather) and synthetic (e.g. polyvinyl chloride: PVC) materials, for textiles, leather, clothing and footwear goods production. It also covers services associated with these goods, including fashion and textile design, dry cleaning operations, laundry operations and clothing and footwear repairs.

Key updates

Post-pandemic recovery in employment.

The Internet Vacancy Index³⁸ has shown that demand for all key occupations within the industry (Laundry Workers, Sewing Machinists, Clothing Trades Workers, Other Cleaners, Manufacturers) have recovered from 2020. However, the Labour Force Survey showed that whilst there is an increasing trend in the cumulative hours worked (e.g. Laundry workers), others are in a downtrend (e.g. Sewing Machinists) consistent with JSA's projections in below economy-wide average demand.

Challenging operating conditions for Laundry Workers.

A steep decline was observed in the number of Laundry Workers nationwide in the Labour Force Survey, from 15,700 in 2022 to 9,600 during 2023. According to Luke Simpkins, CEO of the Laundry Association Australia, businesses have been challenged by sharp increases in operation costs³⁹. Further, its low skill level (ANZSCO 5) omits the occupation from the Skill Priority List, Apprenticeships Priority List, Skilled Migration Lists, and other relevant subsidies and programs.

Opportunities

New and emerging skills: The rapid increase in the repair, reuse and recycling of textiles is predicted to have a significant impact on the industry, including the development of new skills in eco-friendly production and design⁴⁰.

Demand from diverse consumer segments: Increasing consumer interest in locally made, ethical and sustainable⁴¹ products is providing opportunities for a new focus for businesses to focus on quality craftsmanship and strong technical skills.

Challenges

International competition: Textile, Clothing and Footwear wholesalers and retailers often turn to lower cost imports for supply, reducing demand for local production⁴². In particular, the Government has planned to reduce import tariffs on clothing from July 2024⁴³.

Changing skills landscape: Local manufacturers who attempt to reduce operating costs with new technology investments may lead to an increased demand for higher skilled workers, and a reduction in demand for lower skilled workers.

Competition and operation challenges

High

Workforce diversity

Medium

36,782
workers

2021 Census

↑ 12,600

Projected growth
of workers (2028)

JSA Projections

57%
female workers

2021 Census

1.5%
First Nations

2021 Census



Livestock Farming

The livestock industry plans, organises, controls, coordinates and performs farming operations to breed and raise livestock for the production of breeding stock, meat and other products and uses, which covers the value chain associated with products such as milk, eggs, and honey. It includes both specialised or mixed livestock farms that breed and farm one or a variety of animals (e.g. sheep and beef cattle), and mixed crop and livestock farming operations.

Key updates

Safety risks continue to be a concern

Data from Safe Work Australia⁴⁴ has shown that in FY 2021-22, there has been 1,002 serious injury compensation claims by Sheep, Beef Cattle & Grain Farmers, 214 claims by Dairy Farmers, and 275 claims by Other livestock farmers. The agriculture industry overall has been identified as a national priority to reduce fatalities and serious claims under the Work Health and Safety Strategy 2023-2033⁴⁵.

Farmers with mixed production operations working overtime.

As internet vacancies have recovered to pre-pandemic levels for all key occupations, the individual hours worked have dramatically increased for Mixed Crop and Livestock Farmers and Mixed Crop and Livestock Farm Workers in the Labour Force Survey, ranging from 77 to 87 hrs/week to during 2023. This is suggestive of insufficient labour to meet demand during this period.

Opportunities

Rising exports: Increased global wealth, along with recent free trade agreements with countries like China, Japan and Indonesia⁴⁶ can increase demand for meat, cattle and wool in these markets.

Increased investment in machinery and equipment: Farmers have focused on upgrading equipment to improve output efficiency, which can bolster revenue as depreciation expenses⁴⁷.

Support from Government: Farmers can receive financial assistance from both Federal and State Governments during periods of extreme weather conditions⁴⁸.

Challenges

Climate and biosecurity risks: Extreme weather, pests and diseases remain a major threat to the industry, with potential outbreaks affecting export markets and industry attractiveness¹².

Ageing workforce: The 2021 Census indicates that workers over 50 years account for 61% of the workforce. Workforce planning strategies may require focus on the attraction and retention of younger people to meet succession planning needs.

Labour shortages

High

Workplace health and safety issues

High

Ageing workforce

High

122,458
workers

2021 Census

↑ 6,700

Projected growth
of workers (2028)
JSA Projections

32%
female workers

2021 Census

1.8%
First Nations

2021 Census

Animal Care and Management

Animal care and management workers support the welfare of wildlife, exhibited, working, and domestic animals. The industry is experiencing accelerated growth, with increasing opportunities and challenges for pet-related businesses, many of which are seeking to expand operations but facing issues with attracting skilled workers, especially in regional, rural and remote Australia.

Key updates

Consistent work demand but volatile labour supply.

The internet vacancies³⁸ for key occupations, including Veterinary Nurses, Veterinarians, Receptionists, Practice Managers, and Animal Attendants and Trainers have recovered to pre-pandemic levels. The cumulative hours worked for all these occupations have either been increasing or remained stable in the Labour Force Survey. The individual hours worked each year was cyclical, which is reflective of the annual volatility in employment numbers. This suggests that whilst overall demand is relatively stable, workers are adjusting to labour unavailability through longer hours.

Industry participation in Round 3 of the ANZSCO Review.

With stakeholder feedback and support, Skills Insight has proposed a number of changes to occupations within the industry, such as to separately identify Animal Management Officer, Animal Welfare Officer and Animal Technician, and recognition of occupations such as Animal Nutritionists.

Opportunities

Rising demand: Pet ownership in households has been increasing since pandemic lockdowns⁴⁹, driving demand for veterinary and other companion animal services.

Representation of men: The very low participation of men in the sector (17% in 2021, a 3% decline from 2016) is worthy of attention, particularly in light of the anticipated increases in labour demand.

Technological developments: Advanced medical, surgical and diagnostic procedures and medications⁵⁰ may boost productivity and alleviate skill shortages.

Challenges

Dependence on economic conditions: Demand for veterinary services can fluctuate with economic conditions and household income⁵¹. Lack of stability may deter industry entrants.

Underrepresentation in classifications: Growing markets such as animal grooming and allied health services remain under-represented in the ANZSIC and ANZSCO, leading to limited data available on this workforce.

Labour shortages

High

Under-representation in the ANZSCO & ANZSIC

High

Workforce diversity

Medium

28,557
workers

2021 Census

↑ 2,100

Projected growth
of workers (2028)
JSA Projections

83%
female workers

2021 Census

1.2%
First Nations

2021 Census



Aquaculture and Wild Catch

Businesses in this industry catch inshore, estuarine, offshore and freshwater fish, finfish, molluscs, crustaceans, prawns, rock lobsters, oysters and pearls. This is underpinned by current and emerging practices utilising technology and traceability systems to provide consumers with information on seafood provenance and production methods, inclusive of maintaining aquatic animal health, carbon emission mitigation, and regulatory compliance.

Key updates

Empowering the First Nations fishing sector

In line with the National Fisheries Plan 2022-30⁵², initiatives are being led by the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation Indigenous Reference Group and the Australian Fisheries Management Forum Indigenous Working Group to support development of cultural fishing and fisheries management.

Opportunities

Rising seafood consumption driving industry revenue: Demand for healthy proteins like fish and seafood has grown, which is pushing up industry profitability recently, particularly with elevated prices⁵³.

Increased investment: As part of the Government's \$72.7 million investment in expanding Australian export markets, Austrade and the seafood industry have developed a plan to promote and diversify into markets such as Europe and the Middle East⁵⁴, which could see more work opportunities within the sector.

Challenges

Complex regulatory and skills environment: The industry is highly regulated across every level, meaning that businesses must adhere to overlapping international, national, state and local compliance legislation. The industry must have knowledge and skills across diverse domains, including sustainability, ecosystem management, biosecurity, animal health, national and international trade, and traceability systems – and have access to a skilled workforce to support this.

High & increasing barriers to entry: Industry consolidation in recent years has led to a moderately concentrated market, with major players accounting for >40% of industry revenue⁵⁶.

Volatile industry conditions

High

Long working hours

High

Labour shortages

Medium

9,934
workers

2021 Census

↑ 900

Projected growth
of workers (2028)

JSA Projections

22%
female workers

2021 Census

4.7%
First Nations

2021 Census



Broadacre Cropping

Australia's broadacre cropping industries comprise generally large-scale operations that produce a range of high-quality commodities, including wheat, rice, oats, rye, barley, corn, peas, millet and sorghum. Many broadacre farms also diversify into different cereal-cropping activities and sometimes into livestock farming. Skills in sustainability, irrigation, soil health, fertiliser use, pest management and technology use are highly valued.

Key updates

Irregular demand reflected through worker statistics.

Annual employment in key occupations (Crop Farmers, Mixed Crop and Livestock Farmers, Crop Farm Workers, Mixed Crop and Livestock Farm Workers) has been highly volatile in the Labour Force Survey. This is in line with the cyclical performance of grain growers, where the inverse relationship between price and volume fluctuates with market conditions⁵⁷. For example, workers in Mixed Crop and Livestock Farming increased by 7,400 between 2022 and 2023, likely due to exceptional climate conditions for Australian crop production²⁸.

Workers adjust to cyclical labour supply by long work hours.

The Labour Force Survey has also shown that whilst cumulative hours worked have been declining over a decade in all key occupations, the individual hours worked have been variable, often remaining persistently high, ranging from 77-115 hrs/week in 2023.

Opportunities

Introduction of workplace reforms: Legislative changes that promote fair employment practices, such as the Secure Jobs legislation from December 2023, and the Fair Work Amendment (Closing Loopholes) Bill 2023 can contribute to greater workforce conditions and worker stability²⁶.

Increased industry revenue: Disruptions in global grain supply due to geopolitical conflicts have been elevating grain demand and costs. Australia has increased its output volume in recent years, aided by high rainfall⁵⁸. This may have increased demand for new industry entrants.

Challenges

Underrepresentation of women: Women represented 26% of the workforce in the 2021 Census, which was only up 1% from 2016.

Ageing Workforce: 54% of the workforce are aged 50 years and over, according to the 2021 Census. Attraction and retention of younger people to the industry is critical for succession planning needs.

Legislative changes: The Government has introduced biosecurity funding plans that would enforce a new levy on primary producers that may reduce workforce attractiveness⁵⁹.

Labour shortages

High

Gender diversity

Medium

Ageing workforce

Medium

25,991
workers

2021 Census

↑ 5,000

Projected growth
of workers (2028)

JSA Projections

26%
female workers

2021 Census

1.5%
First Nations

2021 Census



Furnishing and Other Manufacturing

The furnishing industry covers a broad range of sectors relating to furniture and fittings for residential and commercial buildings. This includes furniture manufacturing and finishing; interior design and decorating; design, flooring, manufacturing and installation of cabinets, fittings and décor; glass and window manufacturing; upholstery, doors, grilles, awnings and blinds. It also includes niche sectors, such as coopering, mattress manufacturing and piano tuning.

Key updates

Escalating cost pressures leading to some closures

During the pandemic, sales of household goods surged with flow-on effects still underpinning overall industry revenue growth⁶⁰. However, supply delays, rising costs and staff shortages have led to the collapse of several furniture companies. Consumer spending, and likely supply-side demand was sustained in large retailers, assisted by pay later services during challenging economic conditions⁶¹.

Variable work demand in key occupations

The Labour Force Survey suggested that employment in the industry's key occupations tend to fluctuate, particularly Production Managers and Upholsterers. Upholsterers have been recognised as being in shortage on the Skills Priority List, although the number of cumulative hours worked has been declining.

Opportunities

Digitally-driven sales: The increasing presence of online sales channels for furniture reduces the barrier to entry, and broadens the consumer market for small-scale operators⁶¹.

Innovation opportunities: Emerging trends such as demand for home automation and smart furnishings, as well as sustainable practices and materials⁶² can create employment opportunities within the industry.

Responsive management of safety risks: Since safety risks in working with engineered stone have been flagged by Safe Work Australia, a decision to ban its use nationally from July 2024 has been legislated⁶³.

Challenges

Volatile industry conditions: Market demand within the industry is highly subject to conditions in the domestic construction industry and consumer discretionary income⁶⁰.

Male dominant Workforce: Despite a 1% rise from 2016, women accounted for only 19% of workers in the 2021 Census. This may make the workforce more vulnerable to skills shortages⁶⁴.

Legislative changes: The removal of import tariffs between Australia and others in the ASEAN region⁴³ are expected to increase competition for local wooden furniture manufacturers.

Labour shortages

High

Volatile industry conditions, intl competition

High

Workforce diversity

Medium

31,426
workers

2021 Census

↑ 5,200

Projected growth
of workers (2028)

JSA Projections

19%
female workers

2021 Census

1.2%
First Nations

2021 Census

Racing and Breeding

The industry covers racing authority operation, racehorse and race dog breeding, ownership and training, and racetrack and race club operation. Workers in this industry are skilled in training, nutrition, and biomechanics to care for dogs or horses actively participating in racing, keeping them physically healthy and preventing injury. Main activities also include the operation of racing stables, kennels, courses or tracks, the administration of racing clubs, the provision of riding or harness driving services, and horse or greyhound training for racing.

Key updates

Rising industry interest

Despite disruptions to in-person events during the pandemic, increased interest and investment in horse racing has contributed to growing employment (up 1.6%) and establishment (up 3.9%) numbers within the sector⁶⁵. The number of internet vacancies have also recovered for all key occupations to pre-2020 levels.

Varying trading conditions in recent years

Whilst high-quality thoroughbred racehorses have fuelled increased domestic and international interest, standardbred and other horses are facing increased competition with lower demand⁶⁶. This may have contributed to the volatility observed in the cumulative hours worked for Livestock Farm Workers and Livestock Farmers in the Labour Force Survey.

Opportunities

Increasing representation of women: Women represented 47% of the workforce in the 2021 Census, which has increased 2% from 2016. Last year, 13 racecourses in Victoria received Government funding to upgrade their jockey rooms to cater for the growing number of female jockeys, which has increased by over 15% in 2021-22⁶⁷.

Rising interest in animal welfare: An increasing number of jobs in animal welfare has led to the release of the ACMSS00023 Animal Welfare Management Skill Set in 2021, with the trend predicted to continue.

Challenges

Health and safety risks: Stables and horse/dog training facilities present distinctive health and safety risks, which may deter potential workers⁶⁸.

Unacknowledged employment: In its 2022 report⁶⁹, the Racing and Breeding Industry Reference Committee noted high levels of informal work within the sector, such as volunteers. The report also highlighted the increasing reliance of enterprises on informal training that has created a thinning VET market. Skills Insight is currently undertaking a research project to examine how barriers to formal training delivery may be addressed in the industry.

Gender diversity

High

Unacknowledged employment

Medium

14,089
workers

2021 Census

↑ 1,300

Projected growth
of workers (2028)

JSA Projections

47%
female workers

2021 Census

2.2%
First Nations

2021 Census



Meat, Poultry, and Seafood Processing/Manufacturing

The Australian meat, poultry and seafood processing and manufacturing industries are comprised of processors, wholesalers, retailers and exporters who collectively are responsible for supplying products to domestic and international markets. Workers process, grade and package meat, poultry, fish and shellfish. Strong skills in food safety, quality control, animal welfare and compliance requirements underpin Australia's reputation for producing high-quality products.

Key updates

Declining trend in key occupations

Based on the Labour Force Survey, a significant drop in the number of workers has been observed in two key occupations: Meat Boners and Slicers, and Slaughterers and Butchers and Smallgoods Makers. The 5-year change for these occupations have been -38% and -30%, respectively, with the Nowcast of Employment (NERO)⁷⁰ showing significant declines particularly in South-East Australia and Queensland. Meat Boners and Slicers, and Slaughterers has been acknowledged on the 2023 Skills Priority List as being in shortage.

Labour shortages contributing to productivity loss

A 2022 industry survey conducted by the Australian Meat Industry Council suggested shortages of skilled labour were contributing to over 50% of establishments operating below 80% capacity⁷¹. A variety of reasons for these shortages were suggested, including unwillingness to work in the industry, competition from other sectors and lack of international worker availability.

Opportunities

Increasing international demand: Despite slowing domestic meat consumption, industry demand has remained strong from exports⁷².

Migration Reform: Whilst workers in this industry have pre-existing migration pathways through Meat and Fishing Industry Agreements, employers must meet a salary threshold (TSMIT)⁷³ that is above the median wage of the industry (see appendices). The development of a new Essential Skills Pathway⁷⁴ may provide opportunity to alleviate the persistent shortages for some occupations in this industry.

Challenges

Underrepresentation of women: Only 33% of the workforce were women, based on the 2021 Census. Whilst this was an increase of 3% from 2016, increased participation of women may alleviate some skill shortages.

Low skill level diversity: Over half of all workers in the meat, poultry and seafood processing industries are employed in occupations that align with ANZSCO skill level 5²¹. A lack of skill level diversity can decrease industry attractiveness to workers with different skill levels.

Labour shortages

High

Workforce diversity

Medium

Skill diversity

Low

55,152
workers

2021 Census

↓ 100

Projected growth
of workers (2028)

JSA Projections

33%
female workers

2021 Census

2.6%
First Nations

2021 Census

Pulp, Paper, Packaging, and Hygiene

The workforce typically specialises in one or more pulping and papermaking operations, including wet end, dry end, pulping, stock preparation and handling, chemical recovery, electrical power generation, paper finishing and converting, steam generation, recovered fibre, and water services. Manufacturing of pulp, paper and paper products is critical for Australian households, offices, hospitals, food outlets and public buildings – from tissues and toilet paper, medical and sanitary products, to packaging and printing.

Key updates

Stable employment trends

Despite reports of lower recent demand from print publishing, most of the key occupations within the industry had relatively stable employment numbers, cumulative hours worked and individual hours worked in the Labour Force Survey. The exception is Printers, with cumulative hours worked decreasing 1.75-fold from 2010 to 2023.

Lack of trainers leading to no VET enrolments

In their 2022 report, the Pulp and Paper Manufacturing Industry Reference Committee (IRC) noted that employers believe that there is a lack of Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) that can deliver the PPM Training Package, in a way that meets workforce needs. The IRC partly attributed this to the challenge of low financial viability for RTOs in maintaining such training programs, coupled with low turnover rate in the workforce, resulting in a limited number of potential new enrollees.

Opportunities

Downstream demand: Rising demand from packaging by online retailers and food producers has supported revenue over recent years, which is expected to continue⁷⁶.

Eco-friendly options: Industry operators that have put significant investments into manufacturing recycled and sustainable products⁷⁷ can increase the desirability and competitiveness of their products. This may involve new technology as well as skill sets.

Challenges

Underrepresentation of women: The 2021 Census showed women only accounted for 23% of this workforce, a 1% decline from 2016.

Digital and automation practices: The industry continues to invest in automation, which is reducing the number of employees required. However, industry revenues are declining at a faster rate than automation-related cost savings, which is adding to the pressure on employers to reduce staff costs⁷⁶.

Labour shortages

High

Absence of RTOs that can deliver

High

Workforce diversity

Medium

13,449
workers

2021 Census

↑ 2,200

Projected growth
of workers (2028)

JSA Projections

23%
female workers

2021 Census

1%
First Nations

2021 Census



Timber, Wood Processing, and Building Solutions

The product manufacturing industry is a vital part of the timber value chain, turning harvested trees into materials that can be used to construct buildings, furniture, flooring, timber products and other items. High levels of technical skills are required for operating the latest technologies in drying and cutting, including optimisation equipment, allowing industry to continue to supply the high-quality timber that is used to produce some of our most essential structures and products.

Key updates

Cyclical demand within industry

In line with the industry's sensitivity to housing construction activity, the number of workers in the Labour Force Survey for most key occupations have fluctuated in recent years. The exception is Carpenters and Joiners, which has been in an increasing trend over the past 5 years, albeit still acknowledged on the Skills Priority List as being in shortage. Overall demand as observed through cumulative hours worked showed that Timber and Wood Process Workers have been in a declining trend.

VET enrolments still in recovery

Data from NCVET showed that whilst VET enrolments in relevant FWP Qualifications have increased from 298 in 2020 to 522 in 2022, it has yet to recover to pre-pandemic levels.

Opportunities

Technology adoption: Manufacturers may improve operational efficiencies and product customisation by investing in technologically efficient machinery⁷⁸.

Environmental advantage: Emerging consumer awareness of wood's eco-friendly nature, relative to the high energy required to produce alternative materials (e.g. aluminium) may assist industry demand⁷⁹.

Legislative changes: Recent Government assistance relating to the housing construction sector⁸⁰ may positively influence demand.

Challenges

Underrepresentation of women: Despite a 1% rise from 2016, women accounted for only 19% of workers in the 2021 Census. Higher participation of women may assist with skill shortages.

Volatile conditions: Activity within the industry is highly dependent on both upstream suppliers and downstream buyers. Competition from substitute products (e.g. steel and plastic) contributes to revenue volatility, which affects industry attractiveness⁸¹.

Labour shortages

High

Declining VET enrolments

Medium

Workforce diversity

Low

26,738
workers

2021 Census

↑ 5,551

Projected growth
of workers (2028)

JSA Projections

17%
female workers

2021 Census

2.4%
First Nations





2021 Census



7 Workforce planning activities

Skills Insight are currently undertaking, and analysing prospective, workforce planning activities. The below featured activities reflect both data analysis and stakeholder intelligence on priority issues.

Workforce planning priorities key:

-  Improve data and evidence to inform delivery of sustained and inclusive full employment
-  Support workforce leadership and continuous capabilities development to help improve access to secure, fairly paid jobs
-  Addressing skills needs and building our future workforce
-  Overcoming barriers to employment and broadening opportunities

Current Projects



Livestock Farming
Broadacre Cropping

Ag Trade Apprenticeship Project

Current (June 2023 – April 2024)

Research into the potential dynamics of an Ag Trade Apprenticeship, which was proposed in the NFF's 2030 Roadmap, the National Agriculture Workforce Strategy, and by the Agricultural Workforce Working Group, convened by Senator the Hon Murray Watt, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, with a view to helping attract new entrants and promoting career pathways in agriculture.

Research activities included:

- Consultation Workshops (10 face-to-face and 3 online)
- Public consultation on an example qualification
- An electronic survey, with 290 responses, including from employers and RTOs
- 10 in-depth interviews with stakeholders from different jurisdictions and sectors
- Documenting of state-based processes for registering a new apprenticeship.

A final report will be submitted to Senator the Hon Murray Watt and skills ministers in April 2024 to present feedback and the potential dynamics of an Ag Trade Apprenticeship.

Labour market dynamics being addressed

- Industry evolution requiring increase in different skills (e.g. sustainability).
- There is demand from employers for VET graduates to develop less-tangible qualities (e.g. employability skills, attributes and behaviours).
- Prospective workers lack appropriate information on occupational pathways into industry occupations.

Exploring Training Demand & Supply Challenges Project

Current (November 2023 – November 2024)

It can be difficult to gauge the true demand for VET training delivery from qualification enrolment data. A host of factors might prevent RTOs from offering a qualification even if there is industry demand. Similarly, learners or employers may experience barriers to engaging with formal training that are not related to the qualification itself. The challenges for all parties can be particularly pronounced in rural, regional and remote areas⁸².

This project will explore reasons for imbalances in the demand for and supply of VET training delivery. A research paper will be produced to outline the challenges faced by different stakeholders, with recommendations for potential solutions, including through JSC implementation, promotion and monitoring activities. It will build on similar 'low enrolment' research undertaken in 2020, paying attention to changes in the jobs and skills ecosystem over the past four years.

Labour market dynamics being addressed

- Existing workforce requires updated skills for their occupations.
- Low / declining number of people commencing training, despite an industry need for it.
- Certain populations find it harder to participate (due especially to location issues).
- Employees lack appropriate information on occupational pathways / career prospects into occupations.



Horticulture
Agriculture
Aquaculture and Wild Catch
Forestry & Logging
Pulp, Paper, and Converted Paper Product Manufacturing



Racing and Breeding

Connecting RTOs & Employers Research Project

Current (November 2023 – June 2024)

Skills Insight are researching best practice for supporting improved connections between employers and RTOs. This project is concurrent and complementary to the [Exploring Training Demand & Supply Challenges Project](#). It addresses the racing and breeding industry, where collaborative programs have been established to address barriers to formal training delivery in specific regions. As part of this research, Skills Insight are engaging with key organisations to uncover insights on what makes existing solutions successful, and whether they can be scaled up nationally (while considering local jobs and skills contexts).

Labour market dynamics being addressed

- Existing workforce requires updated skills for their occupations.
- Low / declining number of people commencing training, despite an industry need for it.
- Certain populations find it harder to participate (due especially to location issues).



Agriculture
Forestry & Logging

Rural Operations Project

Current (February 2024 – November 2024)

Certificate II in Rural Operations is used to provide learners with foundational skills required for roles in industries in rural, regional and remote areas, especially in northern Australia where rural operations are expanding. The qualification is being reviewed to establish if it accurately reflects the evolving skills needs of industry and learners.

Findings will be used to assess how the unique needs of the learners and workplaces that require these skills can be better met in future, while meeting the current requirements of policies that apply to training package products.

Labour market dynamics being addressed

- Employees lack appropriate information on occupational pathways / career prospects into the occupation.
- Structural industry growth (geographic-specific, or global) increasing demand for a set of skills in that industry for the long term.



Meat, Poultry, and Seafood Processing/ Manufacturing

Training Support Materials for Meat Safety Qualifications Project

Current (November 2023 – July 2024)

The meat processing industry must meet National Standards associated with quality assurance (QA). Employers need a skilled workforce who are capable of understanding and implementing these standards so that meat processing plants can pass external audits and reviews and maintain access to domestic and export markets.

Training and assessment materials, available through MINTRAC, for delivering the Certificates III and IV in Meat Safety Inspection, require updating to reflect changes to QA standards and practices and advances in technology.

Labour market dynamics being addressed

- Changed job or occupational design increasing need for some skill sets (e.g. digital skill sets).
- Industry evolution requiring new skills from the existing workforce.



Livestock Farming

Current 'Unit Sector' approach projects

- **Shearing and Wool Classing Project**
(November 2023 – December 2024)
- **Livestock Operations Project**
(November 2023 – December 2024)

Over the past few years, the entire agriculture, horticulture, conservation and land management (AHC) training package has been undergoing significant revision using a 'Unit Sector' approach to bring it up to date with current work methods and skills needs.

Labour market dynamics being addressed

- Changed job or occupational design increasing need for some skill sets (e.g. digital skill sets).
- Industry evolution requiring new skills from the existing workforce.

Meat Safety Induction Pilot

Current (November 2023 – June 2025)

Across the agricultural value chain, workers must have access to a safe work environment and the skills to keep themselves and others safe. These skills become even more important in workplaces involving machinery, animals, and isolated or remote locations.

During the March 2023 meeting of the Agriculture Workforce Working Group, convened by Senator the Hon Murray Watt, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, it was proposed that investigations take place into what a safety induction program could look like for agriculture and related industries.

This project is to explore potential models for a safety induction program to be piloted in the meat processing industry to provide foundational safety capabilities for workers entering the industry.

Labour market dynamics being addressed

- Existing workforce requires updated skills for their occupations.



Meat, Poultry, and Seafood Processing/ Manufacturing

Tree Felling Project

Current (June 2023 – April 2024)

Using a chainsaw to fell trees is a crucial skill in forestry operations, agriculture and arboriculture, as well as in emergency events like storms, cyclones and bushfires. Manual tree felling skills are essential for removing trees in locations or positions that make the use of large machinery unviable. This skill may also be required in environments such as development, construction, landscaping, and parks and gardens. Three tree felling units have been reviewed to reduce barriers to training related to access to trees, while also supporting safe and competent tree felling.

Labour market dynamics being addressed

- Graduates from the training system need skills that meet the evolving needs for their occupations.
- Existing workforce requires updated skills for their occupations.
- Slow speed of supply (e.g. training system takes a long time to train new graduates).
- Certain populations find it harder to participate (due to location issues).



Forest Management and Harvesting
Ecosystem Management, Conservation, Landscaping, and Gardening



Timber, Wood Processing, and Building Solutions
Furnishing and Other Manufacturing

Wood Machining Research Project

Current (November 2023 – April 2025)

Wood machinists play a crucial role in creating quality timber products for our homes and structures. There are currently two qualifications to support the skills of this job role: the furnishing qualification MSF30322 Certificate III of Cabinet Making and Timber Technology, with a specialisation in wood machining, and the forest and wood products qualification FWP31121 Certificate III in Wood Machining. The MSF30322 is the result of a 2022 project which merged three furnishing qualifications, with the aim of retaining expertise, while offering the potential for related career pathways. Skills Insight was contacted by stakeholders with concerns about the title of this qualification, as it may seem like graduates are trained in cabinet making rather than in the distinct trade of wood machining. Concerns were also expressed about the reduction of wood machining-specific units. Skills Insight is undertaking a research project to explore the complexities of these issues and will produce a report, including potential solutions to address ongoing stakeholder concerns.

Labour market dynamics being addressed

- Graduates from the training system need skills that meet the evolving needs for their occupations.
- Employers and employees lack appropriate information on occupational pathways / career prospects into the occupation.



Meat, Poultry, and Seafood Processing/ Manufacturing

Essential Meat Processing Skills Project

Current (November 2023 – July 2025)

The AMP Training Package is undergoing a full review to meet both the Standards for Training Packages and the evolving needs of the industry. This project is the second stage of a broader project to review the entire AMP Training Package, and will focus on the essential skills in the Certificate II level qualifications, which support accredited training pathways for new entrants.

Labour market dynamics being addressed

- Changed job or occupational design increasing need for some skill sets (e.g. digital skill sets).
- Industry evolution requiring new skills from the existing workforce.



Ecosystem Management, Conservation, Landscaping, and Gardening
Livestock Farming
Horticulture

AHC Improvements Project

Current (June 2023 – March 2024)

The AHC Training Package is one of the most complex, diverse and largest in the Australian system. Some key units of competency for work in the agriculture, horticulture, conservation and ecosystem management sector were revised as part of projects undertaken in 2019-22. As these units relate to important skills used across the industry, several qualifications and skill sets that were not part of the original projects required updating to incorporate the improved units.

Labour market dynamics being addressed

- Graduates from the training system need skills that meet the evolving needs for their occupations.
- Industry evolution requiring new skills from the existing workforce.

Recently approved



Textile, Clothing and Footwear

Research and Analysis of the Textiles, Clothing and Footwear Industry

The Australian Textiles, Clothing and Footwear industry is undergoing major transformation as onshore manufacturing is being re-introduced and advancements in technology have changed the nature of workforce occupations and skills⁸³. Stakeholder consultation and analysis will be undertaken to inform forward strategies and decision-making by the JSC. This will involve mapping existing industry strategies and resources for skilling, upskilling and re-skilling opportunities, and considering labour force dynamics (including symptoms such as shortages), sources of labour supply, and workforce diversity.

Labour market dynamics being addressed

- To be established during the research.



VET

Training product translation: best practices in learning resource development

As overseers of training packages, JSCs are interested in how they are accessed, read, interpreted and translated into workforce skills. It is the responsibility of RTOs to undertake the translation of competency standards into skills, but at present there is only anecdotal evidence of how they achieve this important task. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some providers 'value add' to national training products to better serve the needs of particular employers, student cohorts and communities. Other providers may be more limited in the way they implement training products due to resourcing or expertise constraints. Better understanding of the process of translating training packages will allow Skills Insight to determine what additional support may be useful to RTOs to develop effective learning resources. The activity will involve identifying and examining translation with a focus on determining innovative processes that customise training to meet diverse, local employer, student and community needs. Skills Insight have subcontracted high profile VET researcher Steven Hodge and Griffith University colleagues to undertake this research.

Labour market dynamics being addressed

VET qualification reform:

- This activity will test the proposed qualifications reform model (as per the [March 2024 update](#) of the Qualification Reform Design Group). Specifically, the research will consider differences in training product translation between a qualification that is tightly mapped to an occupation, a qualification that is not tightly mapped such that graduates can be employed in a diffuse range of occupations, and a qualification that develops cross-sectoral or foundation skills and knowledge which may be applied across industries, or lead to tertiary education and training pathways.
- This will support workforce planning in considering flows from qualifications to occupations, where delivering more graduates may be a relatively effective source of labour, and the methodologies practiced by, and capability needs of, the VET workforce.

Under consideration



Animal Care and Management

Review of Veterinary Nursing skills standards and training products

Veterinary nurses – and veterinarians – are in national shortage². The workforce is 97% female, with a median age of 28 years (compared with 40 years for all occupations), and only 50% are in full-time work (compared with 69% for all occupations). Industry stakeholders deem that accurately aligning job roles with required skills will help to address low veterinary nurse retention rates and further help professionalise the occupation.

Findings reported in an Australian Veterinary Association Veterinary Wellness Strategy⁸⁴ suggest that prevalent stress factors in veterinary services include high workload, long hours, poor remuneration, interpersonal abuse by clients, and staff shortages. The report recommends that the role of veterinary nurse 'warrants review and transformation for the benefits of those doing the role, but also the wider team' (ibid, p.48). This is based on findings that these workers experience uncertainty around work tasks and standards, and conflicting and inconsistent job roles, responsibilities, and expectations.

Despite skills shortages being recorded in every state and territory, veterinary nursing appears not to be an under-attractive occupation. According to JSA, there are 16,400 veterinary nurses employed, with an annual employment growth of 700 and a projected 13.4% growth in employment in the ten years to May 2033. Meanwhile, enrolments in the Certificate IV in Veterinary Nursing are growing yearly, with almost 5,100 enrolments and 1,250 completions in 2022. While this might suggest a supply of potential workers to alleviate pressure on businesses, skills

Labour market dynamics being addressed

- Employers are not aligned with employee expectations on job attractiveness (e.g. pay, symptoms, etc.).
- High / increased long-term unemployment in workforce (resulting in degradation of skills and other qualities).
- There are insufficient people in the workforce with the level of experience employers require.

shortages persist. Stakeholder feedback indicates that this is due to high turnover rates, in part due to the working conditions of veterinary nurses, as noted above, and low rates of pay, with median hourly earnings for veterinary nurses at \$27 compared with \$41 for all occupations (median full-time earnings per week are \$1,026 compared with \$1,593 for all occupations).

To improve veterinary nursing workforce employment outcomes, the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC) and Veterinary Nurses Council of Australia (VNCA) are advocating for the mandatory registration of veterinary nurses and technicians (at present, there is mandatory registration in WA only, and a voluntary Australian Veterinary Nurse and Technician Registration Scheme). It has been proposed that a mandatory scheme may recognise the minimum education requirement as being Diploma-level rather than the current Certificate IV-level. The potential establishment of a national registration scheme necessitates a thorough review of qualifications and skill standards to ensure alignment and compliance with regulatory requirements. Industry-led changes may also support businesses in recognising higher-level skills and so responsibility and wage increases for this workforce such that retention rates rise and skills shortages are reduced.

Further stakeholder consultation is required to understand challenges for the veterinary nursing workforce and to consider the appropriateness of current skills standards.



Cross-industry
Ecosystem Management,
Conservation,
Landscaping, and
Gardening

Activities and Initiatives to support Closing the Gap

Skills Insight is exploring initiatives to strengthen relationships with First Nation stakeholders to guide and validate future work. This includes potential activities to:

- Develop training and workforce solutions for working with crocodiles in Northern Australia, where cultural knowledge and safety are highly significant.
- Collaborate with project leader, the First Nations Land and Sea Corporation, to develop immersive technology training and assessment resources to support delivery of the Respect for Country qualifications and Indigenous Ranger skills development.
- Research and analysis of skills and workforce issues in the fishing industry in Northern Australia, particularly in First Nations communities (including biosecurity and Indigenous Ranger program skills).

Labour market dynamics being addressed

- Certain populations find it harder to participate (due to disability, age, gender, culture, location, etc.).
- Industry evolution requiring increase in different skills.
- Structural industry growth (geographic-specific, or global) increasing demand for a set of skills in that industry for the long term.
- Negative population dynamics for the relevant geography (e.g. low / negative growth, ageing population).



Broadacre Cropping
Livestock Farming
Horticulture

Promoting agribusiness career pathways

An increase in people seeking a career in agribusiness is required to address persistent labour supply shortages. Evidence suggests misperceptions around roles, remuneration, and working conditions discourage many from considering industry careers. Addressing these misperceptions requires strategies to promote the breadth of modern occupations and build sustained interest into the future. Identifying strategies will involve further research to map the nature and extent of misperceptions among target markets, including young people and careers advisors, identifying attractive aspects of agribusiness careers, and considering exemplars of effective industry careers promotion. Outcomes may involve identifying a range of potential communications messages and mediums, including advertising, social media, careers advice resources, and school curriculum, through which misperceptions may be reframed and the appeal of agribusiness careers promoted.

Labour market dynamics being addressed

- Employees lack appropriate information on occupational pathways / career prospects into the occupation.



Horticulture

Addressing labour supply and demand in Horticulture

Horticultural farms tend to use relatively large amounts of casual and contract labour (including migrant labour) in peak seasons, reflecting the timing of labour-intensive operations, such as planting and harvest. Businesses need a safe, productive, reliable and, ideally, returning workforce, though struggle to source labour. Data on seasonal and migrant labour employment supply and demand is a significant gap in national collections (see the Workforce planning evidence gaps section below). Further research needs to be undertaken on the productivity and profitability outcomes of different hiring practices and the efficacy of different labour models to improve workforce planning in horticulture.

Labour market dynamics being addressed

- Slow speed of supply (explore how to fill occupation gaps through strategies such as mapping pathways from adjacent workforces, influencing immigration policy and promoting domestic migration).



Forest Management and
Harvesting
Ecosystem Management,
Conservation,
Landscaping, and
Gardening

Building on Tree Felling Project Outcomes

Through consultation undertaken as part of the [Tree Felling Project](#), several needs were identified to help advance training delivery and enhance the quality, safety, and sustainability of tree felling operations, including:

Labour market dynamics being addressed

- Graduates from the training system need skills that meet the evolving needs for their occupations.
- Training system is not delivering training that meets the skill needs of industry.

Simulator technology for chainsaw tree felling training

- Simulator technology provides an important opportunity to improve hazard awareness and enhance safety and training efficiency. Utilising simulators can reduce the number of trees required for training and reduce errors when practicing on real trees.

Partnership protocols for tree allocation for training

- Industry could be supported through the development of protocols for identifying and sharing trees that can be used for training purposes. Strategic partnerships may help promote sustainable resource management and reduce the strain on training providers who experience difficulty sourcing trees.

Development of learning and assessment resources

- Nationally consistent learning and assessment resources could support training providers and promote uniformity and quality in training across various regions.

Challenges in establishing prerequisite units

- There is stakeholder support for prerequisite units to provide additional guidance on learner suitability for undertaking each level of tree felling unit.

Further improvements to the Tree Felling units

- Stakeholder feedback indicates a need for more differentiation between units at each skill level, especially concerning the size and complexity of trees for training at the basic and intermediate levels, which currently overlap.



Workforce Planning Data Analysis to Inform New Strategies and Activities

Skills Insight are developing increasingly sophisticated approaches to the analysis and presentation of secondary data published by JSA, ABS and others. Insights from this data analysis are emerging that provide a baseline for understanding industry-specific labour market dynamics, labour sources, and symptoms impacting a workforce. This will inform assessments of workforce challenges and the development of new workforce planning strategies and activities throughout 2024-2025.

Please see appendix 1 for examples of data analysis and presentation that are contributing to developing workforce planning insights.

DRAFT



Image provided by Seafood & Maritime Training

8 Workforce planning evidence gaps

This section addresses the workforce planning priority to:

- ① Improve data and evidence to inform delivery of sustained and inclusive full employment

The aim is to support continuous improvement of data collections used for government and industry workforce strategies.

It is an abridged version of the evidence gaps documented in the Initial Initial Workforce Plan, with additional commentary added to describe new gaps or challenges encountered by Skills Insight and our stakeholders in the intervening period.

Issue Overlaps in JSCs' jobs and skills coverage	Description and Impact Defining the workforces under JSCs' coverage is not straightforward because of the numerous overlaps across industries (ANZSIC), jobs (ANZSCO) and skills (National Training Register). It is important for JSCs to have clear sight of their stakeholders so that no cohort or group is unduly overlooked or excluded.	Description and Impact JSCs are responsible for collaborating in areas of shared concern. For reference, Skills Insight have mapped the distribution of occupations across industries using 2021 Census data to understand where relevant jobs and skills may overlap with the coverage of other JSCs.
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Issue The ANZSCO does not accurately reflect current and emerging occupations	Description and Impact Descriptions of occupations under the coverage of Skills Insight are outdated, or excluded, in the ANZSCO. This constrains effective workforce planning and industry access to government programs and funding (linked to Skills Priority Lists, Australian Apprenticeship Priority Lists, Skilled Migration Lists, and others).	Description and Impact Skills Insight has submitted stakeholder-informed survey responses to the first three rounds of the ANZSCO review. Round 4 in mid-2024 will seek feedback on the complete set of proposed changes. Skills Insight has begun collecting feedback on proposed changes reported so far. There will be ongoing efforts to influence and collaborate with the ABS on updating the ANZSCO, as has been discussed in JSC CEO Forums and with DEWR.
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Issue The ANZSIC does not accurately reflect current and emerging industry sectors	Description and Impact Descriptions of industries under the coverage of Skills Insight are outdated, or excluded, in the ANZSIC, notably for Animal Care and Management. This constrains effective workforce planning and industry access to government programs and funding.	Description and Impact Skills Insight will continue to document gaps in the ANZSIC and their impact on stakeholders. In turn, there will be efforts to influence and collaborate with the ABS on updating the ANZSIC.
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Issue Vocational education and training data	Description and Impact Challenges with scheduling, capacity and resources mean NCVER can only release Total VET Activity data for the previous year each August. This entails that in July JSC training product decision-making is informed by a data collection that finished 19 months ago. Low participation rates in Employers' Use and Views of the VET System and Student Outcomes Survey data collections constrain effective monitoring, which is a core JSC function (including to assess flows from qualifications to occupations to analyse with whether delivering more graduates may be an effective source of labour to alleviate workforce supply pressures).	Description and Impact Skills Insight will continue to consult with NCVER on their National VET Research Program to provide constructive feedback on evidence gaps and potential future research and evidence collection.
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Issue Lack of granularity in accessible data	Description and Impact Data from Government agencies (e.g. JSA) and other organisations (e.g. Work Safe Australia) are often released at a broad ANZSIC division level, i.e. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, which does not enable differentiation of subdivisions, groups and classes. Furthermore, industries within Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing have not been featured in datasets such as the Recruitment Experiences and Outlook Survey (REOS) by JSA, which has provided data features on other selected industries. This limits the value of these releases for workforce planning purposes.	Description and Impact Skills Insight has been corresponding with data custodians to obtain granular data as a 'data user' where possible, in line with privacy requirements.
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Issue Gaps in seasonal, temporary, and migrant workforce data	Description and Impact National data collections have variable approaches to recording seasonal, temporary, and migrant workers. There are often large margins for error in reporting, which cause volatile estimates. This poses barriers for effective workforce planning, especially for niche and regional industry sectors that rely on these sources of labour.	Description and Impact Skills Insight will continue to engage with the JSA and ABS to support continuous improvement of national data collections. There will also be contributions to industry-based initiatives, such as AgriFutures Australia's Mapping the Workforce of Australian Agriculture project , which is considering data issues surrounding seasonal, migrant, undocumented and family member workers.
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Issue Data aggregation evidence gaps	Description and Impact The lack of granularity displayed in national data collections that aggregate data (e.g. to four-digit ANZSCO level) entail challenges in assessing labour market dynamics, labour source characteristics, shortage/surplus symptoms and, ultimately, formulating appropriate strategies.	Description and Impact Industry intelligence and stakeholder engagement, with a particular focus on place-based jobs and skills characteristics, supplements public data provision. Skills Insight continues to support the continuous improvement of national data collections.
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Issue Continuous improvement of the Skills Priority List (SPS) and Internet Vacancy Index (IVI)	Description and Impact Many stakeholders feel the SPL under-represents shortages in occupations predominately located in regional, rural and remote areas. Similarly, the IVI only monitors mainstream job websites and does not account for the predominance of jobs advertised by businesses through local and informal networks. Industry demand for workers in regional, rural and remote areas and some occupations is likely to be underestimated.	Description and Impact Skills Insight will continue to promote continuous improvement of the IVI and participation in the SPL survey so that labour force demand and shortages are mapped appropriately. Alternatives and/or supplements to the IVI as an indicator for job supply are also in the process of being investigated with JSA.
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Issue Volatility in national data collections	Description and Impact National data collections, such as the ABS Labour Force Survey , can be very volatile due to small participant and sample sizes, and large margins for error. As a result, underlying dynamics may be difficult to elucidate, and apparent trends may be misleading.	Description and Impact Such data should be used with caution, and potential inaccuracies noted in relevant publications.
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Issue Lack of integration between national data frameworks and collections	Description and Impact Multiple national data frameworks and collections do not align, potentially duplicating similar work that would be more effective if integrated. For example: Many ANZSCO occupation skill levels are not reflective of the AQF level of the relevant NTR qualification, despite both defining the level of knowledge and skill required to competently perform tasks in the workplace.	Description and Impact Skills Insight will continue to promote data source harmonisation where appropriate, including in the ANZSCO review and future consultation over an Australian Skills Taxonomy (which is earmarked to replace the Australian Skills Classification).
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Issue Contextual overlay in Australian Skills Classification (ASC)	Description and Impact The ASC promotes a common language for skills and therefore jobs. However, the application of skills is highly contextual and contingent, and there are risks in overstating potential skills transferability. Stakeholders are unclear as to the use-value of homogenising and clustering skills without an additional variable for risk so that true transferability can be assessed.	Description and Impact Skills Insight will continue to engage with development of the Australian Skills Taxonomy. This will involve recommendations for the concept of risk and other contextual variables to overlay datasets intended to show skills transferability across occupations and industries.
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Issue Qualitative evidence and data underutilisation	Description and Impact JSCs utilise data published by JSA and associated agencies, whose products are the most comprehensive in existence for workforce planning; however, data limitations discredit apparent trends. While qualitative data may not always be extrapolatable, it can enrich and explain quantitative data but also, where appropriate, call it into question. The release of qualitative data collected by national agencies, for example from Skills Priority List consultations, would facilitate greater transparency and analyses of complex quantitative data from which veracious insights do not always emerge.	Description and Impact Skills Insight will continue to utilise and develop multiple methods, notably qualitative research, to address key data and evidence gaps. There will be efforts to triangulate qualitative and quantitative data and evidence to help understand and respond to jobs and skills challenges and opportunities in different contexts.
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Issue Training package qualifications and assigned ANZSCO Identifiers	Description and Impact Each qualification having one ANZSCO identifier potentially limits the recognition and transferability of skills acquired from VET across a broader range of occupations and industry sectors. ANZSCO identifiers assigned to qualifications inappropriately can impact on whether the appropriate qualification/occupation is included on the Australian Apprenticeships Priority List and Skilled Occupations List. Description and Impact Skills Insight are engaging with the Qualifications Reform Design Group to test and refine a model to strengthen design focus and so improve outcomes from a qualification, especially for graduates with industry-relevant and transferable skills leading to decent work in a rapidly changing environment.	Example The importance of training and education information and data being compatible with workforce data (e.g. from JSA and ABS) is exemplified in the following example: If a four-digit ANZSCO Identifier is assigned to a qualification by NCVET on the National Training Register, the website automatically displays a six-digit code, with '00' added to the end of the four-digit code. This creates issues for formula-driven data and decision-making, which may have significant impacts for access to workers and training delivery; for example, the AMP31116 Certificate III in Meat Processing (Livestock Handling) was assigned the ANZSCO Identifier 8312 Meat Boners And Slicers, And Slaughterers, which is displayed as 831200 on the National Training Register. While the two six-digit ANZSCO occupations under the 8312 (Meat Boner and Slicer, and Slaughterer) are in national shortage in the Skills Priority List, the corresponding qualification, AMP31116 Certificate III in Meat Processing (Livestock Handling), does not appear in the Australian Apprenticeships Priority List. This is potentially due to the misalignment of data, and Skills Insight is investigating such issues further.
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Issue Lack of privileged access to research and data	Description and Impact JSCs lack access to unit record data and research libraries/journals, limiting the breadth of information and analysis that informs workforce planning insights.	Description and Impact Skills Insight will encourage arrangements for all JSCs to gain access to online research libraries.
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Skills Insight will continue to identify and report on gaps in the available evidence and data to provide constructive feedback to Jobs and Skills Australia, the ABS, and other national agencies. Continuous improvement of data collection and presentation methods by JSA, with support from JSCs, may assist in the development of more integrated and detailed approaches to identifying jobs and skills priorities.

In the next section, existing workforce and skilling strategies are mapped with reference to the key industry workforce challenges and evidence gaps noted in this section, including consideration of how these relate to Skills Insight's strategies, before current and future workforce planning consultations are outlined in the final section.







9 Existing workforce and skilling strategies

This section builds on the identification of existing workforce strategies and initiatives in the Initial Workforce Plan.

The list is not exhaustive but indicative of the many government, workforce, skills, national, and regional strategies that are, and will be, considered in ongoing JSC workforce planning activities. Due to the breadth and diversity of industries covered by Skills Insight, detailing all relevant industry-specific and state-based strategies and initiatives is beyond the scope of this document; however, these are explored in our workforce planning, industry stewardship, implementation, promotion and monitoring, and occupational standards and training product development functions and other activities of the JSC.

The intention of mapping high-level workforce strategies that traverse the industries we work with is to understand connections between diverse initiatives, where government or industry policy prioritises specific approaches, and to consider where Skills Insight may work with, collaborate on and/or help shape different activities. The list has been alphabetised in the first column to avoid assigning relative primacy to different strategies that may have varying levels of significance to specific stakeholders, industries and jurisdictions.

The following is a Workforce Planning Priorities key to which the fourth column in the table below refers.

-  Improve data and evidence to inform delivery of sustained and inclusive full employment
-  Support workforce leadership and continuous capabilities development to help improve access to secure, fairly paid jobs
-  Addressing skills needs and building our future workforce
-  Overcoming barriers to employment and broadening opportunities

ABS: Review of the ANZSCO

<p>Key objectives</p> <p>The ABS is undertaking a comprehensive review of the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) to reflect the contemporary labour market and better meet stakeholders' needs.</p>	<p>Link with workforce planning priorities</p> <p>Reviewing and updating the ANZSCO will support the articulation of, and data to guide, educational pathways, skilled migration programs and workforce planning strategies.</p>	<p>Update from Initial Workforce Plan</p> <p>Skills Insight have submitted stakeholder-informed survey responses to the first three rounds of the ANZSCO review. Round 4 in mid-2024 is to seek feedback on the complete set of proposed changes. Skills Insight have begun collecting feedback on proposed changes reported so far.</p>	<p>Jobs and Skills National 2023-2024</p>
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Agricultural Workforce Forum

<p>Tripartite forum convened by the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Senator the Hon Murray Watt.</p>	<p>Link with workforce planning priorities</p> <p>The Forum influences the work of Skills Insight, including:</p>	<p>Update from Initial Workforce Plan</p> <p>New (succeeds the Agricultural Workforce Working Group)</p>	<p>Agriculture and processing sectors National Nov 2023 - Current</p>
<p>Key objectives</p> <p>To establish solutions that address workforce issues in the agriculture and processing sectors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research into the dynamics of an Ag Trade Apprenticeship to help attract new entrants and promote career pathways. • Development of meat industry safety training materials as a pilot for similar materials across agricultural, fishing and forestry 		



Key objectives	Link with workforce planning priorities	Update from Initial Workforce Plan	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guide workforce data collection. Understand data gaps and needs of the major stakeholders. Evaluate current workforce data collection tools. Develop recommendations and data concepts that can improve workforce data collection. 	<p>Skills Insight are a stakeholder of, and contributor to, AgriFutures work to improve workforce data collection and enable better-informed workforce strategic planning, policy development, research, and progress monitoring.</p>	<p>Along with stakeholders from ABS, JSA and industry associations, Skills Insight continue to participate in this project.</p> <p>Skills Insight will also be involved in a project being scoped to explore First Nations community engagement with industry.</p>	<p>Agriculture, First Nations Peoples</p> <p>National</p> <p>Aug 2023 - Current</p>

Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry: Agriculture and Land Sectoral Plan ✨



Key objectives	Link with workforce planning priorities	Update from Initial Workforce Plan	
<p>The Australian Government is developing a net zero plan, which will outline how transitioning to a net-zero economy can be achieved. Six sectoral plans will support this work, including one for agriculture and the land sector.</p>	<p>Aligning with the Australian Government's emission reduction goals will help producers and land managers to secure a profitable and sustainable future.</p> <p>A proactive capabilities-centred approach will allow industry to seize emerging opportunities and reduce risks associated with climate change.</p>	<p>New</p>	<p>Agriculture; and Conservation and ecosystem/land management</p> <p>National</p> <p>Aug 2023 - Current</p>

Australian Government: Australian Universities Accord ✨



Key objectives	Link with workforce planning priorities	Update from Initial Workforce Plan	
<p>To devise recommendations and performance targets to improve the quality, accessibility, affordability and sustainability of higher education, in combination with VET, to achieve long term security and prosperity for the sector and the nation.</p>	<p>more higher education and VET graduates are produced.</p> <p>The report lays out targets, including for 80% of the workforce to have a VET or university qualification by 2050. This requires a 20% increase in graduates, particularly with a greater proportion from priority cohorts, including people from low socioeconomic status backgrounds, First Nations peoples, people with disability, and people from regional, rural and remote communities. This may be achieved with needs-</p>	<p>based funding, improved RPL processes, a National Skills Passport, and attention to modular, stackable skills.</p> <p>Skills Insight will continue seeking to address workforce challenges through strategies to identify, forecast and respond to skills needs across a range of educational pathways, including VET and higher education.</p>	<p>Higher education</p> <p>National</p> <p>2023-2024</p>



Key objectives	Link with workforce planning priorities	Update from Initial Workforce Plan	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased skilled migration to help meet labour shortages in regional Australia. Reform the Pacific Labour Mobility Scheme (PALM) scheme Area for future reform: evaluate regional migration settings and the Working Holiday Maker program to ensure migration supports development objectives in regional Australia and does not contribute to the exploitation of workers. 	<p>The PALM scheme allows eligible Australian businesses to fill workforce gaps in regional Australia. PALM workers can undertake seasonal or longer-term semi-skilled and lower-skilled jobs, most commonly in the agricultural industries. There are currently about 35,000 PALM visa holders working in Australia, though the Migration Review identified that there is a lack of data to properly evaluate the migration system's performance and understand the full range of migrant outcomes. The agriculture sector experiences a substantial ongoing shortage of workers, but data gaps continue to be a barrier to addressing workforce needs.</p>	<p>As per recommendations in the Migration Strategy, Skills Insight will support improvements in data and evaluation to monitor the outcomes of migration strategies, and identify where migration may be an appropriate response to workforce supply and/or demand imbalances.</p>	<p>Jobs and skills</p> <p>National/ international</p> <p>2023 - Current</p>

Australian Government: National Agricultural Traceability Strategy ✨



Key objectives	Link with workforce planning priorities	Update from Initial Workforce Plan	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build a coordinated, collaborative, evidence-driven education, research and development agenda to lift our understanding of, and responses to, risks and opportunities. Coordinate a data-enabled, adaptable and secure approach within the traceability ecosystem to sustain and promote efficient market access. Improve tracking and tracing capabilities in relevant sectors to advance export opportunities, commodity confidence, and biosecurity and food safety responses. 	<p>Priorities include supporting industry and VET sector decision-making skills for the adoption of innovation, including digital technologies. This will also involve creating enduring and motivated partnerships across the whole traceability system to own and drive continued improvements and outcomes.</p>	<p>Skills Insight are investigating traceability and related systems (such as distributed ledger technologies) to understand workforce capabilities requirements along the food supply chain, which will inform collaboration with JSA and JSCs.</p>	<p>Agriculture</p> <p>National</p> <p>2023 - 2033</p>

Australian Government: National Regional, Rural and Remote Tertiary Education Strategy ✨



<p>Key objectives</p> <p>The Strategy includes recommendations such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to tertiary study options for RRR students • Expand access to high quality VET programs in RRR schools. • Improve participation and outcomes for RRR students from equity groups including low socio-economic status students, Indigenous students, students with disability and remote students 	<p>Link with workforce planning priorities</p> <p>The industries covered by Skills Insight are largely based in regional, rural and remote Australia. However, many of these areas are 'thin' training markets for registered training organisations, whereby delivering training to few, and geographically dispersed learners, is often an unviable proposition.</p>	<p>Update from Initial Workforce Plan</p> <p>In 2024, Skills Insight are undertaking activities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring misalignments in VET supply and demand, with a focus on regional, rural and remote areas. • Connecting RTOs & Employers Research Project 	<p>Regional, rural and remote (RRR) Australia</p> <p>National</p> <p>2019 - Current</p>
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Australian Government: National Skills Passport Consultation ✨



<p>Key objectives</p> <p>Insights from this consultation, which closed in February 2024, will be documented in a business case for consideration by government.</p>	<p>Link with workforce planning priorities</p> <p>Skills Insight submitted a response to this consultation and will support any future implementation strategies aimed at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informing education and employment decisions. • Helping workers promote their qualifications, upskill and reskill. • Helping businesses find staff with the right skills. 	<p>Update from Initial Workforce Plan</p> <p>New (proposed in the Australian Government's White Paper on Jobs and Opportunities)</p>	<p>Jobs and skills</p> <p>National</p> <p>Sept 2023 - Current</p>
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Australian Government: National Training Register Enhancement Project ✨



<p>Key objectives</p> <p>The NTR Enhancement Project is building systems and processes to ensure that training product development is more timely, less bureaucratic, and less complex, while still delivering national and local skills needs.</p>	<p>Link with workforce planning priorities</p> <p>To help find solutions to skills and workforce challenges, the Australian Government, supported by JSCs, is strengthening its information and data assets, with the NTR to remain as the VET sector's source of truth.</p>	<p>Update from Initial Workforce Plan</p> <p>New</p>	<p>VET</p> <p>National</p> <p>Current</p>
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Australian Government and Adelaide University: Australia's Education Strategy for India ✨



<p>Key objectives</p> <p>This strategy presents ways to deliver mutual benefits for Australia and India through education, institutional and research partnerships, and employment mobility.</p>	<p>Link with workforce planning priorities</p> <p>Skills Insight are continuing to support the research, design and delivery of pilot training products, in partnership with stakeholders from the Australian international education sector and Australian</p>	<p>and Indian agriculture sectors, to meet India's emerging agricultural skills needs and provide a market opportunity for Australian education providers, while strengthening the bilateral relationship by developing skills for a critical industry.</p>	<p>Update from Initial Workforce Plan</p> <p>New</p> <p>Jobs and skills</p> <p>International</p> <p>Released Nov 2023</p>
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Australian Government: White Paper on Jobs and Opportunities ✨



<p>Key objectives</p> <p>The White Paper outlines the Government's vision for a dynamic and inclusive labour market. Five key objectives for achieving this vision are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering sustained and inclusive full employment • Promoting job security and strong, sustainable wage growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reigniting productivity growth • Filling skills needs and building our future workforce • Overcoming barriers to employment and broadening opportunity 	<p>Link with workforce planning priorities</p> <p>The Government is embedding a more strategic approach to workplace planning, linking JSA and JSC guidance on skills priorities into key policy choices across the VET, higher education and migration systems. Skills Insight have a key role in the delivery of these tripartite approaches.</p>	<p>Update from Initial Workforce Plan</p> <p>New</p> <p>Jobs and skills</p> <p>National</p> <p>Released Sept 2023</p>
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Closing the Gap ✨



<p>Key objectives</p> <p>Closing the Gap is a strategy that aims to improve the life outcomes of First Nations peoples with respect to health and wellbeing, education, employment, justice, safety, housing, land and waters.</p>	<p>Link with workforce planning priorities</p> <p>The Productivity Commission's latest data on Closing the Gap shows there has been an improvement towards key targets, but they are not on track:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target 6: Increase the population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-34 years who have completed non-school qualifications of Certificate III or above. • Target 7: Increase the percentage of people aged 15-24 years who are fully engaged in employment, education or training. 	<p>Update from Initial Workforce Plan</p> <p>Skills Insight are actively engaging with stakeholders and scoping collaborative activities to improve the participation of, and outcomes for, First Nations peoples in relevant industries and education and training.</p>	<p>First Nations Peoples</p> <p>National</p> <p>2007 – Current</p>
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Key objectives

CCA is responsible for providing independent advice to government on climate change and emissions reductions targets and strategies.

Link with workforce planning priorities

CCA are engaging with Skills Insight to help deliver advice on pathways to net zero for Australian sectors, including Agriculture & Land, and Resources. This includes consideration of skills and workforce planning, including opportunities for women, during the transition to net zero.

Update from Initial Workforce Plan

New

Jobs and skills

National
2024

Industry training advisory bodies (ITABs) 🔍

Note: there are title variations in each jurisdiction, but 'ITAB' is used as a generic term here.

Key objectives

Industry skills and training advisory bodies have responsibility for documenting workforce and skills priorities and shortages in their respective jurisdictions. They provide strategic information and advice to state governments on workforce development issues and recommend which VET qualifications should be subsidised based on data and evidence.

Link with workforce planning priorities

ITABs are key placed-based stakeholders and sources of intelligence, who will be engaged at the conceptual stage of workforce planning strategies and activities so that workplans may be complementary, and minimise duplication of data and evidence collection to ensure the efficient allocation of time, money, and human capital.

Update from Initial Workforce Plan

Skills Insight coordinated a meeting with ITABs in Adelaide in September 2023 to develop ways of working with ITABs to support the JSC program and to begin development of a Memorandum of Understanding.

Jobs and skills

State-based
Ongoing

Jobs and Skills Australia: Food Supply Chain Capacity Study ✨ 🔍

Key objectives

To develop critical evidence, insights and recommendations to support workforce planning, policy development and program design.

Link with workforce planning priorities

Skills Insight supports JSA in improving data collection and evidence provision to inform workforce planning strategies and decision-making. This includes work on both general activities and resources, and specific capacity studies.

Update from Initial Workforce Plan

New

Note: JSCs and JSA continue to collaborate on general workforce data and evidence provision

Agricultural production, transformation (processing and manufacturing) and distribution.

National
To June 2024



Owl and handler at Moonlit Sanctuary (image by Shannyn Higgins Photography)



Council worker planting an Australian native tree on the nature strip



Cabinetmaker Donald Coles from Duraform

Jobs and Skills Councils: Workforce planning

Key objectives Workforce planning is the strategic centrepiece of JSCs	Link with workforce planning priorities JSCs are contracted to take an economy-wide approach in collaboration with other JSCs. There is a shared responsibility to support improvements in data and evidence collection and analysis to inform strategies and decision-making.	Update from Initial Workforce Plan An inter-JSC Workforce Planning Community of Practice has established a platform for sharing best-practice, challenges, and scoping of collaborative activities.	Jobs and skills National 2023 – Current
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National Agriculture Labour Advisory Committee: National Agricultural Workforce Strategy

Key objectives Key objectives include:	Link with workforce planning priorities The Strategy concludes that the key enabling factor for supporting industry is lifting the capabilities and diversity of the workforce. It invites industry leaders to make workforce skills development planning core to their strategies, and to collaborate widely with federal and state government agencies, employers, industry bodies, and unions.	Update from Initial Workforce Plan The Australian government have funded the implementation of various recommendations, which Skills Insight have contributed to, including reviewing the ANZSCO and exploring the potential dynamics of an Ag Trade Apprenticeship .	Agriculture, forestry and fishing; meat processing; racing and breeding; conservation and ecosystem management National 2021 - Current
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal, state and territory ministers and industry leaders should prioritise continuous capabilities development, including for owners, managers and workers (Recommendation 1). Enhance sustainability (Recommendation 2) Value-add across the supply chain (Recommendations 3-5) Adopt digital technologies and develop associated skills (Recommendations 6-8) Attract and retain the future workforce (Recommendations 9-13) Strengthen education and training (Recommendations 14-17) Improve workforce planning, management, health and safety, and wellbeing (Recommendation 18) Empower place-based and locally-led approaches (Recommendation 19) Attract and protect the seasonal and transient workforce (Recommendations 20-31) Improve workforce data and information to bridge evidence gaps and inform policy (Recommendations 32-35) Work collaboratively to implement workforce planning strategies (Recommendations 36-37). 	<p>The Australian Government response to the National Agricultural Workforce Strategy supported the recommendations of the Strategy in principle, and various associated initiatives have already been implemented.</p>		

National VET Completions Taskforce: National Vocational Education and Training Completions

Key objectives South Australia led a project to explore factors affecting completion rates and to identify opportunities to improve the proportion of students completing their training. To inform recommendations for improving completion rates, objectives included:	Link with workforce planning priorities Poor qualification completion rates can result in a loss of productivity for industry and missed opportunities for learners.	VET National From 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement: trialling new approaches with key system stakeholders across Australia, to consider how completion rates could be improved Insights and good practice: consider national and international good practice models for increasing completion rates Measurement of outcomes: collaborative data analysis between NCVET, JSA, and state, territory and Australian governments, with a view to improving data collection and reporting. 	<p>Improving VET completion rates can achieve positive skills and occupational outcomes.</p> <p>Diverse jobs and skills stakeholders can help improve completion rates through a greater appreciation for learners' characteristics and study purpose, and the design and delivery of VET.</p>	
	Update from Initial Workforce Plan New	

National Farmers' Federation (NFF): 2030 Roadmap

Key objectives The NFF's vision is for the industry to exceed \$100 billion in farm gate output by 2030. For 'people and communities', objectives include:	Link with workforce planning priorities The NFF are a key stakeholder in the jobs and skills system generally and workforce planning processes specifically.	Agriculture, forestry and fishing National 2019 - 2030
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build leadership capability, including initiatives for financial literacy, corporate governance and regional development 'literacy' and practice. Establishing a nationally consistent, 'trade-equivalent' job brand for skilled farm workers. Doubling the number of tertiary and vocational agriculture graduates. Clear career pathways to attract workers and develop their skills, with tailored streams for new entrants through to seasoned professionals. Increasing the available workforce by 25%, including from the Australian labour force and migration. Creating pathways for unemployed Australians to find on-farm work. Promote initiatives that facilitate inclusion of under-represented cohorts in the agriculture industry. Adopting methods and strategies for the continuous improvement of sustainability and land use, workplace safety, digital practices, traceability and product integrity, and domestic biosecurity. 	<p>The 2030 Roadmap is a wide-ranging national agenda-setting document that covers all areas of workforce development. The NFF's influence in promoting leadership initiatives to attract new workers, including school leavers and under-represented cohorts, is critical across the agribusiness, fibre, furnishing, food, animal and environment care industries' value chains.</p>	
	Update from Initial Workforce Plan Among other activities to support improvements to skill development consistent with this roadmap, Skills Insight will soon complete a project on the feasibility of an Ag Trade Apprenticeship to help attract new entrants and promote career pathways in agriculture.	

Qualifications Reform Design Group: a tripartite group established by Skills Ministers ✨



Key objectives

To provide advice about the design of a reform process for VET qualifications which prepares the sector for the future.

Link with workforce planning priorities

JSCs, as key agents in national VET arrangements, are central partners in bringing industry insights into new qualification models, and promoting the improved outcomes expected from new qualifications to current and prospective users of VET.

The Design Group's [March 2024 update](#) reported on its initial recommendations to the Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council for a program to modernise VET qualifications. The Design Group proposed a revised system that moves from a 'one size fits all' approach to designing qualifications

based on their purposes, especially to respond to changing workplaces and industries. Three broad purposes have been identified:

Purpose 1

Qualifications leading to a specific occupation (for example a licensed trade), that maintain a level of specificity necessary for safety or licencing requirements, particularly the integrity of the trades, and is unlikely to change substantially from the current approach;

Purpose 2

Qualifications that prepare learners for multiple, related occupations while retaining industry relevance; and

Purpose 3

Qualifications that develop cross-sectoral or foundation skills and knowledge which may be applied across industries, or lead to tertiary education and training pathways.

Update from Initial Workforce Plan

Skills Insight will assist the Design Group in testing the proposed reform model (as per the [March 2024 update](#)). Specifically, this will involve suitable approved and prospective activities being designed to test the value of the three broad qualification purposes, and to consider outcomes for learners and industry. Skills Insight will take an action learning approach, and provide progress reports to Skills Ministers, with recommendations for refining the purpose-led design of qualifications to inform new policy settings for the qualifications system.

VET
National
June 2023 - Current

Regional Australia Institute: Regionalisation Ambition 2032 ✨



Key objectives

Jobs and Skills objectives are for the regional workforce to be optimised and fit for the future. These include to:

- Reduce the recruitment difficulty in regional Australia to below 40%
- Increase the share of skilled workers employed in regional Australia to 80% of the regional workforce.
- Boost post-school qualification completion in regional Australia to 65% or above

Link with workforce planning priorities

The RAI's targets complement Skills Insight's workforce planning priorities given our coverage is predominately in regional, rural and remote areas.

Update from Initial Workforce Plan

Skills Insight continue to understand regional jobs and skills challenges holistically, and implement, collaborate on and/or influence strategies and activities as appropriate.

Regional, rural and remote Australia
National
2022 - 2032

TAFE Centres of Excellence ✨



Key objectives

- Provide national leadership in the delivery of skills, education and training
- Bring together employers, unions, universities and other education and training providers to develop and implement real work and practical solutions to meet skills needs
- Support industry and enrich students' learning experience through applied research and problem solving programs.

Link with workforce planning priorities

JSCs will work with TAFE Centres of Excellence, including to harness Centres' insights from training delivery and to contribute to new national training product development (where training products do not currently exist, curriculum development for accredited courses by Centres may inform subsequent national training product development).

Update from Initial Workforce Plan

New

VET
National
From 2024

The Commonwealth, state and territory governments: Fee-Free TAFE ✨



Key objectives

The Australian Government has announced an additional \$414.1 million will be committed for a further 300,000 TAFE and vocational educational courses to be made fee-free from Jan 2024 – this is currently being negotiated with States and Territories through the 5-year National Skills Agreement.

Link with workforce planning priorities

The Australian Government announced additional funding for fee-free courses from Jan 2024. This is being negotiated with States and Territories through the National Skills Agreement, which sets out training places across areas of national priority, including agriculture, as well as for priority cohorts, including First Nations Australians, young people (17-24), and women undertaking study in non-traditional fields.

Update from Initial Workforce Plan

Skills Insight continues to work with federal and state and territory governments and agencies to identify skills priorities.

VET
National
Jan 2023 - Current

The Commonwealth, state and territory governments: National Skills Agreement ✨



Key objectives

The Agreement aims to:

- deliver a national VET system that provides high quality, responsive and accessible education and training to boost productivity
- support Australians to obtain the skills and capabilities they need to obtain well-paid, secure jobs
- ensure Australia has the skilled workforce it needs now and into the future, with TAFE at the heart of the VET sector.

Link with workforce planning priorities

Skills Insight will collaborate with governments, who have agreed national priorities for addressing critical skills and workforce shortages, including:

- gender equality
- Closing the Gap
- supporting the Net Zero transformation
- developing Australia's sovereign capability and food security
- ensuring Australia's digital and technology capability
- delivering reforms to improve the regulation of VET qualifications and quality.

Update from Initial Workforce Plan

New

Jobs and skills

National

2024 - 2029

The Commonwealth, state and territory governments: VET Workforce Blueprint ✨



Key objectives

The Blueprint will identify strategies for:

- Growing and diversifying the VET workforce
- Attraction and Retention
- Capability and career development
- Succession planning

Link with workforce planning priorities

The Blueprint will be developed in close consultation with key VET stakeholders, including JSCs. It will include analysis and consideration of:

- current workforce supply and demand, including qualification coverage, specialist roles and regional and remote distribution
- the interaction between the Standards for RTOs and the impact this has on the VET workforce
- the important role of industry as part of the VET workforce, including employers/supervisors involved in on-the-job training, particularly for apprentices and trainees, as well as the role of industry currency and maintaining connections between RTOs and industry.

Update from Initial Workforce Plan

New

VET

National

2023 - Current

Outline of planned and ongoing consultation

This section outlines planned and ongoing consultation specific to Workforce Planning for 2024 – 2025.

It builds on the outline of planned and ongoing consultation from the Initial Workforce Plan, and will only cover changes and additions from that plan.

Sections that have not changed from the Initial Workforce Plan include:

- Working with Jobs and Skills Australia
- Working with State training Authorities and state-based industry skills and training advisory bodies
- Consolidating stakeholder relationships
- First Nations stakeholders
- Priorities and Timelines



Susie Falk and Peter Miller on site visit to McCormack's cattle farm



Diana McNaughton at an Animal Emergency Incident Management Network event



Susie Falk and Anna Henderson with Tracey Leo from Humpty Doo Barramundi



Andrew Horgan building fences with BlazeAid in Jingellic

Stakeholder Engagement Governance

Skills Insight has now established the JSC Stakeholder Forum and supporting Networks. These bodies will be formally consulted twice per year on the Workforce Plan that will be submitted to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, to provide guidance on:

- Q1/2 2024-2025 – establishing the workforce plan priorities and the major focus for activity submissions
- Q3/4 2024-2025 – approving the Workforce Plan for submission and the priorities for the Annual Activity plan.

During the establishment phase, Skills Insight determined the structure of the networks and then aligned them with ANZSIC defined industry sectors. Networks have been established for (with inaugural network members as at February 2024):



In addition to the networks brought together by Skills Insight, a number of key bodies with existing networks have agreed to provide representatives for the Forum. These bodies are:

- Australian Forest Products Association
- Australian Meat Industry Council
- Australian Meat Industry Employees Union
- Australian Workers Union
- Manufacturing Division of the CFMEU
- National Farmers Federation
- Racing Australia
- Seafood Industry Australia

Note: The Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation has requested us to approach an alternative organisation as a key body for First Nations representation, and this representation will be finalised before the next Forum meeting.

Virtual Communities will be established for each of the Networks to facilitate ongoing engagement between the organisations that are part of Networks and others operating in the relevant industry sectors.

Outside of formal consultations, these bodies will be engaged with informally throughout the year to gather industry intelligence, support research activities and review data as part of the development of the Plan, as outlined in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan section of the Initial Workforce Plan.

As a result of the experiences so far, and the guidance being received from DEWR, there appears to be no need to establish a Workforce Planning sub-committee. The JSC Stakeholder Forum will consider any need for sub-committees in its review of the industry engagement structures, expected to report in February 2025.

Developing new relationships and networks

In addition to the plans outlined in the Initial Workforce Plan, Skills Insight will also be prioritising building operational relationships with:

- Rural and Research Development Corporations
- Regional Development Australia branches
- Higher education bodies, particularly on improving research, data and evidence-based for VET reform

These bodies will be increasingly important as JSC work develops, and will be an area of focus now that industry stakeholder membership has successfully commenced and grown.

Opportunities for Cross-JSC Workforce Planning

Skills Insight has and will continue to actively participate in the cross-JSC structures that have been established, including the JSC CEO Forum, the Workforce Planning and the Communications Community of Practices. We will continue to share our experiences with other JSCs and to learn from their approaches.

Engagement with other JSCs in funded activities remains a priority, but is subject to development of a framework for these activities, including leadership, accountability and contractual arrangements.

Stakeholder Engagement Plan for Workforce Planning

The Stakeholder Engagement Plan is built on the Workforce Planning Priorities. The Plan is presented for each priority.

The time frames are defined by the financial year quarters:

- Q1:** 1 Jul – 30 Sep
- Q2:** 1 Oct – 31 Dec
- Q3:** 1 Jan – 31 Mar
- Q4:** 1 Apr – 30 Jun

Improve data and evidence to inform delivery of sustained and inclusive full employment

Engagement Purpose

Continue to work with major data organisations in our sectors to address gaps

Contributions	Methods	Time frame	Key Stakeholders
Contributions to plans to improve data for industry, and to the Mapping the Workforce of Australian Agriculture project (Q1, Q2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing involvement in projects being led by Deakin University and Agrifutures through Steering and advisory committee meetings 	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4	ABARES ABS
Assist to finalise the Mapping the Workforce of Australian Agriculture project (Q3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of projects with partners to identify opportunities for future joint activities 		Agrifutures (and other RDCs) Deakin University JSA
Work with partners to identify ongoing gaps and future work (Q3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of industry intelligence and data 		RMCG (consultancy)
Analyse improvements from the Mapping the Workforce of Australian Agriculture project (Q4)			
Work with partners to develop plans to address ongoing gaps and future work (Q4)			

Ongoing

Q1

Engagement Purpose

Analyse and validate current information on data gaps

Contributions

Building on previous identification of industry data needs, potential data sources and research partners

Methods

- Stakeholder meetings and discussions
- Working groups and subject matter expert meetings
- Formal and Informal Network approaches
- Conferences and events
- Virtual communities

Key Stakeholders

Agrifutures
Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union (AMIEU)
Australian Dairy Farmers
Australian Forest Products Association
Australian Workers Union (AWU)
AVETRA
CFMEU (Manufacturing Division)
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF)
Department of foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)
ABARES

Austrade
ITECA
ILSC
NAILSMA
First Nations Land Councils
Indigenous Business Australia
JSC Stakeholder Forum
Key Bodies
Formal network organisations that are peak bodies
Other key Industry Peak Bodies
Other Rural Research and Development Corporations (RDCs)
All other JSCs

Q2

Engagement Purpose

Commence prioritised data work and identification of new priorities

Contributions

Implement specific data improvements prioritised by the JSC Stakeholder Forum.

Commence work on researching potential new improvements.

Methods

- Stakeholder meetings and discussions
- Working groups and subject matter expert meetings
- Formal and Informal Network approaches
- Conferences and events
- Virtual communities

Key Stakeholders

Agrifutures
Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union (AMIEU)
Australian Dairy Farmers
Australian Forest Products Association
Australian Workers Union (AWU)
AVETRA
CFMEU (Manufacturing Division)
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF)
Department of foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)
ABARES
Austrade

ITECA
ILSC
NAILSMA
First Nations Land Councils
Indigenous Business Australia
JSC Stakeholder Forum
Key Bodies
Formal network organisations that are peak bodies
Other key Industry Peak Bodies
Regional Development Australia network
Other Rural Research and Development Corporations (RDCs)
All other JSCs

Q3

Engagement Purpose

Present Workforce Plan and prioritisation information for data improvement

Contributions

Finalise plans for the next round of data improvement for consideration by the JSC Stakeholder Forum and Formal networks

Methods

- Formal Network approaches
- JSC Stakeholder Forum meeting

Key Stakeholders

JSC Stakeholder Forum
Key Bodies
Formal network organisations that are peak bodies
Public consultation

Q4

Engagement Purpose

Prepare plans for activities and commence next round of consultation and intelligence gathering regarding data improvements

Contributions

Submit Activity proposals for data improvement or proposals for joint activities

Build on industry intelligence to identify continuing data gaps and improvements

Methods

- Stakeholder meetings and discussions
- Working groups and subject matter expert meetings
- Formal and Informal Network approaches
- Conferences and events
- Virtual communities

Key Stakeholders

Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union (AMIEU)
Australian Dairy Farmers
Australian Forest Products Association
Australian Workers Union (AWU)
AVETRA
CFMEU (Manufacturing Division)
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF)
Department of foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)
ABARES
Austrade
ITECA

ILSC
NAILSMA
First Nations Land Councils
Indigenous Business Australia
JSC Stakeholder Forum
Key Bodies
Formal network organisations that are peak bodies
Other key Industry Peak Bodies
Regional Development Australia network
Other Rural Research and Development Corporations (RDCs)
All other JSCs

Support workforce leadership and continuous capabilities development to help improve access to secure, fairly paid jobs and addressing skills needs and building our future workforce

Ongoing

Engagement Purpose

Engagement with key stakeholders for 2025 workforce plan and activities identification

Contributions	Key Stakeholders	
Undertake collection of data and industry intelligence	Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union (AMIEU)	NAILSMA
	Australian Dairy Farmers Association	First Nations Land Councils
	Australian Forest Products Association	Indigenous Business Australia
	Australian Workers Union (AWU)	National Horticulture Council
	AVETRA	Regional Australia Institute and Australian Farm Institute
	Career Development Association Australia and similar career development based peak bodies	RTO trainers
	CFMEU (Manufacturing Division)	TAFE Directors
	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF)	VELG
	Department of foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)	VETASSESS
	ABARES	JSC Stakeholder Forum Key Bodies
	Austrade	Formal network organisations
	ITECA	Other Key Industry Peak Bodies
	ILSC	Key Bodies to provide input from identified cohorts
		Regional Development Australia network
		Rural Research and Development Corporations (RDCs)

Q1

Engagement Purpose

Finalise planning of activities for submission and seek approval for the priorities

Contributions	Methods	Key Stakeholders
Based on stakeholder intelligence and data collected over the last twelve months, develop the relevant Activity Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal Network approaches JSC Stakeholder Forum meeting 	JSC Stakeholder Forum Formal network organisations that are peak bodies Other key Industry Peak Bodies State and territory training authorities (S/TTAs)
Approval of priorities by the JSC Stakeholder Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of industry intelligence and data Meetings and emails to S/TTAs 	

Q2

Engagement Purpose

Finalise submissions of activity proposals for November

Contributions	Methods	Key Stakeholders
Further engagement with DEWR and S/TTAs	Meetings and emails	JSC Stakeholder Forum Formal network organisations State and territory training authorities (S/TTAs)

Q3

Engagement Purpose

Finalise Workforce plan content

Contributions	Methods	Key Stakeholders
Using evidence-base collected over the last twelve months, develop the updated Workforce Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal Network approaches JSC Stakeholder Forum meeting 	JSC Stakeholder Forum Formal network organisations Public Consultation State and territory training authorities (S/TTAs)
Approval of draft Plan and priorities by the JSC Stakeholder Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of industry intelligence and data Meetings and emails Public consultation via website, social media and emails 	

Addressing skills needs and building our future workforce

Q1

Engagement Purpose

Identify key priorities and obtain approval from the JSC Stakeholder Forum

Contributions

Present preliminary evidence-base from research and industry engagement to identify priority areas of work

Key Stakeholders

JSC Stakeholder Forum
Formal network organisations
Corporations (RDCs)

Q2

Engagement Purpose

Release completed research and seek feedback

Contributions

Distribution, promotion and feedback on research regarding misalignments in VET supply and demand and Training package translation to curriculum

Methods

- Emails and website
- Virtual Communities
- Conferences and Events
- Stakeholder meetings and discussions

Key Stakeholders

Australian Forest Products Association
Australian Meat Industry Council
Australian Meat Industry Employees Union
Australian Workers Union
CFMEU Manufacturing
National Farmers Federation
Racing Australia
Seafood Industry Australia
Formal networks
TAFE Directors
VELG
Key Bodies to provide input from

Key Stakeholders

identified cohorts
First Nations Land Councils
AVETRA
Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union (AMIEU)
Australian Workers Union (AWU)
CFMEU (Manufacturing Division)

Q3

Engagement Purpose

Identify any cross-JSC themes and shared barriers and opportunities

Contributions

To identify and develop any potential cross-JSC activities

Methods

- Meetings and emails
- JSC CEO Forums

Key Stakeholders

All other JSCs

Q3 - Q4

Engagement Purpose

Ongoing engagement with Stakeholders to identify barriers and opportunities and influence changes

Contributions

Continue work to promote potential opportunities and ways to overcome barriers, including identification of specific activities that can be undertaken by the JSC

Methods

- Emails and website
- Virtual Communities
- Conferences and Events
- Stakeholder meetings and discussions

Key Stakeholders

Australian Forest Products Association
Australian Meat Industry Council
Australian Meat Industry Employees Union
Australian Workers Union
CFMEU Manufacturing
National Farmers Federation
Racing Australia
Seafood Industry Australia
Formal networks

Key Stakeholders

TAFE Directors
VELG
Key Bodies to provide input from identified cohorts
First Nations Land Councils
AVETRA
Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union (AMIEU)
Australian Workers Union (AWU)
CFMEU (Manufacturing Division)



10

Towards a 2025 Workforce Plan

This update to the *Initial Workforce Plan* develops Skills Insight's workforce planning priorities with respect to Australian Government strategies, newly released national data, and stakeholder insights. Stakeholder feedback and evidence has been used to contextualise and add depth to initial analyses and proposed activities.

The identified strategies will be applied consistently with *Skills Insight's approach to Workforce Planning* and will underpin all activities undertaken over 2024-2025. These strategies are part of a holistic approach, whereby Skills Insight are taking an active role in working with governments, industry, unions, learners, and training and education providers to implement, collaborate on, and/or influence a range of approaches to alleviate workforce challenges. This reflects that the jobs and skills ecosystem shapes and is shaped by a range of strategies and dynamics across multiple jurisdictions and stakeholder groups that can work together more productively with the right support. All gaps and challenges mapped in this document are mapped to a workforce planning priority. They are either the subject of current or prospective JSC activities or targeted stakeholder engagement to understand where strategies should be prioritised to provide needed support and have the greatest impact in the short, medium and longer terms.

Supported by the JSC Stakeholder Forum, the 2025 Workforce Plan will broaden and deepen insights on jobs and skills demand and supply challenges. It will go beyond identifying the symptoms of workforce challenges by including more direct diagnoses of the most pressing issues and determine strategies to address them, informed by detailed research and data analysis, stakeholder engagement, collaboration with JSA, and extensive consultation with other JSCs.



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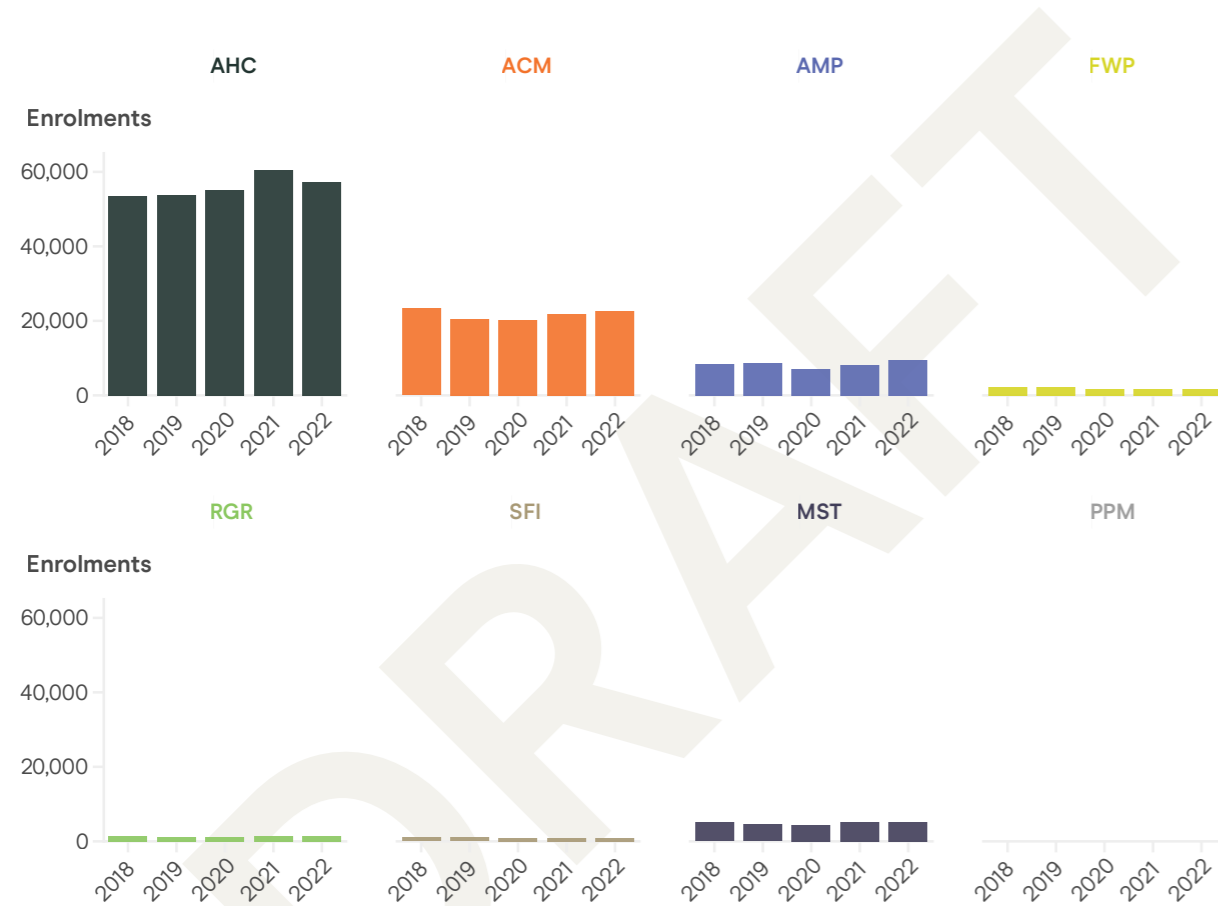
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Appendix 1

Ongoing Workforce Planning Data Analysis to Inform New Strategies and Activities

Training Package Qualification enrolments



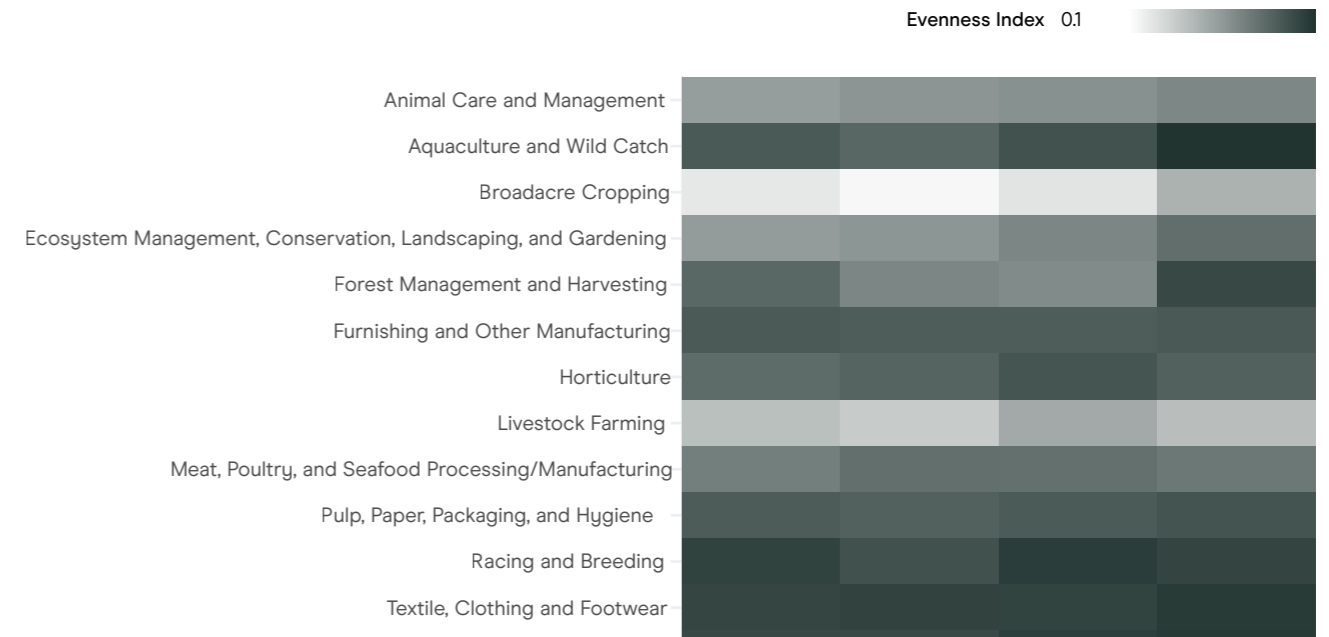
Source: NCVET VOCSTATS (2023)

Areas for further workforce planning analysis

Almost half of all qualification enrolments in these training packages were in just 5% of their qualifications

Further research is required to understand this phenomena, with stakeholders suggesting that many of the qualifications service small and niche industries with low workforce turnover, entailing challenges for balancing demand for and supply of training, especially in thin markets with challenging RTO operating environments. In 2024, Skills Insight are undertaking a project to explore training demand and supply challenges to better understand such issues and propose solutions.

Workforce Skills Diversity



Increasing diversity in workforce skill levels seen across most industries

Here, Pielou's Evenness Index (J') is used to measure a group dominance in a community*. A low J' (lighter colour) indicates a high concentration of one or few skills in the workforce, while a high J' (darker colour) indicates a diverse range of workforce skill levels.

Understanding the distribution of industry occupation skill levels will help inform business and industry workforce planning strategies to assess the supply of, and demand for skilled labour. It also considers the progressive evolution of tasks performed in occupations, for example, with higher skilled roles becoming more prevalent as technology adoption becomes more widespread.

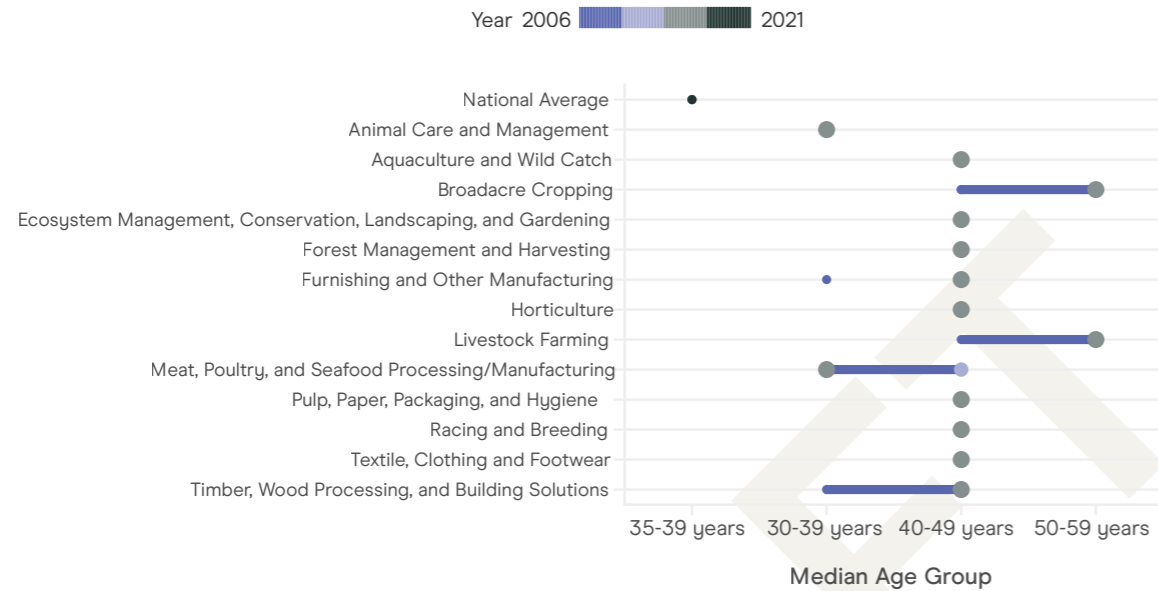
Source: Skills Insight analysis of ANZSCO occupation skill levels from the ABS Australian Census Longitudinal Dataset (2006 - 2011 - 2016), ABS Census (2021), Pielou (1966).

*The relative dominance of a skill level alone does not provide information on the skill level that is dominant.

Industry Workforce Median Age

Median age group across industries consistently exceeded national average

Australia's national median age has risen over the years, but remain in a bracket lower than that of workers within our industry coverage. Median age data informs workforce planning strategies that seek to address ageing workforces, including prioritising careers promotion for younger people (and other cohorts).



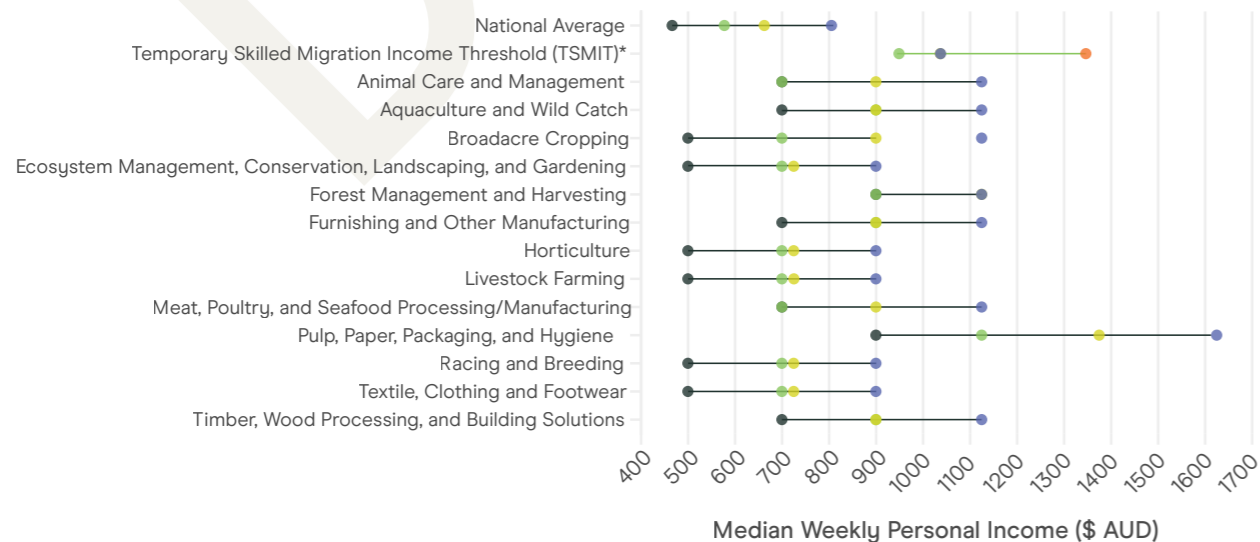
Source: ABS Australian Census Longitudinal Dataset (2006-2011-2016), Census (2021) A lack of connecting purple line suggests no movement between the years since 2006. Where a year has not been specified on the chart (faintly outlined in the dot), assume the value is the same as the previous record (e.g. The median age class for the National Average has not shifted since 2006).

Median weekly income

Income mobility over time tends to vary among industries

For industries with skill shortages, the recent increase in salary requirements to nominate overseas workers could mean a decreased inflow of skilled migrants into lower wage occupations.

Income mobility impacts on workforce planning strategies to attract and retain a skilled workforce.

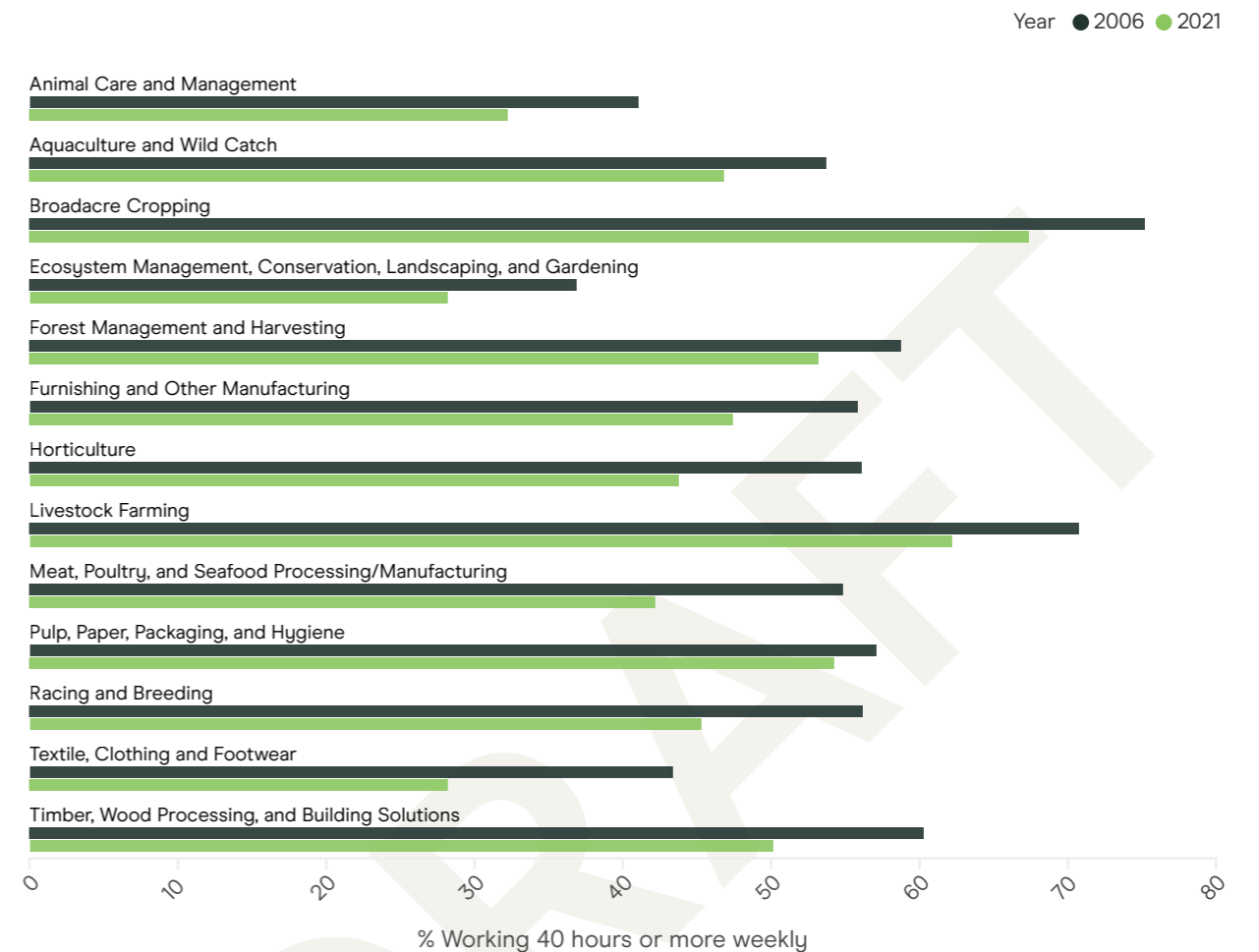


Source: ABS Australian Census Longitudinal Dataset (2006-2011-2016), ABS Census (2021), Azarias (2016).
* Not a median value. Missing years suggest that the median value of the specified year has not increased from the previous recorded value.

Weekly Hours Worked

Our workers are working less, but still overtime

The proportion of workers working 40 hours or more has declined since 2006, but many are still working over the national standard of 38 hours weekly. Working hours are one of the key indicators of a labour market supply and demand considered in the analysis of workforce attraction and retention.



Source: ABS Census (2016, 2021)