

Landscaping Skills Review

Interim report

Collated insights from
workshops & other
consultation activities

Feb-May 2026



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.



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Executive summary

Purpose: This interim report summarises the first phase of the Landscaping Skills Review, a national project to address critical skills shortages, qualification misalignment, and regulatory fragmentation in the Australian landscaping industry. This interim report is evidence-focused and is intended to inform the next phase of mapping and analysis.

Scope: Initially scoped for landscape design only, the project expanded following peak industry association executive consultations to encompass design, construction, maintenance, and expansion of areas like green infrastructure across all jurisdictions.

This interim report does not propose changes to qualifications, units or licensing frameworks. Its purpose is to establish a shared evidence base and clearly articulate issues requiring further analysis.

Methods: The consultative approach involved face-to-face workshops in Victoria, Queensland, and Western Australia; online sessions for South Australia, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory; two national forums; Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show (MIFGS) engagement; and an online Skills Review questionnaire.

Results: Key findings reveal consistent national themes: industry recognition and visibility, need for clearer occupational definitions, workforce and skills shortages, shifting technology and work practices, inconsistent jurisdictional regulations and licensing laws, and segmentation of the industry.

Next Steps: Consultation has identified three key actions to address and continue to explore findings to date:

1. Carry out skills gap analysis for industry through qualification mapping.
2. Develop a nationally coherent landscaping career pathway strategy.
3. Progress coordinated occupational classification (OSCA) submissions.

These will be the ongoing focus, leading to the final report (due December 15, 2026) which will consolidate findings and make formal recommendations for skills needs and qualification refresh priorities.

Introduction

The Landscaping Skills Review purpose

The Landscaping Skills Review responds to industry calls for a comprehensive examination of skills needs across the design, construction, and maintenance sectors. This review serves peak landscaping associations, employers, Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), learners, and regulators seeking nationally coherent yet jurisdictionally sensitive training solutions. It aims to map current skills against qualifications, identify gaps, and recommend training package updates that support professional autonomy, address shortages, and align with state licensing requirements. By establishing a unified national identity for landscaping occupations, the review supports advocacy for funding, apprenticeships, and more accurate occupational classifications through the OSCA, ultimately strengthening grounds for future industry workforce growth.

The landscaping context

The landscaping industry in Australia shapes the outdoor environments where people live, work, and connect – from residential gardens to major public-realm projects. Despite its influence on the built environment, the industry itself is often not visible: most people experience the outcomes of landscaping every day without recognising the skilled workforce behind these outcomes.

The landscaping industry is a multidisciplinary practice that sits at the intersection of horticulture and construction. It spans distinct and interconnected occupational streams: landscape construction, design and maintenance, all of which centre around plant establishment, ecological care, and ongoing environmental stewardship. These related yet specialised career pathways require unique skills, training, and recognition, underpinning our focus on workforce and training strategy.

A growing industry made up predominantly of small to medium-sized businesses, landscaping delivers design, construction and maintenance services across residential, commercial and public spaces. It contributes to employment, economic activity, and community amenity while supporting government priorities such as urban greening, liveable housing and climate resilience.

While landscaping competency standards are primarily held within the *AHC Agriculture, Horticulture and Conservation and Land Management Training Package* (plant care, landscaping design and construction, irrigation), there are also crossovers with competencies held in the *CPC Construction, Plumbing and Services Training Package* (concreting, building small structures).

Key industry stakeholders

Current stakeholder groups

The stakeholders listed below have been engaged to this point.

Type	Stakeholders
Landscaping peak associations (and their members)	Landscape Design Institute
	Landscape Industries Association of Western Australia
	Landscape Queensland Industries Association
	Landscaping Victoria
	Master Landscapers of South Australia
	The Landscape Association (NSW/ACT)
	(No dedicated peak association in TAS or NT. Individuals in these jurisdictions have been consulted.)
Education	Higher Education training providers
	Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) including TAFE

Future potential stakeholders

The following stakeholders will be engaged as we continue with this project.

Type	Stakeholders
Industry stakeholders	Employers and employees of landscaping businesses
Regulators / licensing authorities	ACT Construction Occupations Registrar (Access Canberra)
	New South Wales Building Commission (formerly under NSW Fair Trading)
	Northern Territory Building Practitioners Board and NT Building Advisory Services
	Queensland Building and Construction Commission (QBCC)

	South Australia Consumer and Business Services (CBS)
	Tasmania Consumer, Building and Occupational Services (CBOS)
	Victoria Building and Plumbing Commission
	Western Australia Building and Energy (Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety)
Unions	Construction, Forestry and Maritime Employees Union (CFMEU)
	Australian Workers' Union (AWU)
Jobs and Skills Council	BuildSkills Australia *

* BuildSkills Australia will be closely consulted throughout the next phases of the project to ensure any overlap between the AHC Agriculture, Horticulture and Conservation and Land Management Training Package and the CPC Construction, Plumbing and Services Training Package is appropriately considered, with due regard to industry need, scope, resourcing and value.

Approach

Scope refinement

A key feature of the project has been the deliberate refinement of scope in response to early stakeholder feedback. Although the original activity proposal was framed as a national Skills Review focused on landscape design, early consultation indicated that stakeholders wanted the project to consider broader issues related to landscaping in its entirety, including skills shortages, apprenticeship priority settings, qualification viability and regulatory inconsistency. For that reason, the project did not proceed with a narrow design-only lens. Instead, it began with a broader scoping phase to determine whether the scope should be expanded, adapted or sequenced differently.

Refinements based on consultations:

- Key sectors confirmed: design, construction, maintenance.
- Capabilities previously identified as specialist and/or standalone were instead identified as also being essential to all landscaping roles
- Regulatory mapping identified as essential due to state variances (e.g. QLD licensing scopes, SA apprenticeship restrictions, NSW urban irrigation rules).

This scoping work is central to the interim report because it establishes the issues most likely to require further investigation in later phases.

Consultation methods

The consultation phase was conducted between October 2025 and April 2026 and was designed to test project scope, capture jurisdictional perspectives and gather national industry input to inform later analysis.

Consultation was undertaken with the following stakeholder groups:

- Executive Officers of state and territory landscaping peak associations.
- State and territory associations and invited industry members.
- RTOs and education representatives.
- Industry practitioners and employers from across design, construction and maintenance.
- Specialist industry and education representatives from the landscape design sector.

The project has also taken account of likely consultation risks, including consultation fatigue and limited stakeholder availability over the summer period. As a result, consultation has been intentionally staged, with face-to-face, online and event-based

options offered where appropriate. This is consistent with a risk-managed approach that seeks to keep stakeholders informed, maintain participation and reduce the likelihood of disengagement.

A staged consultation model was selected because the landscaping industry has a complex and fragmented operating environment. It also provided an efficient way to identify commonalities, contradictions and jurisdiction-specific issues before committing to more resource-intensive methods such as roundtables, workplace visits or surveys.

The consultation process occurred in staged phases:

- jurisdictional executive consultations and a national collective discussion
- association and invited member meetings
- national online forums
- national online Skills Review questionnaire
- event-based engagement
- direct contact with employers in jurisdictions without dedicated associations.

This mixed-method approach was selected to balance depth of engagement with geographic reach, accommodate seasonal and availability constraints, and ensure that both national trends and jurisdiction-specific contexts were captured.

In practical terms, the approach has already shown there are shared concerns across the country, and that regulatory settings within each state and territory shape how those concerns are experienced and responded to.

Results

Consultation results

Consultation revealed strong synergies in underpinning issues such as skills shortages, apprenticeship challenges and qualification misalignment, while also highlighting regulatory differences (e.g. varying definitions of design vs. construction work) that prevent a one-size-fits-all national approach.

Common themes emerged across all consultations:

- employers' dissatisfaction with current landscaping related *AHC Agriculture, Horticulture and Conservation and Land Management Training Package* qualifications' fit for safe, autonomous practice
- challenges presented by regulatory requirements that continue to evolve faster than qualifications have been updated
- calls for nationally consistent recognition
- concerns over declining opportunities for individuals to learn design as a standalone skill.

While these themes were consistently raised across all consultation activities, stakeholders emphasised that they manifest differently depending on jurisdictional regulation, market structure and training settings.

Concerns about qualification misalignment included content gaps and whether qualifications enable graduates to work safely and autonomously within licensing or regulatory frameworks.

Skills shortages were described as both a lack of entrants and as a career pathway issue, influenced by:

- apprenticeship structures
- public perception of the industry
- limited clarity around career progression opportunities.

These dynamics help explain why stakeholders cautioned against a single national solution without careful consideration of state-based regulatory and training constraints.

The following are industry insights, specifically consistent themes and jurisdiction-specific issues identified through consultation activities described in the [Approach](#) section. Please see the [Appendices](#) for more information.

Industry insights – scope

Stakeholders emphasise that the industry’s scope is broader than common public perceptions. In addition to garden maintenance, it includes technically complex work involving levels/set-out, construction, drainage/irrigation, materials, compliance and project delivery.

Key sectors identified in this review include:

- **Design:** concept and detailed design, site analysis, documentation/specifications, and design development for buildability and compliance.
- **Construction (landscape construction/hardscape and softscape installation):** site set-out and levels, earthworks, retaining structures, paving/tiling, concrete works, timber/steel structures, planting and establishment, and integration with other site works.
- **Maintenance (horticultural maintenance and asset care):** pruning and plant care, turf management, pest, weed and disease management, irrigation operation and servicing, seasonal programs, and client-facing service delivery.

Where the industry operates (settings and clients):

- **Residential:** gardens, outdoor living spaces, courtyards, renovations, and ongoing maintenance programs.
- **Commercial and institutional:** commercial developments, streetscapes, campuses and contracted maintenance.
- **Public realm and community assets:** parks, playgrounds and civic landscapes, often requiring coordination with regulatory and procurement settings.

Across consultations, stakeholders noted that this breadth of work creates ongoing challenges in defining clear occupational boundaries, particularly at the interface between landscape construction and other construction trades. This contributes to confusion in regulatory interpretation, inconsistent enforcement, and misalignment between the real scope of work and the qualifications intended to support it.

Industry insights – capabilities

Universal capabilities identified:

- **Plants and horticulture:** repeatedly identified as essential knowledge and capability across the industry (questionnaire respondents ranked plants/horticulture as the top essential knowledge theme).
- **Soils and growing media:** widely described as fundamental 'bridge' knowledge connecting horticulture with construction (this knowledge is essential for both plant health in soft landscaping and structural stability of hard landscaping elements).
- **Water management (irrigation, drainage, catchment/flow):** treated as a pervasive requirement across design, construction and maintenance (results also elevated water management/irrigation/drainage as a top future-critical theme for compliance and sustainability).
- **Set-out, levels and plan interpretation:** consistently raised as a practical, technical capability required for safe and accurate delivery (responses highlighted set-out/levels/plan reading as a major essential skill theme).
- **Work health and safety and compliance:** universal requirements, including applying relevant standards, codes and local requirements.
- **Business, supervision and project management:** quoting/costing, tendering, contracts, workforce supervision and end-to-end project delivery were often identified as under-taught yet central to autonomous practice and career progression. This skill is required by all operators at differing levels.
- **Technology and digital tools:** increasing use of apps/software and emerging AI tools, particularly for estimating, documentation and productivity, while maintaining hands-on diagnostic judgement.

Stakeholders consistently described these capabilities as fundamental rather than specialist skills, noting that deficiencies in areas such as soils, water management or set-out, compound risks across all the industry.

Participants reported that these capabilities are often not addressed to the level of detail required by industry in current training package design or delivery, leading employers to rely heavily on on-the-job training to fill critical gaps.

Jurisdiction-based findings

- **New South Wales and ACT:** Continued advocacy for licensing in the ACT to benchmark skills and professional standards. Stakeholders called for national consistency in licensing and education, stronger plant and horticultural knowledge, clearer AQF 1–6 role progression and improved alignment between qualifications, apprenticeships and regulatory requirements, including specialist licensing areas such as urban irrigation.
- **Queensland:** Significant concern about qualification fit for safe and autonomous practice, which is closely linked to regulatory expectations. Stakeholders highlighted the rigidity of construction licensing requirements, including mandated unit inclusions within qualifications, as creating barriers where licensing, workforce needs and training viability are not well aligned. Strong competition exists from construction and mining, impacting workforce attraction.
- **South Australia:** Stakeholders identified access challenges for rural, regional and remote (RRR) learners and other underrepresented groups. Key delivery constraints include the requirement for a formal apprenticeship training contract to enrol in the Certificate III, and supervision ratios (e.g. 1:3 at Certificate III level) that limit progression and small business capacity.
- **Victoria:** Strong emphasis on preserving standalone landscape design qualifications that support industry outcomes and align to clearer regulatory boundaries. Stakeholders noted inconsistencies in requirements between residential and commercial landscaping work, and variability in funding and regulation across state and local regulatory bodies.
- **Western Australia:** Focus on the growing importance of technology, sustainability and climate responsive practice. Stakeholders highlighted irrigation and soils knowledge as critical due to local conditions, alongside a broader concern about maintaining consistency and coherence in regulatory expectations without strong licensing levers. Employment challenges are exacerbated by an attraction to financial opportunities offered by the mining sector.

While the specific issues raised varied by jurisdiction, together they highlight how regulatory maturity, apprenticeship structures and licensing arrangements directly shape training viability and workforce progression. Jurisdictions with tighter links between qualifications and licensing (such as Queensland and South Australia) reported acute pressures where qualification structures or enrolment rules act as bottlenecks, whereas less regulated environments (such as Western Australia, Tasmania and the ACT) face challenges in professionalisation and quality assurance

without regulatory levers. These differences reinforce the need for nationally consistent logic that remains adaptable to jurisdiction-specific regulatory settings.

Careers and employment

Indicative role groupings identified through consultation tended to fall into three overarching categories:

- entry-level roles, focused on task execution under supervision across hardscape and softscape activities
- trade-level roles, requiring independent judgement across complex site conditions and responsibility for compliant delivery of work
- advanced roles, incorporating supervision of others, higher regulatory risk and oversight of projects, contracts and/or business operations.

Stakeholders emphasised current qualification pathways and occupational classifications do not clearly reflect these gradients of responsibility. This misalignment was linked to limited workforce visibility and poor data quality, contributing to confusion about career opportunities and progression nationally.

Pathways

While apprenticeships were strongly supported by industry as the preferred entry point for workers, consultation and questionnaire findings indicate that career pathways beyond a Certificate III-level apprenticeship are poorly articulated and inconsistently understood. Workforce shortages have also led to employer concerns that requirements to complete an apprenticeship to access funding or licensing may cause a further barrier to entry.

Stakeholders described limited visibility of progression options into supervisory, specialist or business leadership roles, and inconsistent signals between qualifications, regulatory expectations and workplace responsibilities across jurisdictions.

Many stakeholders identified that the more common pathway for entry into landscaping is through career change rather than early career planning due to lack of industry visibility and a lack of understanding of the industry as a career pathway and option, particularly for school leavers and career counsellors.

This lack of clarity was linked to a reliance on qualification stacking, where workers complete multiple qualifications, often at the same level and in similar fields (for example horticulture and landscaping) to address skill gaps, regulatory requirements or role changes that are not clearly supported through a single, coherent pathway. Employers noted this creates inefficiencies for businesses and individuals alike. Learners reported uncertainty about which qualifications or experiences would

support advancement alongside the cost of training as influencing decisions about courses.

Occupation Standard Classification for Australia (OSCA)

Consultation consistently identified shortcomings in current occupational classifications as a structural issue affecting workforce visibility, data quality and pathway clarity. Stakeholders noted that the number of existing OSCA titles fails to reflect the breadth and complexity of contemporary landscaping work, particularly at trade and supervisory levels where responsibility, autonomy and regulatory exposure increase.

Current titles are limited to:

- 312134 [Landscape Designer](#)
- 342432 [Landscape Gardener](#)

This lack of alignment has practical consequences beyond terminology, for instance:

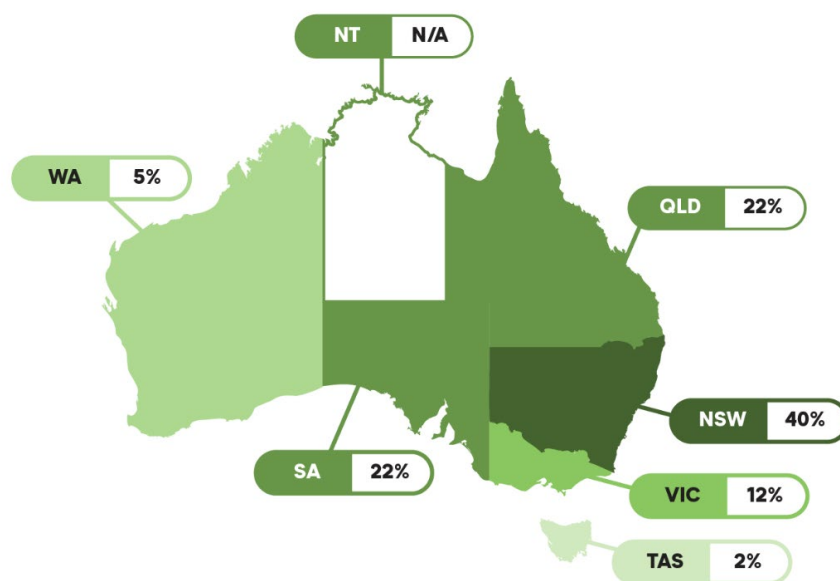
- inaccurate or overly narrow classifications limit the ability to capture reliable workforce data
- obscure distinctions between entry-level, trade and advanced roles weaken the link between qualifications, job roles and career progression.

Stakeholders emphasised that improving occupational classification is therefore a fundamental step for any downstream work on pathway design, qualification mapping or workforce planning, rather than an end in itself.

Skills Review questionnaire results

A national Skills Review questionnaire was designed to test the prevalence and relative strength of themes identified through consultation, rather than to represent the full landscaping workforce. Given the industry's fragmentation and limited availability of published workforce data, findings are used in this interim report to triangulate and contextualise workshop insights, particularly in relation to skills priorities, pathways and workforce challenges.

There were 37 respondents to the questionnaire (as of the time of drafting this report). Not all respondents answered every question, and the number of responses is therefore reported for each table or chart as (n=x) where relevant. The respondent profile was weighted towards experienced practitioners and educators, meaning the results primarily reflect established industry perspectives rather than those of new entrants. As such, the questionnaire provides valuable directional evidence that complements consultation findings, rather than serving as a standalone representation of the workforce.



The questionnaire remains open, and has been disseminated to a wider audience, with additional questions to further deepen conversation. This initial sample size was appropriate for triangulating findings from consultations, and the larger sample size for future analysis will provide more robust and meaningful data.

The distribution of responses by state indicates stronger representation from NSW/ACT relative to other jurisdictions. While this limits the ability to draw jurisdiction-specific conclusions from the questionnaire alone, the broad range of activities reported supports consultation findings that most practitioners operate across multiple functional areas rather than within narrow specialisations. This

reinforces stakeholder concerns that current training and occupational classifications oversimplify the nature of landscaping work.

Workforce activities

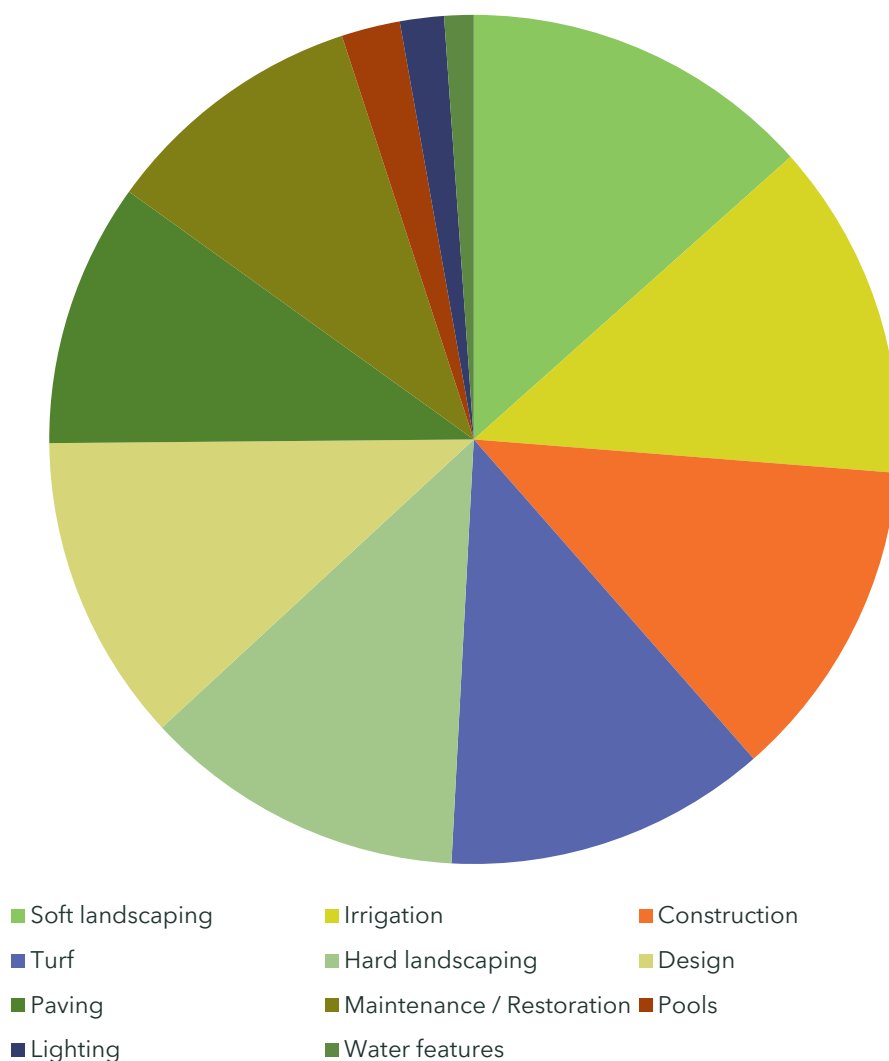
The majority (33 out of 37) of respondents had been in industry at least five years, with 31 of these having more than 10 years' experience.

They performed a range of work tasks across commercial and residential settings.

Only two respondents reported just one work function, while seven indicated 'all the above'.

On average, respondents performed six different types of work in their business.

Type of work performed by respondents



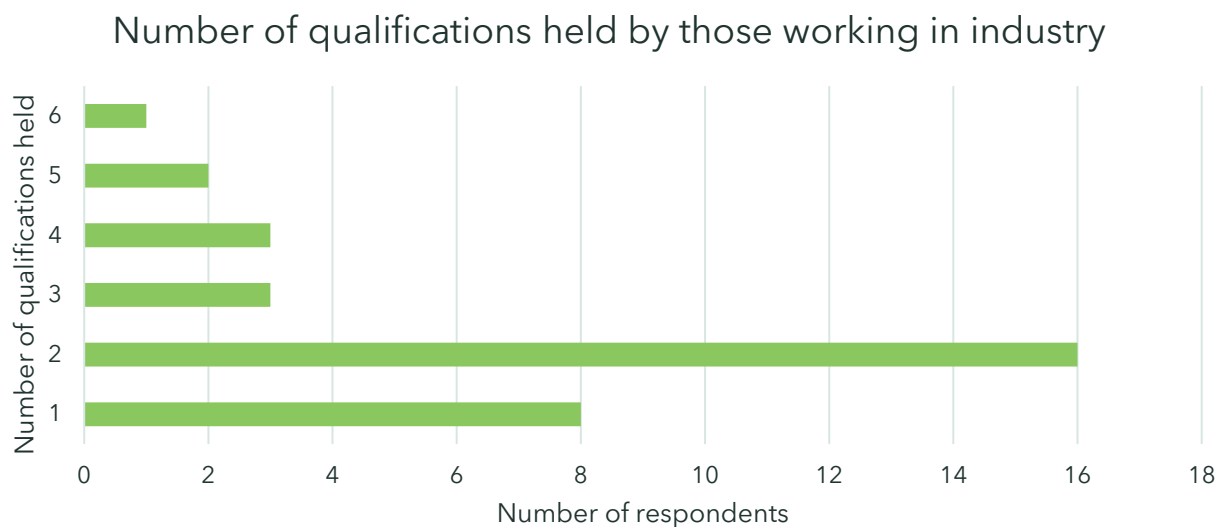
Education

All respondents who indicated they were currently working in or had worked in industry held a relevant qualification.

Of these 34 respondents with industry experience, **76%** held two or more relevant industry qualifications with a range of AQF 1–6 qualifications held.

The prevalence of multiple qualifications suggests workers often rely on qualification stacking (more than one qualification at the same level, often the Certificate III in Horticulture and the Certificate III in Landscape Construction or the Certificate IV in Landscape Design and the Certificate IV in Landscape Construction Management) to meet job requirements, regulatory expectations or skill gaps encountered in practice.

Stakeholders noted this pattern may reflect both the evolving nature of the industry and a lack of single qualifications that comprehensively prepare graduates for autonomous practice. This has implications for training efficiency, cost to workers and employers, and the clarity of formal career pathways.

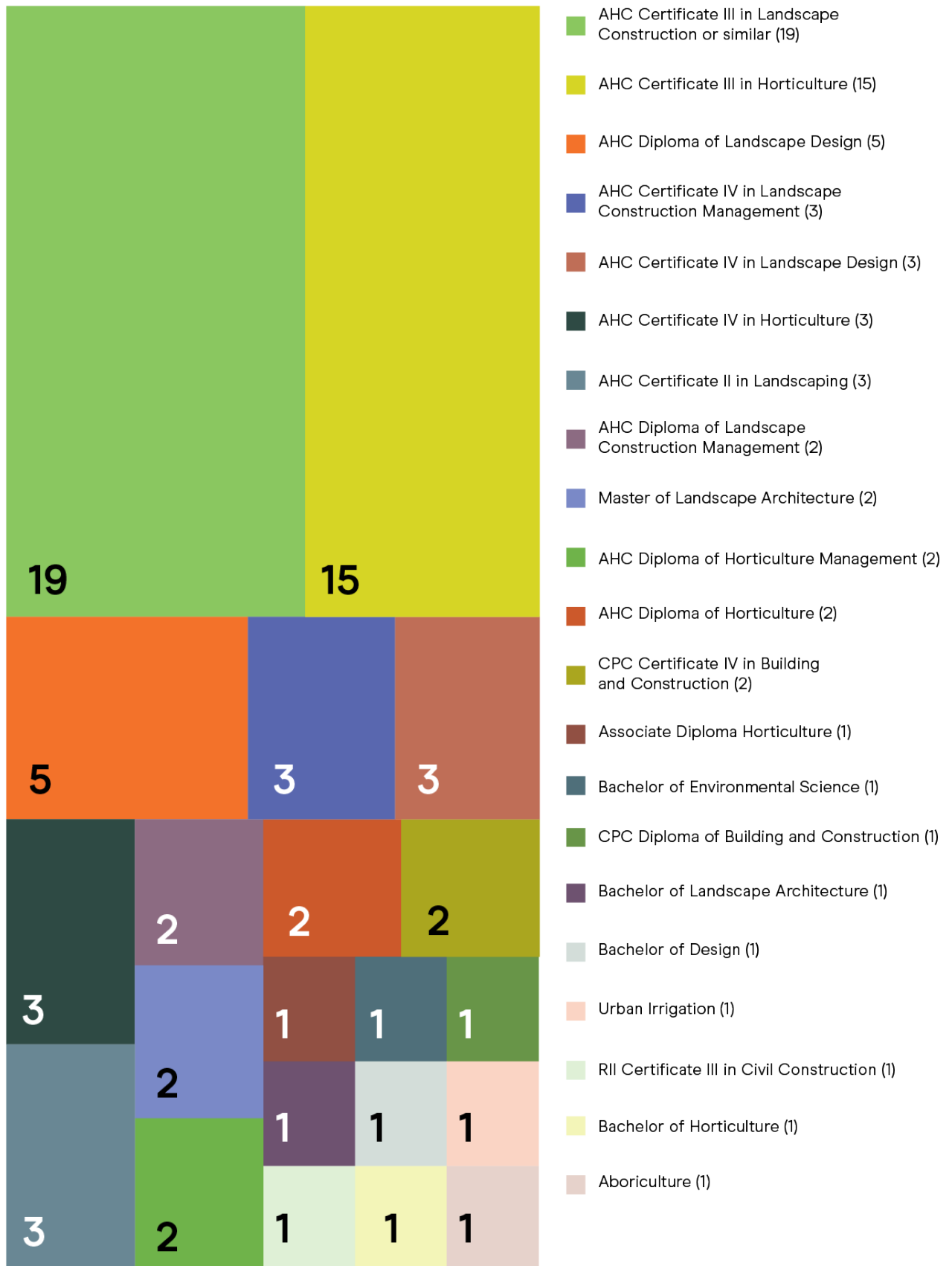


n=34

The type of qualification held was a broad field. When asked to provide a free-form response, 22 unique qualifications were captured.

Where the respondent worked in education, they also held education qualifications, which have not been included in the below data.

Current qualifications held by respondents



n=33

Pathways

A significant majority of respondents indicated that apprenticeships should be the standard pathway into industry.



n=37

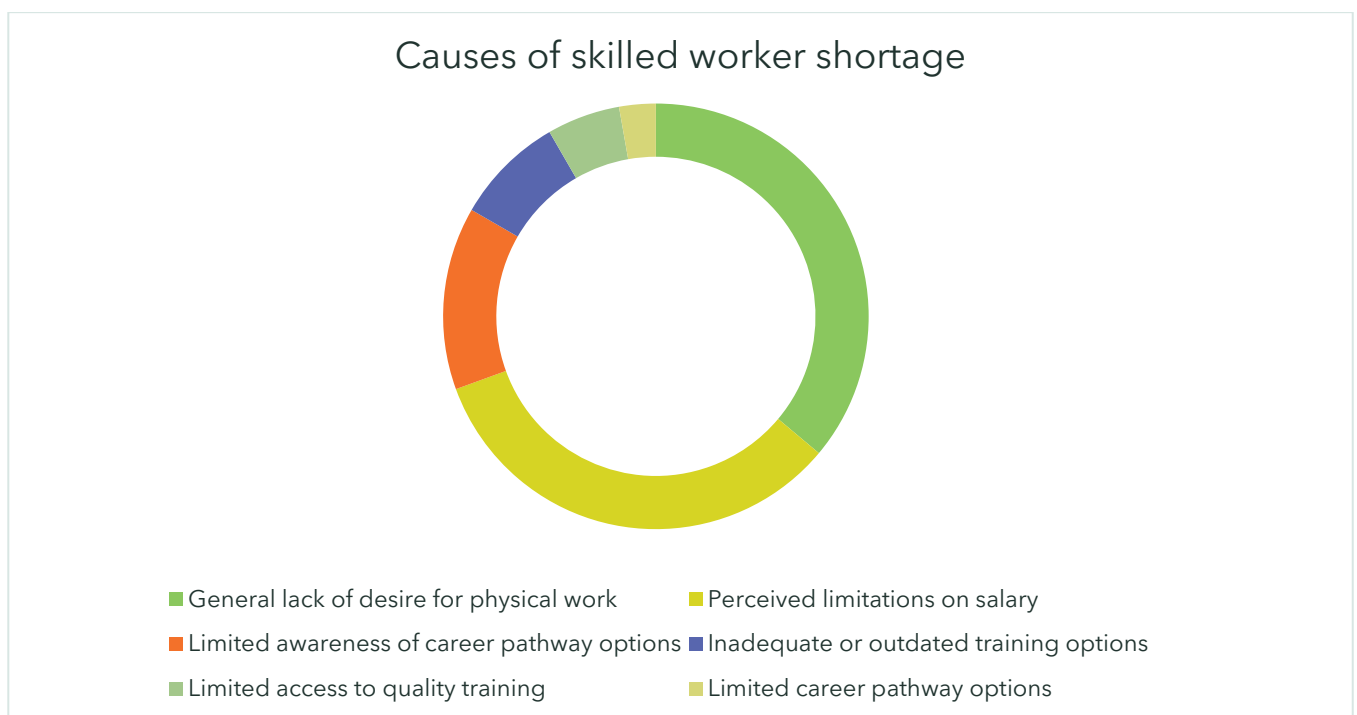
While there is no single, recognised qualification for industry entry, the two frontrunners (held by most respondents) were **AHC Certificate III in Landscape Construction** and **AHC Certificate III in Horticulture**. While a large portion of respondents held a certificate IV or diploma in the field, this was often secondary to a Certificate III.

Workforce challenges

The top three challenges identified by respondents in attracting and retaining workers were:

- general lack of desire for physical work
- perceived salary limitations
- limited awareness of industry employment and career opportunities.

These echoed findings from consultation activities conducted prior to the questionnaire.



Current capability needs

Strong themes emerged with the holding and application of key knowledge (**plants, hardscaping materials and soils**) being considered a required skill by many respondents.

Knowledge

Questionnaire responses reinforced the importance of plant and horticultural knowledge and soils and soil science as key cornerstones to effective practice.

Respondents also emphasised knowledge of construction and hardscape materials, reflecting the technically complex nature of landscape work and the need to manage multiple materials and interfaces.

Regulatory knowledge, including codes and standards, was consistently identified as integral for day-to-day practice rather than a specialist consideration.



Skills

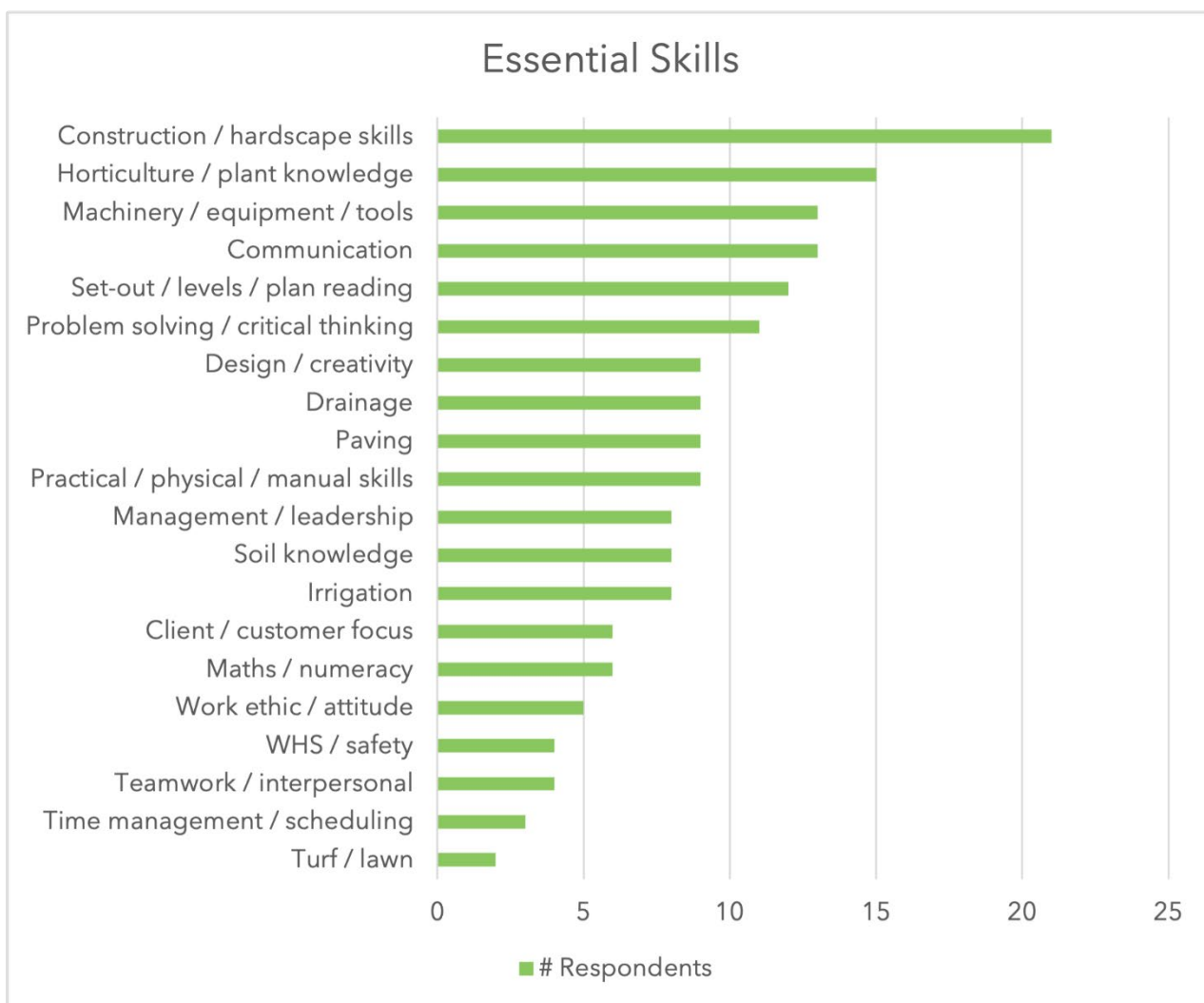
Questionnaire responses highlighted the applied and practical nature of landscaping skills.

Construction and hardscape skills, horticultural and plant handling skills, and machinery and equipment operation featured most strongly, reflecting the site-based realities of the work.

Skills in measurement, set-out and plan reading were also rated highly, reinforcing the importance of accurately translating designs and specifications into compliant outcomes.

Problem-solving and critical thinking emerged as key skills, reflecting the need to adapt to variable site conditions and constraints.

Broader professional skills such as communication, teamwork and time management were identified as important, typically alongside, rather than in place of, strong technical capability.

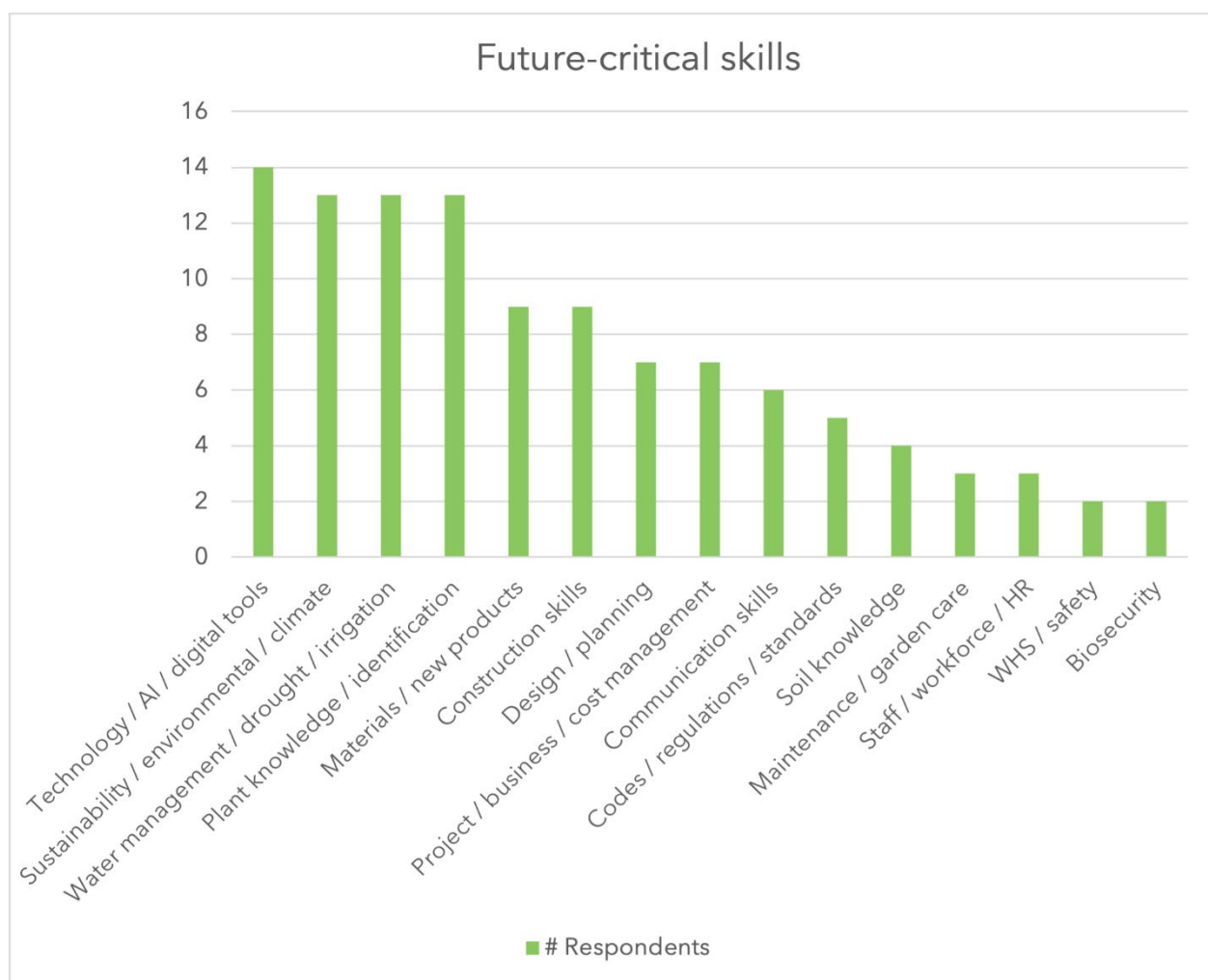


Future capabilities

When asked to consider the skills and knowledge that will be most critical in the future, respondents identified an intensification of certain capabilities rather than a wholesale shift away from existing practice. Technology and digital tools emerged as the most frequently cited future requirement, alongside sustainability, climate responsiveness and water management.

Importantly, these future-focused skills were generally described as extensions of existing roles rather than entirely new areas of practice. Water management, plant knowledge and construction skills continue to feature strongly, suggesting respondents see future capabilities as requiring deeper integration of environmental, technological and regulatory considerations into established technical work.

This pattern reinforces earlier feedback that industry's future challenges are less about creating new occupational streams and more about strengthening judgement, adaptability and systems thinking across the existing workforce. It also suggests future training responses may need to rebalance emphasis within current qualifications and skill sets rather than introduce wholly new training products.



Next steps

1. Carry out skills and knowledge gap analysis for industry through qualification mapping

Based on both consultation and questionnaire results, a detailed skills gap analysis is recommended in areas consistently identified as fundamental yet under-served in current training delivery. These areas include:

- plants, soils and soil science
- irrigation, drainage and broader water management
- project management, supervision and business operations (at AQF 4–5 levels).

Analysis should examine the presence of these capabilities within current qualifications within the *AHC Agriculture, Horticulture and Conservation and Land Management Training Package*, including their depth, consistency of delivery and alignment with different regulatory and industry expectations for safe, autonomous practice.

2. Develop a nationally coherent landscaping career pathway strategy

It is recommended to continue towards development of a nationally coherent, AQF-aligned career pathway strategy covering entry-level through to advanced roles across the landscaping industry to promote industry visibility and credibility. This strategy should:

- clearly distinguish between entry, trade and advanced/supervisory roles, reflecting differentiated levels of autonomy, responsibility and regulatory risk
- recognise specialist industry skills as extensions of capability rather than separate occupations
- identify where formal qualifications, workplace experience and ongoing professional development intersect.

Developing this strategy will provide clarity for learners, employers, RTOs and regulators, and address consistent feedback that progression beyond the Certificate III is poorly articulated and understood. The ultimate goal of this strategy will be to promote awareness of growth and opportunity across the landscaping industry.

Throughout this process, Skills Insight will work with other Jobs and Skills Councils that support this industry to develop a strategy that strengthens visibility of career and training opportunities for landscaping workers.

3. Progress coordinated occupational classification (OSCA) submissions

The interim findings indicate strong, cross-jurisdictional agreement that existing occupational classifications do not adequately reflect the breadth and complexity of modern landscaping work. It is recommended that Skills Insight continue to support future industry-led submissions to the Australian Bureau of Statistics regarding OSCA reform.

This support should include:

- collation of evidence from this review to underpin future submissions
- facilitation of consistency across state and national industry submissions
- articulation of how proposed occupational titles better align with actual job roles, responsibility levels and regulatory exposure.

Improved occupational classification is critical for workforce visibility, data accuracy, policy development and longer-term pathway planning, and is a necessary base for any future training or qualification reform.

Sources

- National Statement of Intent (Landscaping Associations, 2025)
- Workshop transcripts (QLD, SA and national; March April 2026)
- Skills Review questionnaire results

Glossary

The following are key terms, role definitions or acronyms used in this report.

Term	Definition
Apprentice / apprenticeship pathway	A structured entry pathway combining paid employment and formal training, widely supported by industry as the preferred entry route into landscaping roles.
AQF (Australian Qualifications Framework)	The national policy for regulated qualifications in Australian education and training, used in this review to consider role progression, skill depth and pathway design.
Cross-cutting skills	Skills and knowledge that apply across design, construction and maintenance contexts rather than being confined to a single role or sector.
Green infrastructure	A term used to describe landscape-related works that contribute to environmental performance (such as water management, cooling, biodiversity and sustainability outcomes), generally understood by stakeholders as embedded across design, construction and maintenance rather than a standalone sector.
Jurisdiction-specific variation	Differences in regulation, apprenticeship rules, supervision requirements and training settings between states and territories.
Core Key skills	Foundational Fundamental skills and knowledge areas required across multiple landscaping roles and sectors, including plant knowledge, soils, water management, set-out, compliance and safety.
Landscape construction	The physical installation of landscape works, including site set-out and levels, earthworks, structures, hardscape elements, planting and integration of irrigation and drainage systems.
Landscape design	The development of concept and detailed designs for external environments, including site analysis, design documentation,

Term	Definition
	specifications and design development to support buildability, compliance and intended performance.
Landscape Gardener (OSCA)	An existing occupational title that stakeholders widely regard as outdated and overly narrow, failing to capture construction, supervisory and project delivery responsibilities commonly undertaken in practice.
Landscape maintenance	Ongoing horticultural care and management of landscaped areas, including plant care, turf management, pest and weed control, irrigation operation, seasonal programs and asset management.
Landscaping	The design, construction and maintenance of the external environment across residential, commercial and public settings, encompassing both hardscape and softscape elements and associated technical, horticultural and regulatory responsibilities.
Licensing / regulatory framework requirements	State- and territory-based systems governing who can undertake particular types of work, supervise others or operate independently, with significant variation across jurisdictions.
Occupational classification (OSCA)	The occupational classification system administered by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, currently viewed by industry stakeholders as insufficiently granular to reflect the breadth and complexity of contemporary landscaping roles.
Qualification alignment	The extent to which qualifications reflect actual job roles, skill requirements and regulatory expectations for safe and independent practice.
Qualification stacking	The practice of completing multiple qualifications (often at the same AQF level) over time to meet job requirements, regulatory expectations or skill gaps not fully addressed by any single qualification.

Appendices

Skills Review Questionnaire

1. Have you ever worked in a landscaping role? (tick)
 - Yes, currently
 - Yes previously
 - No

2. What is the job title of your current or most recent position in a landscaping role?

3. How long have you worked in landscaping? (tick)
 - Less than 1 year
 - 1 - 3 years
 - 3 - 5 years
 - 5 - 10 years
 - More than 10 years

4. What qualification/s if any, have you completed relevant to landscaping? (tick)
 - No qualifications in the landscaping sector
 - Certificate II in Landscaping, or similar
 - Certificate III in Landscape Construction or similar
 - Certificate III in Horticulture
 - Certificate IV in Landscape Construction Management
 - Certificate IV in Landscape Design
 - Certificate IV in Horticulture
 - Diploma of Landscape Construction Management
 - Diploma of Landscape Design
 - Diploma of Horticulture Management
 - Bachelor of Landscape Architecture
 - Bachelor of Design
 - Master of Landscape Architecture
 - Other - Free text

5. What landscaping qualification, if any, did you have when starting out in a landscaping role?

6. Have you ever been a Landscape Architect? (logic applied to this question if yes you are sent to Q8 and if no, you are sent to Q7)
 - Yes
 - No

7. Are you currently or have you previously worked in horticulture or construction?

- Yes
- No

8. Is the majority of your current or most recent workplace (tick)

- Residential
- Commercial
- Combined residential and commercial
- A training facility
- Other - free text

9. How would you best describe the type of work as per the previous question?
Feel free to include extra details in the 'other' box

- Soft landscaping
- Hard landscaping
- Design
- Maintenance
- Construction
- Turf
- Irrigation
- Paving
- Pools
- All the above
- Other - free text

10. What is the postcode and suburb of this workplace (e.g. 7303 Westbury)

If you work across multiple postcodes, you can provide multiple postcodes OR the postcode of your main workplace/s up to 2 postcodes.

(there is an Australia Post search tool link) _____

11. Please give an estimate of the number of people who work in your workplace (tick)

- 1 -9
- 10 - 19
- 20 - 99
- 100 - 199
- 200+
- I don't know

12. Do you own the landscaping business in which you work? (tick)

- Yes
- No

Landscaping skills and knowledge

While landscaping roles and responsibilities may vary, the following questions ask specifically about the skills and knowledge required for the provision of landscaping services, in your experience.

As a guide the following definitions are provided:

Skills are a person's ability to do something. Skills may be technical or practical, personal or interpersonal or cognitive (such as the ability to process information or solve problems). Examples of skills may include using correct techniques to perform a task.

Knowledge is what a person knows – their understanding of information and facts. Examples of knowledge may include plant identification, tool or machinery selection or soil science.

13. Based on your experience, what are the most essential skills involved in landscaping? (up to 10)

14. In your experience, what essential knowledge do you need for landscaping?

15. Based on your experience, please identify key skills or areas of knowledge that may become more critical in landscaping within the next 5 years?

16. In your opinion, what are the main causes of the current shortage of suitably skilled workers in the landscaping industry?

- Limited career pathway options
- Limited awareness of career pathway options
- Limited access to training
- Inadequate or outdated existing training options
- A general lack of desire to do physical work
- Perceived limitations on salary opportunities
- I don't know

17. Would reinstating or developing new apprenticeship or trainee pathways improve workforce supply? (tick)

- Yes
- No
- Maybe
- I don't know

18. Do you have anything else you would like to add or ask?

Contact Details (ALL OPTIONAL)

Summary of Findings from Consultation - Common Themes

Theme	Summary of agreement	Jurisdictions that raised it	Evidence / example
Workforce & apprenticeship shortage	Persistent difficulty attracting young people and apprentices; landscaping loses candidates to other trades and university.	VIC, WA, QLD, SA, NSW/ACT, Online 1, Online 2	QLD: sharp decline in youth interest at careers expos; NSW/ACT: landscaping unable to match applicant volume of other trades.
Occupational classification (OSCA) is inadequate	Only two OSCA titles ('Landscape Designer' and 'Landscape Gardener') do not reflect the breadth of roles; coordinated submissions encouraged before 24 April 2026.	VIC, WA, QLD, SA, NSW/ACT, Online 1, Online 2	'Gardener' label perceived as maintenance-only; fails to capture construction, supervision, project management roles.
Plant knowledge / horticulture erosion	Plant ID and soils depth has declined in qualifications; seen as the key differentiator from general construction.	WA, QLD, NSW/ACT, Online 1, Online 2	NSW/ACT: plant lists reduced from hundreds to a small number; Online 1 & 2: soils described as fundamental and fading.
Training-workplace disconnect	Graduates not job-ready; Cert III unit count (15–17) widely seen as too narrow for the real scope of work.	QLD, SA, VIC, Online 1, Online 2, NSW/ACT	QLD advocates expanding Cert III to 20–25 units; Online 2: 'tick-and-flick' delivery reported.
Public perception / industry identity	Public confuses 'landscaper' with 'gardener'; under-values scope, cost and professionalism of landscaping.	VIC, WA, QLD, SA, Online 1, Online 2, NSW/ACT	QLD: 'builders of the external environment'; VIC: stereotype that a landscaper 'just digs holes'.

Theme	Summary of agreement	Jurisdictions that raised it	Evidence / example
Regulation & licensing inconsistency across jurisdictions	Licensing rules differ materially by state, hindering national consistency of training and portability of workers.	VIC, WA, QLD, SA, NSW/ACT, Online 1, Online 2	QLD strict; WA light; SA tightening; VIC mid; ACT seeking a licensing regime.
Green Infrastructure – confusing term	Widely viewed as a new label for existing work, not a separate sector; sits across design, construction and maintenance.	VIC, SA, NSW/ACT, Online 1, Online 2	NSW/ACT: rejected design-only framing; Online 1: described as sustainability-focused (green roofs, living walls).
Need for clearer career pathways & CPD	Progression from entry through to supervisor/manager/business owner not transparent; CPD not embedded.	VIC, WA, QLD, SA, NSW/ACT, Online 1, Online 2	NSW/ACT: call for AQF 1–6 alignment; Online 2: learning should not stop at Cert III.
Importance of soils & irrigation/drainage	Soils knowledge is the bridge between horticulture and construction; irrigation/drainage described as cross-cutting.	WA, QLD, Online 1, Online 2, NSW/ACT	Online 1: soils essential to drainage, footings, retaining; WA: irrigation critical and underdeveloped.
Business, supervision & project-management skills	Quoting, costing, tendering, supervision legally significant and under-taught.	VIC, SA, Online 1, Online 2	VIC: gaps in reading RFQs/RFPs; SA: supervisors promoted post-Cert III without preparation.
Technology & AI – practical digital skills	Industry embracing apps, AI, digital tools but cautioning against loss of hands-on diagnostic skill.	VIC, WA, Online 1, Online 2	WA: plant-ID apps useful but limited; Online 1: AI adoption must not erode diagnostic judgement.

Theme	Summary of agreement	Jurisdictions that raised it	Evidence / example
Support for coordinated national voice	Stakeholders want consistency in terminology, training and advocacy; Peak Association Executives already meet informally.	WA, SA, Online 1, Online 2, NSW/ACT	Online 1: aspiration for a national body; NSW/ACT: coordinated ABS/OSCA submissions underway.

Summary of findings from consultation – collaboratively-discussed

These concerns were highlighted during the online workshops, where stakeholders from all states and territories contributed to discussions.

Topic	Online workshops framing	State-based workshop framing	Interpretation
Green Infrastructure	Online 1 & 2: debated as potentially confusing; Online 2 split view (cross-cutting vs emerging specialist field).	NSW/ACT & VIC: firmly rejected as a standalone sector; framed as already-delivered work under a new label.	State workshops (esp. NSW/ACT Apr 16) reached firmer consensus; online groups more exploratory. Later state sessions may have benefited from earlier online airing.
Occupational title reform	Online 1 & 2: broad brainstorming — ‘Landscape’ as root with modifiers (construction, maintenance, supervisor); cautioned against ‘builder’ overlap.	SA & QLD & WA: more concrete titles proposed (Landscape Constructor, Tradesperson, Supervisor, Manager).	State workshops produced named title proposals; online sessions synthesised them and encouraged coordinated ABS submissions.

Topic	Online workshops framing	State-based workshop framing	Interpretation
Training reform scope	Online 1 & 2: emphasis on national consistency, AQF 1–6 framework, CPD embedding, core-vs-elective balance.	QLD: specific unit-count proposal (20–25); SA: supervision-ratio reform; VIC: microcredentials for specific skills.	Online forums aggregated and generalised state-specific proposals into a national framework argument — clear sign of cross-pollination.
Plant knowledge concern	Online 1 & 2: framed as systemic course-design erosion over generations.	NSW/ACT & LDI: specific historical evidence (plant list sizes shrinking); ACT training-provider adding plant units.	States supplied the evidence; online sessions converted it into a shared narrative.
Industry structure (design / construction / maintenance / GI)	Online 2: explicitly discussed as a four-category proposal, with GI debated; project management placed at AQF 4–5.	Earlier state workshops (VIC, WA, QLD): broader, less structured; focus on residential vs commercial, hard vs soft.	The four-category frame appears to have crystallised between state workshops and online sessions — likely informed by state feedback.
Tasmania visibility	Online 1: TAS perspective (limited regulation, ‘cowboys’) raised directly.	No dedicated TAS state workshop held.	Online workshops serve a gap-filling role for jurisdictions without their own session.
ABS / OSCA consultation coordination	Online 1 & 2: explicit push for coordinated, cross-state submissions; offer to consolidate ideas.	LDI, VIC, WA, QLD, SA, NSW/ACT: each workshop noted the window and encouraged local submissions.	Online forums explicitly played a coordination role — states raised the issue locally, online consolidated nationally.

Topic	Online workshops framing	State-based workshop framing	Interpretation
Licensing language	Online 1 & 2: cautious framing — warn against overlap with building/plumbing/irrigation trades.	ACT (NSW/ACT): wants licensing introduced; QLD already has tight linkage; SA designing it.	State urgency varies; online framing emphasises linguistic/boundary risks that emerged from cross-state exchange.

Summary of findings from consultation – jurisdiction-specific concerns

Jurisdiction	Unique point	Detail	Why it matters
VIC	Building & Plumbing Commission future licensing review	Possible future VIC-specific work on landscaping licensing/registration, with uncertainty about scope and enforcement.	Only VIC raised a named state regulator actively reviewing landscaping registration.
	Commercial work draining labour from residential	Large commercial projects pull trained staff and materials away from residential businesses, raising costs.	A market-structure effect noted only in VIC, not other states.
WA	Comparatively unregulated environment	WA described as the lightest regulatory jurisdiction (confirmed also in NSW/ACT comparison).	Creates a distinct baseline problem: professionalisation without a licensing lever.
	Irrigation as overarching statewide priority	Irrigation positioned as critical in WA climate and in need of professionalisation — quality hit by DIY/homeowner installs.	WA-specific intensity around irrigation not matched elsewhere.

Jurisdiction	Unique point	Detail	Why it matters
QLD	Proposal to expand Cert III from 15–17 to 20–25 units	Specific numeric reform request; QLD blocked nationally by other states at a prior skills meeting.	QLD is the only jurisdiction with a concrete quantified training-structure proposal.
	‘Landscape LinkUp’ platform	QLD-built platform providing centralised info on apprenticeships, training pathways, and a jobs board.	Unique industry-led infrastructure solution not replicated elsewhere.
	Cert IV linked to licensing	QLD regulator linking Cert IV completion to licensing and may require additional licences outside landscaping.	Tightest training-regulation linkage in the country.
SA	Enrolment restriction (Feb 2026)	SA learners cannot enrol in Cert III Landscape Construction unless on a formal apprenticeship training contract, even fee-for-service.	A genuinely unique bottleneck blocking near-completion students and prospective entrants.
	Supervision ratios blocking upskilling	A person on a training contract cannot supervise an apprentice; ratios (1:3 at Cert III, 1:6 at higher) constrain small businesses.	Most detailed account of supervision-rule impact; not surfaced elsewhere at this level.
	SA only recently recognised landscaping as a trade	Licensing moving forward, with \$20,000 regulatory trigger threshold recently increased.	SA at a distinct stage of regulatory maturity vs other states.
NSW/ACT	ACT missing from cross-jurisdiction regulatory spreadsheet	Action item for ACT stakeholders to populate ACT column using NSW as a reference.	Operational gap specific to ACT consultation.

Jurisdiction	Unique point	Detail	Why it matters
	ACT licensing as the top 'one wish'	Multiple ACT participants prioritised licensing introduction as their primary ask.	ACT uniquely focused on introducing (not reforming) licensing.
	Strong advocacy momentum via TLA	Active member campaign on licensing generating large member response.	Association-driven advocacy intensity most visible in NSW/ACT.
Tasmania	Limited landscaping-specific regulation	Described as enabling 'cowboys'; TAS has no dedicated state workshop.	Only emerged via online forum — TAS situation otherwise invisible in state-level data.

State-by-state comparison - licensing & financial requirements

Note - this is yet to be validated directly with the regulators and is in DRAFT form only.

Element	QLD	NSW	VIC (Proposed from July 2026, subject to finalisation) *	SA	WA
Regulator	Queensland Building and Construction Commission	NSW Fair Trading	Building and Plumbing Commission	Consumer and Business Services	Building and Energy WA
Financial Test (like MFR)	☒ Yes (strict MFR)	☐ Indirect (via HBCF eligibility)	☒ Yes (proposed MFR)	☒ No	☒ No
Liquidity Ratio Required	☒ 1:1 current ratio	☒ No (no formal ratio)	☒ 1:1 (proposed)	☒ No	☒ No
Net Tangible Assets (NTA)	☒ Must be positive	☐ Assessed via insurance capacity	☒ Required (linked to turnover)	☒ No	☒ No
Turnover Limits (MR bands)	☒ Yes	☐ Yes (project/exposure limits via HBCF)	☐ Yes (linked to NTA, ~20x proposed)	☒ No	☒ No

Element	QLD	NSW	VIC (Proposed from July 2026, subject to finalisation) *	SA	WA
Ongoing Financial Reporting	☒ Annual / event-based	 Periodic reassessment for insurance eligibility (not formal ongoing reporting)	 Yes (turnover capped relative to NTA, ~20:1 proposed) ***	☒ No	☒ No
Insurance - Residential Work	 QBCC Home Warranty Insurance (applies to defined building work; limited / inconsistent for landscaping, particularly softscape) **	☒ HBCF required	☒ Domestic Building Insurance (expected to remain)	☒ Building indemnity insurance	☒ Home Indemnity Insurance
Public Liability Insurance	☒ Required (industry standard)	☒ Required	☒ Required	☒ Required	☒ Required
Entry Barrier (Financial)	 High	 Medium (insurance + financial constraints)	 High (expected)	 Low	 Low

Element	QLD	NSW	VIC (Proposed from July 2026, subject to finalisation) *	SA	WA
Residential Work Threshold (Regulatory Trigger)	⚠ Contract thresholds (~\$3,300 / \$20,000); no insurance trigger equivalent	☑ \$20,000 (HBCF trigger)	☑ ~\$16,000 (insurance + proposed MFR overlay)	☑ ~\$12,000 (insurance trigger)	☑ ~\$20,000
Consumer Protection Model	Preventative (financial vetting)	Insurance-based (with financial overlay)	Hybrid (insurance + financial vetting)	Insurance-based	Insurance-based
Risk to Contractor	High compliance burden	Moderate (insurance + eligibility constraints)	High compliance burden (expected)	Lower compliance	Lower compliance
Risk to Consumer	Lower (via financial vetting)	Managed via insurance	Lower (via financial vetting + insurance)	Managed via insurance	Managed via insurance

Australia currently operates two distinct regulatory models for residential construction work: Queensland's preventative financial vetting approach and an insurance-based model used in all other states.

* Victoria's proposed reforms signal a shift toward the Queensland model, increasing national inconsistency while also highlighting gaps in how non-structural landscaping (e.g. softscaping) is regulated and insured. ** In Queensland, statutory home warranty insurance applies to defined 'building work', which may include structural landscaping. However, soft landscaping activities are generally not captured under the scheme, meaning consumer protection for these works relies on contractor-held insurances such *** A business's maximum turnover (revenue) will be limited based on how much Net Tangible Assets (NTA) it has – at roughly 20 times its NTA.