



Australian Government
Department of Employment
and Workplace Relations

2025 Incoming Government Brief

Volume I – Implementing your agenda

May 2025

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Implementing your agenda

Your portfolio will make key contributions to building Australia's future and delivering on the government's commitments and priorities. This includes through lifting wages, fast tracking trade qualifications, protecting penalty rates, realising priorities around full and inclusive employment, making the economy more productive and competitive, supporting working women and skilling Australians for the future.

This Incoming Government Brief provides a strategic overview of your portfolio, its operating environment and early advice on opportunities for you to implement your commitments and priorities as minister.

Volume 1 provides an overview and initial advice on:

- your election commitments and their implementation
- actions for your immediate attention
- strategic advice on key themes across your portfolio including productivity, skilled labour supply, trust in government and artificial intelligence
- potential opportunities for further reform.

You will be provided with further detailed advice on the issues and opportunities included in the brief in the first weeks of government.

Volume 2 provides information about:

- the structure of the department and portfolio
- the department's executive
- staffing levels and budget appropriations
- significant programs
- key stakeholders and ministerial-level meetings.

We have identified the key levers that will deliver each of your election commitments. Some are dependent on Budget and other processes, such as procurement or the grant rules, while others are able to be delivered administratively. We are able to canvass options that will impact on the pace of implementation, including consultation and engagement.

A number of commitments and priorities will include a legislative component. We expect there will be significant pressure on the government's legislative resources and will brief you on options to advance your portfolio's legislative commitments through the processes of Parliamentary Business Committee of Cabinet.

There may be benefit in packaging certain measures to support a coherent narrative and coordinated commencement.

1. Your election commitments

s 47C(1)

Election commitment	
1	Make a submission to the Annual Wage Review 2024-25
2	Engage with the Fair Work Commission to address findings of gender undervaluation
3	Legislate protections for penalty rates
4	Ban non-compete clauses for low and middle-income earners <i>Lead portfolio: Treasury</i>
5	Amend the Fair Work Act to prevent employers cancelling employer-paid parental leave if a child is stillborn or dies
6	Advanced Entry Trades Training Program
7	National Training Centre in New Energy Skills
8	Establish a Dandenong Employment Hub
9	Thrive Employment Hub funding

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
Documents released under FOI – LEX 1600

1.1 Election commitments – Immediate

MAKE A SUBMISSION TO THE ANNUAL WAGE REVIEW 2024-25	
SOURCE	Initial Australian Labor Party submission to the 2024-25 Annual Wage Review
ANNOUNCED DELIVERY TIMEFRAME	Submissions due to Fair Work Commission by 16 May 2025 (16 April 2025 Statement by Justice Hatcher, FWC President)
ANNOUNCED FUNDING	Nil
AUTHORITY REQUIRED	s 47C(1)
IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS	
The government committed to making a submission to the 2024-25 Annual Wage Review in support of an economically sustainable real wage rise for workers on minimum and award wages. Submissions are due by 16 May 2025 and expressions of interest to participate in the Fair Work Commission consultations are due by 9 May 2025. s 47C(1)	
KEY CONSIDERATIONS AND SENSITIVITIES	
s 47C(1)	
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES	
s 47C(1)	

ENGAGE WITH THE FAIR WORK COMMISSION TO ADDRESS FINDINGS OF GENDER UNDERVALUATION

SOURCES	Media release: Building Australia's future: Labor's commitment to women 4 April 2025 letter from Senator the Hon. Murray Watt to the ASU
ANNOUNCED DELIVERY TIMEFRAME	Nil
ANNOUNCED FUNDING	Nil
AUTHORITY REQUIRED	s 47C(1)
IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS	
The government committed to working positively with the Fair Work Commission to address its findings of gender undervaluation in 5 priority awards. s 47C(1)	
KEY CONSIDERATIONS AND SENSITIVITIES	
s 47C(1)	

s 47C(1)

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

s 47C(1)

1.2 Election commitments

LEGISLATE PROTECTIONS FOR PENALTY RATES	
SOURCE	Media release: Labor will protect your weekend penalty rates from Dutton
ANNOUNCED DELIVERY TIMEFRAME	Nil
ANNOUNCED FUNDING	Nil
AUTHORITY REQUIRED	s 47C(1)
IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS	
The government committed to legislating to protect penalty rates in awards. s 47C(1)	
KEY CONSIDERATIONS AND SENSITIVITIES	
s 47C(1)	
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES	
s 47C(1)	

BAN THE USE OF NON-COMPETE CLAUSES FOR LOW AND MIDDLE-INCOME EARNERS	
SOURCES	Budget Paper No. 1 Budget 2025–26 Media release: Cracking down on non-compete clauses to boost wages and productivity
ANNOUNCED DELIVERY TIMEFRAME	Effective from 2027
ANNOUNCED FUNDING	Nil
AUTHORITY REQUIRED	s 47C(1)
IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS	
The government committed to banning non-compete clauses for anyone earning under the Fair Work Commission’s high-income threshold (currently \$175,000) and to considering arrangements for high-income earners. Treasury is the lead portfolio for competition reforms, however this commitment involves amendments to the <i>Fair Work Act 2009</i>, which you administer. s 47C(1)	
KEY CONSIDERATIONS AND SENSITIVITIES	
s 47C(1)	
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES	
s 47C(1)	

AMEND THE FAIR WORK ACT TO PREVENT EMPLOYERS CANCELLING EMPLOYER PAID PARENTAL LEAVE IF A CHILD IS STILLBORN OR DIES	
SOURCES	Media release: Building Australia's Future: Labor's Commitment to Women 17 April 2025 letter from Senator the Hon. Murray Watt to the ASU regarding paid parental leave
ANNOUNCED DELIVERY TIMEFRAME	Raise matter at National Workplace Relations Consultative Council meeting
ANNOUNCED FUNDING	Nil
AUTHORITY REQUIRED	s 47C(1)
IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS	
The government committed to legislating to stop employers cancelling employer paid parental leave after the death of a child, including discussing the issue at the next meeting of the National Workplace Relations Consultative Council. s 47C(1)	
KEY CONSIDERATIONS AND SENSITIVITIES	
s 47C(1)	
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES	
s 47C(1)	

s 47C(1)

ADVANCED ENTRY TRADES TRAINING PROGRAM	
SOURCES	Media release: Labor fast tracking 6,000 tradies to build Australia's future Media release: Labor's costed plan to Build Australia's Future
ANNOUNCED DELIVERY TIMEFRAME	The program will commence in 2026
ANNOUNCED FUNDING	The government committed \$78 million over 3 years to deliver this commitment in <i>Build Australia's Future</i>
AUTHORITY REQUIRED	s 47C(1)
IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS	
The government committed to establishing the Advanced Entry Trades Training program to fast track the qualification of 6,000 tradies to help build more homes across Australia. The policy focuses on helping experienced but unqualified workers get formal qualifications through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and gap training. s 47C(1)	
KEY CONSIDERATIONS AND SENSITIVITIES	
s 47C(1)	

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

s 47C(1)

NATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE IN NEW ENERGY SKILLS	
SOURCE	Media release: Labor's costed plan to Build Australia's Future Article: Australia's first National Training Centre in New Energy Skills to open in Melbourne West
ANNOUNCED DELIVERY TIMEFRAME	Nil
ANNOUNCED FUNDING	The Government committed \$5 million in 2025-26 to deliver this commitment in <i>Build Australia's Future</i>
AUTHORITY REQUIRED	s 47C(1)
IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS	
The government committed to investing \$20 million towards a new National Training Centre in New Energy Skills in West Melbourne. s 47C(1)	
KEY CONSIDERATIONS AND SENSITIVITIES	
s 47C(1)	
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES	
s 47C(1)	

ESTABLISH A DANDENONG EMPLOYMENT HUB	
SOURCE	Media release: Labor to deliver the Dandenong Employment Hub
ANNOUNCED DELIVERY TIMEFRAME	Nil
ANNOUNCED FUNDING	\$1.5 million
AUTHORITY REQUIRED	s 47C(1)
IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS	
The government committed to providing \$1.5 million towards establishing a Dandenong Employment Hub to help workers in Greater Dandenong find secure and rewarding work. s 47C(1)	
KEY CONSIDERATIONS AND SENSITIVITIES	
s 47C(1)	
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES	
s 47C(1)	

EXTENDING FUNDING FOR THRIVE EMPLOYMENT HUBS	
SOURCES	Media release: Labor's costed plan to Build Australia's Future Article: BSL welcomes \$1 million funding commitment for Thrive Hubs
ANNOUNCED DELIVERY TIMEFRAME	Nil
ANNOUNCED FUNDING	The government committed \$1.0 million in 2025-26 to deliver this commitment in <i>Build Australia's Future</i>
AUTHORITY REQUIRED	s 47C(1)
IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS	
The government committed to \$1 million in funding for Thrive Employment Hubs in Broadmeadows and Frankston, Victoria. The initiative was first launched by the Victorian Government as a pilot run by the Brotherhood of Saint Laurence. s 47C(1)	
KEY CONSIDERATIONS AND SENSITIVITIES	
s 47C(1)	
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES	
s 47C(1)	

1.3 Commitments of interest led by other portfolios

COMMITMENT	INTEREST	LEAD PORTFOLIO
\$5 billion investment in early childhood education and care	s 47C(1)	Education
Cut student debt	The government is wiping 20% from the balance of students' HELP and other student loan debt, including VET Student Loans and Australian Apprenticeship Student Loans. VET and apprenticeship loan arrangements represent around 7% of all income-contingent loan accounts administered by the government.	Education
Deliver Commonwealth Prac Payments	Employment and Workplace Relations is responsible for delivering the Commonwealth Prac Payment for VET Diploma of Nursing students. The program is due to commence on 1 July 2025.	Education
National occupational licensing for electrical trades	A national licencing scheme for electrical occupations would replace existing licensing arrangements including the mutual recognition schemes for occupational licensing that sit within the remit of the Employment and Workplace Relations portfolio.	Treasury
Prioritising Australian businesses in government procurement and contracts	This would inform departmental procurement practices.	Finance

1.4 Fiscal overview

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2. Key issues and decisions for your first month

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3. The employment, skills and workplace relations landscape

3.1 Labour market overview

The labour market is strong but has begun to soften, against the background of heightened uncertainty globally, including around the scope and impact of US tariffs

The Australian labour market has remained reasonably tight over the last year, although conditions have eased. Employment rose by 2.2% over the year to March 2025, but trend monthly jobs growth has been gradually slowing.

Despite the gradual easing in labour market conditions, the unemployment rate has remained low and has fluctuated between 3.9% and 4.2% over the last year, to stand at 4.1% in March 2025. Encouragingly, the participation rate has increased over the last year, from 66.5% in March 2024, to 66.8% in March 2025.

Indicators of labour demand suggest that labour market conditions will continue to soften further in the period ahead. For example, Jobs and Skills Australia's (JSA) Internet Vacancy Index (IVI) shows that online job advertisements are now 17.3% (or 42,900) lower than they were a year ago.

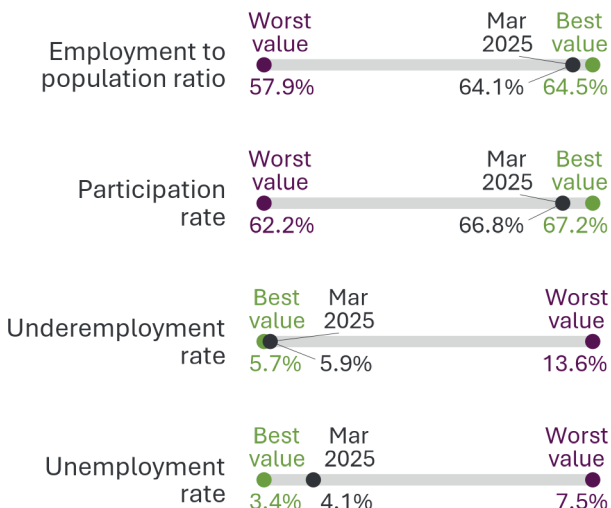
Real wages have partially recovered in the past 2 years – with positive annual real wages growth (as measured by the Wage Price Index) recorded in the past 5 quarters – but remain below pre-COVID levels. Sluggish productivity growth has dragged on real wages growth.

The Pre-election Economic and Fiscal Outlook (PEFO) forecasts that employment will increase by 2 ¾% over the year to the June quarter 2025, before slowing considerably to 1% over the year to the June quarter 2026. The unemployment rate is expected to rise modestly to 4 ¼% by the June quarter 2025 and remain at that rate in the June quarter 2026.

Conditions have evolved since PEFO and there are downside risks to the forecast. The potential effects of US tariffs on global economic growth have resulted in greater-than-usual volatility on financial markets and heightened uncertainty surrounding the economic outlook. These tariffs, and other retaliatory responses, are likely to continue to weigh on international trade, investment and growth and have the

Headline jobs indicators are close to their best levels in at least 20 years

Key labour force metrics, range in past 20 years, per cent



Note: seasonally adjusted figures.

Source: ABS Labour Force, March 2025

potential to significantly disrupt supply chains. This will have both direct and indirect effects on the Australian economy and labour market.

Not all Australians have shared equally in the benefits of a strong labour market

Some groups are less likely to have a job than others. For example, 63.1% of Australians with a high level of English proficiency are employed, while only 26.5% of people with low proficiency are in work. There are also substantial gaps between the employment-to-population ratios of people with a disability, compared with those without disability; those with and without post-school qualifications; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous people.

Only 63.7% of young people (aged 15-24) are in work, compared with 84% of those who are prime age (25-54). Although the youth unemployment rate is relatively low in historical terms, at 8.9%, it is more than double the overall unemployment rate (of 4.1%).

If Australia experiences a rise in unemployment, this is likely to be borne disproportionately by already disadvantaged groups. For example, during the Global Financial Crisis, the unemployment rate for young people rose by 3.6 percentage points, while the overall unemployment rate increased only by 1.6 percentage points.

Conditions are uneven across the country and are stronger in the capital cities than rural and regional areas. Annual employment growth in the capital cities (2.4% in March 2025) outpaced that of the non-capital city areas (1.6%).

Unemployment rates as at March 2025 ranged from 2.5% in *Sydney – Sutherland*, to 6.4% in the *Sydney – South West* and *Queensland – Outback* regions.

Women continue to face barriers to equal participation and pay. Women are overrepresented in lower paying industries, typically take on a greater share of unpaid care and domestic labour, and spend longer periods outside the labour force. Despite these barriers, the gender pay gap has shrunk over the past decade – down 6.8 percentage points from 18.7% in Nov 2014 to 11.9% in November 2024. Most jobs growth is in roles that require post-secondary qualifications

Pockets of labour market disadvantage remain

	Employment-to-population ratio		Difference in ratio
	Higher disadvantage group	Lower disadvantage group	
English proficiency	26.5% (Low proficiency)	63.1% (High proficiency)	36.6 ppts
Disability	56.1% (Has reported disability)	82.3% (No reported disability)	26.3 ppts
Educational attainment	50.9% (Year 12 or below)	75.0% (Cert III and above)	24.1 ppts
Indigenous status	52.2% (Indigenous)	74.6% (Non-Indigenous)	22.4 ppts
Age	63.7% (15-24)	84.0% (25-54)	20.3 ppts
Sex	60.3% (Female)	67.9% (Male)	7.6 ppts
Location	61.1% (Outside capital cities)	65.6% (Capital city areas)	4.6 ppts

Note: 'High' English proficiency refers to people who speak only English, or speak English very well/well; 'low' proficiency is people who speak English not well/not at all.

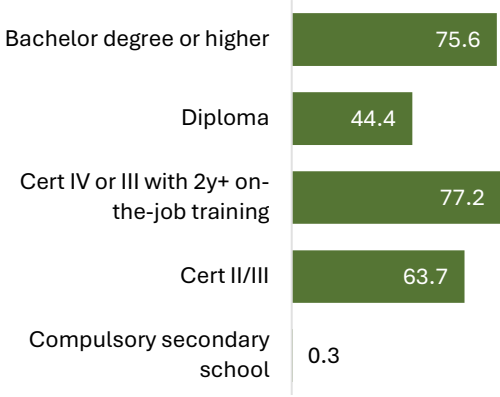
Sources: ABS Labour Force, Australia and Labour Force, Australia, detailed, March 2025 (sex, age, location), Labour Force, Australia, detailed, February 2025 (educational attainment). 2021 Census (Indigenous status and English proficiency). 2022 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (disability status).

In recent years, almost all jobs growth has occurred in occupations that require post-school qualifications. Growth has stagnated in jobs that do not require post-school qualifications. This has made it harder for some Australians to secure a foothold in the labour market.

More than 90% of projected jobs growth over the 10 years to May 2034 is expected to be in roles that require post-secondary qualifications; 42.6% of this will be in roles for which VET is the main pathway.

Employers looking to fill vacancies in middle-skill occupations (this that typically require a Cert IV or III plus 2 years on-the-job training) are facing challenges, with fewer suitable applicants per job vacancy than other occupations.

In the past year, growth in low skill jobs lagged behind middle and high skills jobs
Employment growth in the year to February 2025 by occupational skill level (thousands)



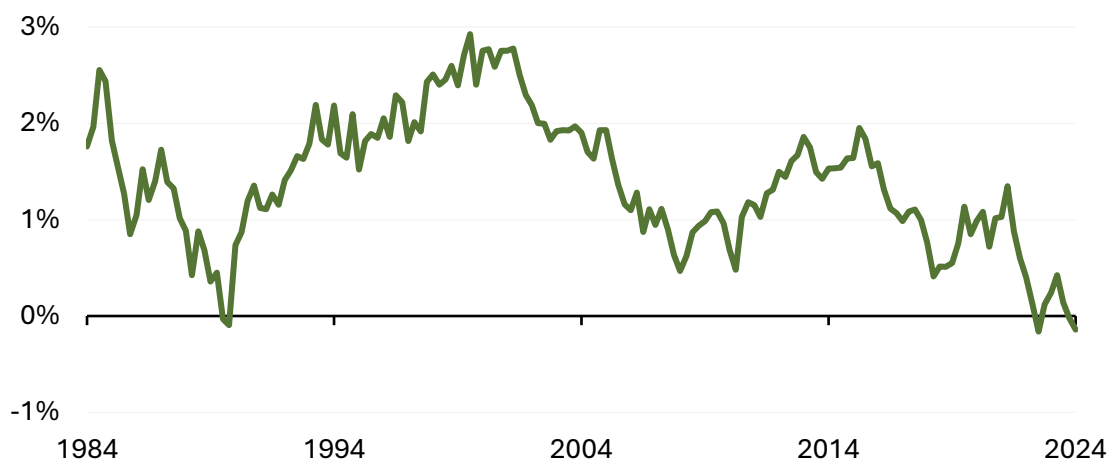
Note: Figures refer to jobs growth by occupational skill level 1-5. The labels summarise minimum qualifications typically required for occupations at each level. Trended by Jobs & Skills Australia. Source: ABS, Labour Force, Australia, detailed, February 2025.

3.2 Productivity and economic resilience

Productivity growth is the key driver of real wage growth and rising living standards over the long term, but it has been slowing around the world, and in Australia, since the mid-2000s.

Annual real wages have grown 5 quarters in a row but remain below pre-COVID levels; and pre-COVID growth was modest due to sluggish productivity growth. Productivity is now the most important structural problem in our economy and the government has identified it as a priority area for reform.

Rolling 5-year average growth in labour productivity (GDP per hour worked)



Note: 5-year rolling compound average growth rates of seasonally adjusted data. Source: DEWR calculations based on ABS Australian National Accounts December 2024.

The White Paper on Jobs and Opportunities sets out a 5-pillar productivity agenda focused on:

- supporting productivity growth through creating a more dynamic and resilient economy
- building a skilled and adaptable workforce
- harnessing data and digital technology
- delivering quality care more efficiently, and
- investing in cheaper, cleaner energy and the net zero transformation.

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Further, small businesses are essential to the Australian economy - nearly 90% of employing Australian businesses are small businesses with fewer than 20 employees.^{s 47C(1)}

Building a skilled and adaptable workforce

Investing in the development of a responsive future workforce will support a more resilient economy, that can better withstand shocks. A well-calibrated skills system can enable and encourage employers to play a leading role in workplace training and skills development to support their employees to grow throughout their careers. This will be essential to realising the benefits of the energy transition and other structural changes, not only improving productivity but enhancing job satisfaction and retention rates.

In Australia, there is a significant positive association between management capabilities and labour productivity. Improving management capability and practices can better support the adoption of innovative practices and unlock the broader productive potential of the public and private sectors, including for small businesses who report that prioritising resources to support management upskilling can be challenging.

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Creating a more dynamic and resilient economy

Improved labour market competition and dynamism, including job switching and labour mobility, is important for workers and business, who both benefit from better job matches. Fewer people are switching jobs – but on average those who switch obtain a \$5,700 wage gain relative to those who don't. More broadly, mobility plays an important role in ensuring Australians can adjust to structural change.

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Productivity in the non-market sector

The rapidly expanding non-market sector presents a challenge for government. The sector includes employers in the public administration and safety, education and training, and health care and social assistance industries, regardless of public or private ownership. While the strongest employment growth in the past year has been in the non-market sector, non-market sector productivity is lower, on average, than productivity in the market sector. As the non-market sector's share of the economy has grown, this has impacted measures of overall productivity growth.

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3.3 Skilled labour supply

A skilled labour force is essential to the resilience, growth and capability of Australia's economy. Skilled workers are needed to achieve net zero, meet future care demands, realise the Future Made in Australia agenda, develop and maintain sovereign capability, and meet defence and national security commitments. These competing demands create challenges in the provision of skilled labour.

There is an increasing gap between our skills needs and the available workforce. The skills and training system is historically focused on enabling pathways directly from school, with barriers to entry to training and commencing new occupations for women, workers older than 25, and CALD and migrant workers. At the same time, there are fewer young people successfully transitioning from school into training, study or full-time stable work.

One in 5 working-age Australian adults has low literacy or numeracy. Only 26.5% of people with low proficiency in English are employed, compared to 63.1% of people with high proficiency. This is a more significant gap in employment rates than between people with and without disability, those with and without post-school qualifications, and between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

While most future jobs growth is expected to be in roles that require post-secondary qualifications, there has been a decline in the number of young people enrolling in and completing VET courses. Further, the number of young Australians that are not in employment, education, or training has increased for 2 consecutive years. Improving skills pathways to better support young people into careers in in-demand industries will not only help connect young Australians with good, well-paid jobs, but it will also support key sectors to deliver on Australia's priorities and promote improved social cohesion.

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Better pathways will provide the skills pipeline needed for the future

A key goal set out in the White Paper on Jobs and Opportunities is sustained full employment, which s 47C(1)

aims to minimise volatility in economic cycles and keep employment as close as possible to the current maximum level. To help achieve this, we need to ensure that current and future workers are equipped with the skills they need for the jobs of the future.

A skilled workforce will improve Australia's ability to respond to a changing global economy, including by supporting our sovereign capability. Strong pathways into skilled jobs will ensure that workers and businesses can remain adaptable, and provide the skills base we need for a capable nation.

A recent review of the Apprenticeship Incentive System recommended considering opportunities for better targeting of incentives where they are most efficient and effective.

Over 90% of projected employment growth to 2034 is in roles that require post-secondary qualifications. 42.6% of this projected growth is in occupations for which Vocational Education and Training (VET) is the primary pathway. People in employment services are disproportionately qualified for 'low skill' jobs, where growth is weakest.

Despite forecasts indicating strong future job growth for occupations requiring a Certificate III or IV (like electricians, truck drivers, aged care workers and early childhood educators), they have the lowest fill rate and least suitable applicants per vacancy.

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Continuing to support an inclusive labour market

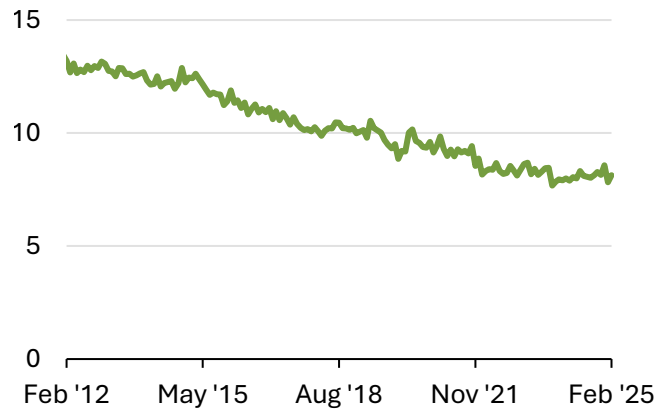
In addition to sustained full employment, the White Paper on Jobs and Opportunities outlines the need for inclusive full employment, which aims to broaden opportunities, lower barriers to work, and over time reduce structural underutilisation to increase the level of employment in our economy.

While the national unemployment rate is low by historical standards, labour market outcomes vary starkly across cohorts and regions. Women are disproportionately represented in lower paying industries, accounting for more than 50% of employees in the 2 lowest paying industries (accommodation and food services and retail trade). Gender segregation in our labour market is also reflected in enrolment patterns of VET learners: 4 times as many women undertake community service and health training packages than men, and 13 times more men undertake construction packages than women.

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The gap between male and female participation rates has fallen

Participation gap (percentage points)



Source: ABS, Labour Force Survey, Australia, February 2025, seasonally adjusted

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Industry led, demand driven workforce skilling initiatives

As the economy transitions to new industries, we need to prioritise demand-led jobs and skilling initiatives to meet industry needs and focus on real job opportunities. National and regional engagement with critical industries on workforce needs and priorities can support strategic collaboration and planning to address areas of skill shortage and increase participation of priority cohorts such as migrants, First Nations peoples, women and people with a disability.

Support is also required to help meet the demand in low skilled-labour. In February 2025, 499 employers accessed the skills of 31,195 Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) program workers to fill gaps where there are not enough local workers available.

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3.4 Artificial intelligence and emerging technologies

The adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) and other emerging technologies has the potential to benefit the Australian economy, workers and businesses. Ensuring Australians are equipped with the skills and opportunities to thrive in an increasing digital world is key to maintaining a resilient and inclusive workforce.

Australia ranks just 28th out of 36 countries on the Stanford AI vibrancy index, which measures the level of activity, development, and impact of AI technologies within a country.

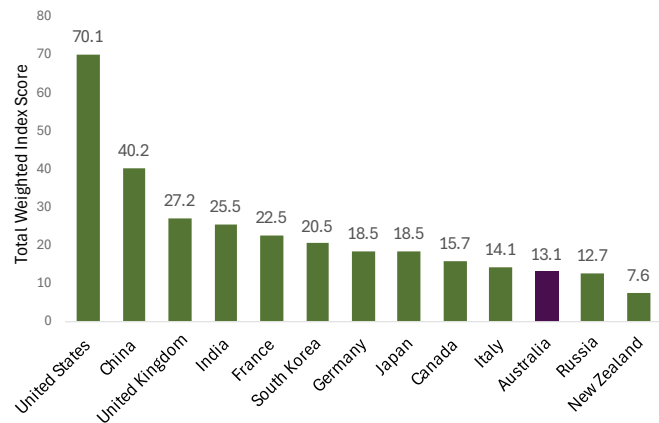
We need to ensure Australians are not only equipped to use AI and emerging technologies, but actively participate in the design, development and ongoing adoption of technologies. This is essential to maximise the benefits of these technologies for our workers and economy and to support Australia's strategic sovereign capability.

The employment and workplace relations portfolio has a key role in ensuring that Australians benefit from the jobs needed to support the wider adoption of these technologies. Policies and supports within the portfolio will also help workers and business to navigate the challenges that come with the introduction of new technology, particularly in its potential to displace existing jobs.

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Australia ranks lower in AI vibrancy than most G8 countries and our largest trading partners

2023 Global AI Vibrancy Index



Labour market impact of AI and emerging technologies

The expanded adoption of AI and emerging technologies will influence the Australian workforce in a way that is difficult to measure at this stage. Jobs and Skills Australia will release a study in mid-2025 exploring the implications of generative AI on job creation, displacement, transitions and skills demand.

The integration of AI and emerging technology in business processes will also change how employees gain experience within workplaces. AI could remove the need for many entry-level positions, risking the development of critical workplace skills subsequently needed to perform in more complex or senior roles.

Innovations in assistive technology could help further reduce barriers to participation for people with disabilities, and better support those currently in the workforce to achieve their full potential.

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AI and skills

Technological advancements will require skills transformation. The exponential growth in AI development has increased the urgency to build infrastructure that supports this development and the subsequent adoption of AI to shape the future rather than react to it.

The pathway to greater digital capability in Australia will require workers with the skills to install, maintain and repair the hardware that supports systems. Electricians, mechanics and technicians are essential to these processes and are all areas of skills shortage.

The Tech Council of Australia estimates that AI has the potential to create up to 200,000 jobs in Australia by 2030, which will need to be filled through a combination of entry-level training, upskilling of existing workers, and mid-career retraining.

Foundation skills will also be critical for supporting participation in communities and the workplace. The introduction of technology will make this more pronounced as workers will be required to engage more with technology-enabled systems regardless of the sector or industry they enter. Just as the workforce required training and upskilling to engage with email and word processing, so too will AI and other emerging technologies require upskilling the workforce to avoid people being left behind.

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Transformation of government services

The *National framework for the assurance of AI in government* is a key step in the safe and responsible use of AI by Australia's governments and will help guide the adoption of AI to drive innovation and improvements in the delivery of high quality, efficient services and programs within the portfolio.

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Well-designed regulation and the safe use of AI

Well-designed regulatory settings can promote sustainable economic growth while delivering well-paid and secure jobs. Using AI and emerging technologies under clear, well-structured regulatory systems will also enable Australia to unlock global investment potential while maintaining national privacy and security interests.

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3.5 Trust in government

Trust is crucial for effective governance, fostering social cohesion, promoting compliance with laws, protecting democratic norms, and reducing costs. Identifying regulatory issues early and improving the quality, integrity and efficiency of government programs and processes bolsters trust in government and government services.

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Trust in government in Australia has remained relatively stable over time, regularly ranking in the mid-range among OECD countries. While Australia performs well in comparative terms, in absolute terms, trust in the federal government remains low, with 46% of Australians expressing high or moderately high trust in the federal government in 2023.

Trust in, and satisfaction with the department's services is low, with respondents to a 2023-24 Australian Public Service Commission survey placing the department third last (ahead of Centrelink and the NDIS) on feeling whether they can trust our services. The department was also ranked second last in terms of respondents being satisfied with the services they received from the department.

Building integrity in employment, skills and training, and workplace relations svstems

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In 2023, the House Select Committee into Workforce Australia Employment Services (the House Select Committee) found that the employment services system has largely failed to improve employment outcomes for job seekers, or more broadly to boost their capacity for social and economic participation. s 47C(1)

Employer engagement with and use of employment services has been low. Service providers report spending more time on administration and compliance than helping clients, and stakeholders report that IT systems limit the autonomy of frontline staff, as well as their ability to provide flexible and innovative services. Multiple employment services systems and fragmented support between those systems and Services Australia can create confusion, friction and risk across and between the systems as well as inefficiencies and inconsistencies.

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Delivering for Australians

The community's expectations around the quality of public services are growing, for a higher standard of care, for tailored and personalised services, and for greater responsiveness, convenience and efficiency when accessing services. Innovation in the public sector is vital for maintaining public trust in government over time.

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Appendix A – Overview of priorities and possible reform options

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Australian Government
**Department of Employment
and Workplace Relations**

2025 Incoming Government Brief

Volume II – Departmental information

May 2025

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1. The department

1.1 Overview

The department achieves its purpose through 3 outcomes outlined in the department's 2025–26 Portfolio Budget Statement, as included in the Appropriation Acts:

1	Foster a productive and competitive labour market through policies and programs that assist job seekers into work, including secure work, and meet employer and industry needs.
2	Promote growth in economic productivity and social wellbeing through access to quality skills and training.
3	Facilitate jobs growth, including secure work, through policies and programs that promote fair, productive and safe workplaces.

These outcomes are designed to provide a framework for fair and productive relationships between employers and employees and promote skills development and training initiatives to support those entering the workforce or re-training.

The department is undertaking a program of work to transform how we work, increase capability, and enhance our ability to deliver for the government and the Australian people.

In addition to our policy, program, and service delivery responsibilities, the department delivers and supports ICT services for other Commonwealth agencies and programs. In 2024–25, these shared services offerings included application development and project services for 6 Commonwealth agencies, a full desktop, mobile computing, and application hosting service for 8 agencies, and the provision of part services including a protected IT environment for a further 38 agencies. The department also provides property services to the Department of Education.

Senior leadership team



Natalie James, Secretary

Tania Rishniw
Deputy
Secretary
s 22(1)



Anna Faithfull
Deputy
Secretary
s 22(1)



Greg Manning
Deputy
Secretary
s 22(1)



Deborah Jenkins
Deputy
Secretary
s 22(1)



Barney Glover
Commissioner
s 22(1)



Employment and Workforce

Employment and Workforce Group delivers and supports national policies and programs that help workers in Australia to find and keep a job, change jobs or create their own job through self-employment.

The group is also responsible for managing the domestic components of the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility scheme.

Skills and Training

Skills and Training Group works with state and territory governments to design and deliver policies and programs that support the national vocational education and training (VET) system to meet industry and student needs, lifting productivity and labour market participation.

Workplace Relations

Workplace Relations Group delivers policies and programs that support the national workplace relations system and federal work health and safety and workers' compensation systems.

Corporate and Enabling Services

Corporate and Enabling Services Group provides whole-of-department and ministerial office corporate support. The group also provides digital and technology services to 8 other Commonwealth agencies, in addition to property services for certain Commonwealth agencies located around Australia.

Jobs and Skills Australia

The role of Jobs and Skills Australia is to engage and advise the Australian Government and other stakeholders to assist in decision-making on the current, emerging and future skills and workforce needs of the Australian economy.

Employment and Workplace Relations Portfolio – Budget overview

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

The Employment and Workplace Relations portfolio comprises 3 outcomes, 2 statutory offices, and 7 portfolio entities. The department also delivers and supports ICT and property services for other Commonwealth agencies and programs.

Natalie James – Secretary

Average Staffing Level (ASL) and departmental funding

The department's operating funding and staffing profile are forecast to reduce over the forward estimates.

ASL (as at 2025-26 Budget)	2024-25	2025-26
	4,167.1	4,084.5

Departmental operating budget	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
	\$1.1b	\$940.4m	\$916.2m	\$886.3m	\$893.6m

s 47C(1)

Whole of dept. administered

2024-25: \$6.0 billion

2025-26 budgeted: \$4.8 billion

State Payments (OC2)

2024-25: \$2.6 billion

2025-26 budgeted: \$2.7 billion

Outcome 1 – Employment

2024-25 estimated actual: \$1.8 billion

Outcome 2 – Skills and Training

2024-25 estimated actual: \$3.5 billion

Outcome 3 – Workplace Relations

2024-25 estimated actual: \$736.1 million

Portfolio Entities							
Entity	ASSEA	ASQA	Comcare	FWC	OFWO	SWA	Coal LSL
2025-26 program expenses	\$6.2m	\$58.5m	\$424.4m	\$116.8m	\$198.2m	\$25.5m	N/A**

Notes:

This factsheet outlines the external facing budget numbers outlined in the 2025-26 Portfolio Budget Statements and does not include minor adjustments found in the Pre-Election Economic and Fiscal Outlook released in April 2025. For internal numbers such as headcount and ASL by Group, please see 'Your People' Section.

*ASL figures for 2026-27 onwards are not published and are therefore cabinet-in-confidence

**As a public financial corporation, Coal LSL sits outside the general government sector.

Workplace Relations Group



Greg Manning
Deputy Secretary, Workplace Relations
§ 22(1)

Sarah Godden
Chief Counsel
§ 22(1)

Liz Brayshaw
First Assistant Secretary
§ 22(1)

Diab Harb
First Assistant Secretary
§ 22(1)

Jody Anderson
First Assistant Secretary
§ 22(1)

Matt Cowgill
Chief Economist
§ 22(1)

Workplace Relations Legal

The Workplace Relations Legal Division provides legal advice to government and develops legislation on workplace relations, work health and safety and workers' compensation matters. The division advises the minister on workplace relations litigation and is responsible for appointments to workplace relations and work health and safety bodies.

Entitlements Safeguards

The Entitlements Safeguards Division administers the Fair Entitlements Guarantee (FEG), a legislative safety net scheme of last resort for eligible employees, and the FEG Recovery program. The division has policy responsibility for the Fair Work Act's compliance and enforcement framework and provides oversight of the Fair Work Ombudsman.

Employment Conditions

The Employment Conditions Division has policy responsibility for the minimum terms and conditions of employment through the National Employment Standards, modern awards and protections against termination, discrimination and harassment. The division also has policy responsibility for the Fair Work Commission, the Coal Mining Industry (Long Service Leave Funding) scheme and Australia's engagement with the International Labour Organization.

Safety and Industry Policy

The Safety and Industry Policy Division has policy responsibility for enterprise bargaining, industrial action and the registered organisations framework. The division also has policy responsibility for the federal work health and safety and workers' compensation schemes in the Commonwealth jurisdiction. The division includes the Office of the Federal Safety Commissioner and oversees the National Construction Industry Forum.

Office of the Chief Economist

The Office of the Chief Economist provides economic analysis, data and strategic policy thinking to underpin the department's role as stewards of the Australian labour market. It undertakes research on key labour market issues, reports on key data, and provides economic advice services to all areas of the department.

Workplace Relations

Workplace Relations funding largely comes from legislated special appropriations for the Fair Entitlements Guarantee and the Fair Entitlements Guarantee Recovery Program. The outcome also has several grant programs such as the Productivity, Education and Training Fund. The outcome also has 6 portfolio entities that make up the Commonwealth's workplace relations bodies.

Outcome 3: Facilitate jobs growth, including secure work, through policies and programs that promote fair, productive and safe workplaces

Greg Manning – Deputy Secretary

2024-25 operating budget (appropriation): \$75.9m
2024-25 ASL: 393

Key programs (2025-26 estimates):

- **Fair Entitlements Guarantee and Recovery Program** – \$336.5m (*pays employee entitlements whose employer has entered liquidation or bankrupted*)
- **Grant programs** – \$38.5m (*including the PET Fund, SWA Member grants, Advancing gender equality in gender-segregated industries*)

Portfolio entities

Asbestos and Silica Safety and Eradication Agency

Jodie Deakes – Chief Executive Officer

2025-26 program expenses: \$6.2m

2025-26 ASL: 21

Fair Work Commission

Murray Furlong – General Manager (Accountable Authority)

2025-26 program expenses: \$116.8m

Safe Work Australia

Marie Boland – Chief Executive Officer

2025-26 program expenses: \$25.5m

2025-26 ASL: 101

Comcare, including the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission, and Seacare

Michael Duke – Acting Comcare Chief Executive Officer

Dave Oliver – SRCC Chairperson

Barry Sherriff – Seacare Chairperson

2025-26 program expenses: \$424.4m

2025-26 ASL: 646

Office of the Fair Work Ombudsman

Anna Booth – Fair Work Ombudsman

2025-26 program expenses: \$198.2m

2025-26 ASL: 997

Coal Long Service Leave Corporation (Coal LSL)

Darlene Perks – Chief Executive Officer

As a public financial corporation, Coal LSL sits outside the general government sector.

Workplace relations portfolio entities

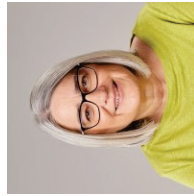
Asbestos and Silica Safety and Eradication Agency



CEO: Jodie Deakes
Term ends: 18 Nov 2028

Responsible for overseeing national actions to improve asbestos and silica awareness and the effective and safe management, removal, and disposal of asbestos and silica through coordinating the Asbestos National Strategic Plan and Silica National Strategic Plan.

Safe Work Australia



CEO: Marie Bolland
Term ends: 31 Oct 2028

Responsible for leading the development of national policy to improve work health and safety (WHS) and workers' compensation arrangements across Australia. Jointly funded by the Commonwealth, state and territory governments. States and territories are responsible for regulating and enforcing WHS laws and administer workers' compensation schemes in their jurisdictions.

Fair Work Commission



President: The Hon. Adam Hatcher
Term ends: 10 Mar 2028



General Manager: Murray Furlong
Term ends: 29 Sep 2026

The independent national workplace relations tribunal and registered organisations regulator. Responsible for administering provisions of the *Fair Work Act 2009* and the registration, recognition and accountability of registered organisations under the *Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009*.

Office of the Fair Work Ombudsman



Ombudsman: Anna Booth
Term ends: 31 Aug 2028

The statutory office established by the *Fair Work Act 2009*, comprised of the Fair Work Ombudsman, Fair Work Inspectors and staff. Responsible for compliance with workplace relations laws through advice, education and enforcement.

Coal Mining Industry (Long Service Leave Funding) Corporation



Chair: Darlene Perks
Term ends: N/A, permanent appointment

Responsible for the Coal Mining Industry Long Service Leave Fund, a portable entitlements scheme operating in the black coal mining industry.

Comcare

A/g CEO: Michael Duke

Term ends: N/A, acting appointment



The Commonwealth work health and safety regulator, a

workers' compensation scheme administrator and an insurer and claims manager. It works to minimise the incidence and impact of harm in the workplace, improve recovery and return to work outcomes, and support engagement and better practice approaches to health and safety across the Comcare scheme.

Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission*

Chair: Dave Oliver

Term ends: 19 Jun 2027



A statutory body established under the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988* (SRC Act). It administers the regulatory functions of the SRC Act, other than those ascribed to Comcare, and is the issuing authority and regulator of workers' compensation self-insurance licences under the Act.

Seafarers Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Authority*

Chair: Barry Sherriff

Term ends: 21 Oct 2025



Responsible for overseeing a national scheme of occupational health and safety and workers' compensation arrangements for defined seafarers.

***Seacare and the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission are not body corporates and do not employ their own staff. Both are supported by Comcare.**

Employment and Workforce Group



Tania Rishniw
Deputy Secretary, Employment and Workforce
§ 22(1)

Fiona Dewar
First Assistant Secretary
§ 22(1)

Edwina Spanos
First Assistant Secretary
§ 22(1)

Miranda Lauman
First Assistant Secretary
§ 22(1)

Bronwyn Field
First Assistant Secretary
§ 22(1)

Lisa Schofield
First Assistant Secretary
§ 22(1)

Jason Stott
First Assistant Secretary
§ 22(1)

Workforce Australia for Individuals

Workforce Australia for Individuals Division is responsible for managing and delivering online and tailored services for individuals, including those on income support. The division focuses on the individual service and experience, ensuring individuals can easily access core supports and job seekers are actively encouraged to participate.

The division supports clients throughout their pathway to employment, including by providing direct support to people looking for work through our online Digital Contact Centre. The National Customer Service Line provides information for jobseekers and directs people using employment services to the available support.

Workforce Australia Provider Support

Workforce Australia Provider Support Division delivers and manages employment services on the ground. The division coordinates provider contract management and engagement, administer the deeds and guidelines that set requirements for employment services, and deliver end-to-end procurement services for employment programs and services, and manages the delivery of employment programs.

The division includes the State Network which plays a key role in the day-to-day management of providers involved in delivering programs across employment services, apprenticeships and foundation skills.

Workforce Australia for Business

Workforce Australia for Business Division engages with employers, industries, and communities to deliver people-centred workforce policies and programs. The division focuses on demand-side measures, delivering activities to drive workforce policy reform, build effective local labour markets and bring business and people together through projects, advice and collaboration.

The division plays a key role in supporting regional labour markets and workforces through the transition to a Net Zero emissions economy in partnership with other government agencies. It provides critical support and advice to workers affected by major company restructuring and closure.

Employment Strategy and Policy

Employment Strategy and Policy Division leads employment services system design. Through this work, the division provides policy advice on how to improve outcomes for jobseekers to find and remain in work, and on how to improve the effectiveness of the system. This includes developing culturally sensitive employment policies and programs to increase employment outcomes for First Nations people and other priority cohorts such as youth and those from a culturally and linguistically diverse background.

Evidence and Assurance

Evidence and Assurance Division provides services that enable the efficient and effective delivery of Workforce Australia. The division provides critical assurance, data, reporting and analytics, and evaluation of services and programs to drive continuous improvement and ensure that Workforce Australia delivers strong employment outcomes. The division also plays an important role in assessing provider performances.

The division hosts the Complaints Management Team, which assesses more complex, serious or sensitive employment services complaints, and provides support to complainants throughout the complaints' resolution process.

Pacific Labour Operations

Pacific Labour Operations Division is responsible for the domestic operational delivery of the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme, Australia's key temporary migration program that addresses low, semi and unskilled workforce shortages, usually in rural and regional Australia.

The PALM scheme supports the economic growth of Pacific Island countries and Timor-Leste and addresses short-term and long-term workforce shortages in Australia. Implementation of the PALM scheme sits with the department, while the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is responsible for PALM policy.

Employment and Workforce

Employment programs centre on several large demand-driven programs providing employment services to mainstream and key cohorts, complemented by more targeted programs. Major frontline services (including call centres and domestic Pacific Australia Labour Mobility operations) have been insourced into the department.

Outcome 1: Foster a productive and competitive labour market through policies and programs that assist job seekers into work, including secure work, and meet employer and industry needs

Tania Rishniw – Deputy Secretary

2024-25 operating budget (appropriation): \$223.5m
2024-25 ASL: 1,480

Key programs (2025-26 estimates):

- **Workforce Australia Employment Services** – \$1.5b (*mainstream employment services*)
- **Transition to work** – \$331.4m (*youth specific employment services*)
- **Parent Pathways** – \$98.5m (*parent specific employment services*)
- **Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme** – predominantly departmental expenses (*temporary migration program – addressing workforce shortages*)
- **Digital Services Contact Centre** – departmental expenses (*call centre for online employment services*)
- **Local Jobs Program** – \$27.1m (*place-based employment services*)

Overview of employment services

For most people, participation in employment services is linked to their eligibility for activity tested income support payments		
Workforce Australia Online (198,555 individuals) (\$453.8m 2024-25 to 2028-29)	Workforce Australia Services (455,820 individuals) (\$5,786.9m 2024-25 to 2028-29)	Transition to Work (46,985 individuals) (\$1,631.4m 2024-25 to 2028-29)
• An online service for those assessed as more job-ready and capable of self-managing and finding work without provider assistance. • People can generally access the service for up to 12 months before being transferred to provider services but can choose to move at any time. • All users are supported by a dedicated Digital Services Contact Centre. Department's role: administer and deliver the online service.	• A provider-delivered service for eligible people assessed as at a higher risk of long-term unemployment or who have opted for face-to-face support. • Provider organisations operate from 51 Employment Regions • The program aims to help people: ◦ improve employability and mitigate barriers to employment ◦ navigate the employment, skills, and social services ecosystems and connect with employers ◦ access individualised case management services with mutual obligation requirements suited to their individual circumstances. • Specialist services in some regions with tailored support for First Nations Australians, ex-offenders, refugees, and CALD people. Department's role: includes procurement, contract management, assurance, performance management and evaluation.	• A provider-delivered service for people aged 15-24 assessed as being at a higher risk of not successfully transitioning to employment. • Time-limited for up to 24 months. • Offers young people intensive, pre-employment support to develop practical skills to get a job, and connect with education, training or local community services. • Required to engage with the service and other activities for 25 hours per week. Department's role: includes procurement, contract management, assurance, performance management and evaluation.
Complementary programs	Targeted assistance for people, such as employability skills development, transitioning existing skills to work in different roles or industries, and support for individuals seeking to start or grow a business.	
Employer-facing programs and supports	Support for employers to prepare and employ people from the system, such as pre-employment training and support, wage subsidies, and recruitment and post-placement support.	
Parent Pathways program (\$611.4m 2024-25 to 2028-29)	Voluntary pre-employment support for parents, replaced ParentsNext in November 2024. Caseload: 16,521 people in Parents Pathways as at March 2025. Includes service delivery by an APS Pilot in Playford, South Australia.	
Place based initiatives (\$84.4m 2024-25 to 2026-27)	The Local Jobs Program is a collaborative initiative with community, business, training and employment providers to support tailored approaches to local workforce needs. Employment Facilitators drive local outcomes in 51 Employment Regions.	
Structural adjustment and Net Zero (\$99.2m over 4 years from 2024-25)	A Transition Support Network helps retrenched workers impacted by structural adjustment to access new job opportunities. Net Zero measures will support workers through energy system changes, including supporting access to skills and re-training, employment support and personal support, for example financial planning and well-being support.	
The 2 other main Commonwealth employment services programs are:		
• Disability Employment Services – helps eligible people with disability, injury or health condition to prepare for, find and keep a job • Responsible Minister: Minister for Social Services. Caseload: 247,990 people as at Mar 2025. Budget: \$7,466.7m 2024-25 to 2028-29 • Community Development Program – provides employment support and community development activities for people and communities in remote Australia. • Responsible Minister: Minister for Indigenous Australians. Caseload: 42,135 people as at Mar 2025. Budget: \$1,878.4m 2024-25 to 2028-29		

Skills and Training Group



Anna Faithfull
Deputy Secretary, Skills and Training
§ 22(1)

Renae Houston
First Assistant Secretary
§ 22(1)

Vicki Wilkinson
First Assistant Secretary
§ 22(1)

Simon Booth
First Assistant Secretary
§ 22(1)

Belinda Campbell
First Assistant Secretary
§ 22(1)

Danica Yanchenko
A/g First Assistant Secretary
§ 22(1)

Careers, International, Defence and Assessment

Careers, International, Defence and Assessment Division is responsible for VET Student Loans, Commonwealth Prac Payments for VET, and Trades Recognition Australia, which delivers cost-recovered skills assessment services.

The division is also responsible for oversight of skills assessment authorities for migrants and policy oversight of international engagement, international students and migration policy, mutual recognition, and careers policy. In addition, the division includes the Defence Skills and Workforce Taskforce, which works closely with the Australian Submarine Agency on AUKUS and other defence industry workforce needs.

National Skills Reform

National Skills Reform Division is responsible for implementing the five-year National Skills Agreement (NSA) through the Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council. The 5-year agreement enables national planning and coordination with a focus on nationally agreed areas of skills priorities including energy, digital, housing and construction, essential care services, Australia's sovereign capability and food security, and gender equality. The agreement includes transfer of funding for skills places, as well as incentivised funding for key system reforms including foundation skills, Closing the Gap, TAFE Centres of Excellence and improved completions. The division works closely with states and territories and Treasury on the implementation of the NSA, including tracking performance and outcomes across governments. The division is responsible for driving national innovations such as the National TAFE Network and the TAFE Centres of Excellence.

Policy, Performance and Inclusion

Policy Performance and Inclusion Division leads whole-of-government and whole-of-VET system strategy and policy. It coordinates the group's engagement with the Commonwealth Budget process, cross-cutting strategy, and system-level data and evidence.

The division supports the minister's statutory bodies including Jobs and Skills Australia and the Office of the Student Identifiers Registrar and the contractual arrangements and relationship with the National Centre for Vocational Education Research. The division delivers programs and partnerships to support social and economic inclusion with a focus on First Nations peoples and women. The division also houses the Training Products Assurance function.

Apprenticeships and Foundation Skills

Apprenticeships and Foundation Skills Division provides national leadership on the policies and programs that ensure a supply of skilled workers through the apprenticeship system, as well as term resilience of our labour market through supports for the development of core language, literacy, numeracy and digital skills necessary to participate in work and life.

The division's policy responsibilities cover settings for the Australian Apprenticeship Incentive System and related programs, and strategies to support apprenticeship commencements and completions.

The division also manages the national Skills for Education and Employment Program, which delivers foundation skills training to eligible adults, including job seekers, supporting them to complete VET qualifications where required, and to develop the skills they need to function effectively in the workplace or in further training.

Industry Policy and Quality

Industry Policy and Quality Division is responsible for leading reforms to lift the quality of the VET system for students and industry. This includes reforms of the VET quality framework, including new Standards for registered training organisations (RTOs), leading implementation of Commonwealth responses to the VET Workforce Blueprint, working with the regulator – the Australian Skills Quality Authority – and state and territory governments to support regulatory reform.

Working closely with industry-owned Jobs and Skills Councils, the division works to understand and develop effective skills and training responses to industry workforce challenges and skills needs. The division has expertise in energy, care, manufacturing, agriculture, supply chain and digital industry policy.

Skills and Training

The Skills and Training portfolio directs the delivery of national programs (demand-driven apprenticeship incentives and supports; numeracy, literacy and digital foundation skills; VET student loans and funding; and migration skills assessments and oversight. It also leads the stewardship of the national training system and its architecture.

Outcome 2: Promote growth in economic productivity and social wellbeing through access to quality skills and training

Anna Faithfull – Deputy Secretary

2024-25 operating budget (appropriation): \$139.2m
2024-25 ASL: 790

Key programs (2025-26 estimates):

- **Australian Apprenticeship Incentive System** – \$1.2b
- **Apprentice Connect Australia Providers** – \$214.4m
- **Apprenticeship Support Loans** – \$84.7m
- **VET Student Loans** – \$158.8m
- **Foundation Skills** – \$159.2m (*Skills for Education and Employment*)
- **Jobs and Skills Councils** – \$112.4m (*align training to skills needs*)
- **Trades Recognition Australia** – \$84.7m (*skilled migration assessing authority*)
- **Other programs total** – \$141.1m

Treasury state payments

2025-26 estimates

- **National Skills Agreement** – \$2.5b (*the 5-year agreement is \$12.4b with flexible matched funding from states and territories*)
- **National partnerships** – \$202.3m (*includes Fee Free TAFE*)

Portfolio entity

Australian Skills Quality Authority

Saxon Rice – Chief Executive Officer

2025-26 program expenses: \$58.5m

2025-26 ASL: 252

Statutory office

Office of the Student Identifiers Registrar

Craig Ward – Registrar

2024-25 operating budget: \$2.2m

2024-25 ASL: 44

How the skills system operates



The Vocational Education and Training system is a stable but complex federated arrangement with shared responsibilities across governments, industry and private providers.



Governed through the Skills & Workforce Ministerial Council (SWMC); guided by the objectives of the **\$12.6B National Skills Agreement (NSA) 2024 – 2028**; a set of regulators and agreed processes including registration. The Commonwealth plays a central and influential role through its funding (NSA & other programs), system regulation and collaborative policy development with jurisdictions.



VET is delivered in **schools**, in the **workplace**, and in public & private training **campuses**.

Approx 4,000 providers* (2023 data)

- 340 schools
- 24 TAFEs
- 14 Universities
- 3,229 private or community providers



The State Training Authorities (STAs) are responsible for the operation of VET and are accountable to their Minister. This includes ownership and management of TAFEs, allocation of funding and places to RTOs, the shape of their respective markets and regulation of the apprenticeship system.



VET system is competency-based
Students can study single subjects or **units, skill sets**, or full **qualifications**.
Can be delivered **full-time or part-time**, and **institutionally** or as part of an **apprenticeship**.

Short course & single units
3.6 million 2023
Qualification / certificate
2.1 million 2023

5.1 million people enrolled in nationally recognised VET in 2023

Commonwealth expenditure on VET is \$5.1b in 2025-26 (as at Budget 2025-26)

Commonwealth own programs \$1.9b

Commonwealth provides funding of \$2.7b to the States & Territories (2025/26)

States & Territories provides funding of \$4.7b* (available data is 2023)

\$575m
Income
contingent
loans*

* Nominal value

National Skills Agreement \$2.5b (2025/26)

\$166m Fee Free TAFE (2025/26)
Total package \$1.5 billion joint funding over 2023 -2026

\$15m Turbocharge the Teacher, Trainer & Assessor (2025/26)

\$14m Turbocharging TAFE Centres of Excellence (2025/26)

\$8m Capital & Equipment Investment Fund (2025/26)

Skills and training portfolio entities

Australian Skills Quality Authority



CEO: Saxon Rice
Term: 5 years from 1 January 2021

Under the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*, the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) is responsible for ensuring quality vocational education and training so that students, employers, the community and governments have confidence in the integrity of national qualifications issued by training providers. ASQA is responsible for regulating around 3,800, or approximately 90%, of Australian VET providers.

ASQA works in partnership with state-based regulators in Victoria and Western Australia to ensure a nationally consistent and quality VET system.

Office of the Student Identifiers Registrar (Statutory Body)



Student Identifiers Registrar: Craig Ward
Term: 5 years from 15 January 2024

The Student Identifiers Registrar is a secondary statutory office holder established by the *Student Identifiers Act 2014*. The Registrar, supported by the Office of the Student Identifiers Registrar, is responsible for the administration of the Unique Student Identifier for VET and Higher Education students.

The Unique Student Identifier gives students access to a complete record of their VET and tertiary education enrolments and achievements from a single source. This information provides an important foundation for understanding and improving VET and higher education performance and better meeting the needs of students, education or training providers and employers.

Joint Commonwealth-State Entity

National Centre for Vocational Education Research Ltd



Managing Director: John King
 National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) is a not-for-profit Australian company, established in 1981 by its members – the Commonwealth, state and territory ministers responsible for VET. NCVER is responsible for collecting, managing, analysing and communicating statistics and research on the Australian VET sector.

NCVER's role as the national VET data custodian is established through the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011*.

The Commonwealth provides funding to NCVER for statistical and research services through a contractual arrangement.

Corporate and Enabling Services Group



Deborah Jenkins
Deputy Secretary, Corporate and Enabling Services, Chief Operating Officer
§ 22(1)

Tim French
General Counsel
§ 22(1)

Adam Shain
Chief Digital Officer
§ 22(1)

Scott Wallace
Chief Information Officer
§ 22(1)

Sue Goodear
A/g Chief People Officer
§ 22(1)

Ben Stadie
Chief Financial Officer
§ 22(1)

Legal and Assurance

Legal and Assurance Division is responsible for delivering efficient, timely and accurate legal services to the department's executive and line areas. The division advises on legal matters, manages legal risk, and coordinates litigation and legislation functions on behalf of the department. It also delivers the department's enterprise risk, fraud and corruption, audit and assurance functions through the provision of timely, high-quality advice and services.

Digital Solutions

Digital Solutions Division builds and manages the department's business applications, enabling digital service delivery to stakeholders. The division drives the uplift of digital and data literacy, leads innovation in the department, and promotes human centred design approaches. The division partners with business to build trusted relationships and deliver well architected, customer centric services that meet our user needs and deliver the policy intent. The division also provides services to other departments and agencies.

Technology and Services

Technology and Services Division provides the department's information, communication and technology (ICT) platforms including end-user computing solutions (desktop and mobile), infrastructure and hosting solutions both on-premises and in the cloud, corporate applications, and IT security and cyber operations services. The division also provides the department's service desk, protective security, emergency management and business continuity and property services.

In addition to supporting the department, the division currently provides core ICT services to 8 client agencies (including the Department of Education), with a combined overall user base of around 8,500 users operating from around 60 sites in Australia. Services include dedicated premier support arrangements to assist our ministers, executive and state office locations.

People and Communication

People and Communication Division is responsible for delivering strategic and operational human resource services, providing strategic direction and professional advice on a range of communication activities, and delivering professional end-to-end communication services. The division also provides media and issues management support to our portfolio ministerial offices, the Secretary and the department.

Finance and Budget

Finance and Budget Division provides strategic advice to the executive and support to our ministers on budget, financial, parliamentary, governance and project management matters.

The division also provides strategic support and facilitates departmental accountability with whole-of-government performance frameworks, including the delivery of the department's Corporate Plan, Annual Performance Statement, Performance Framework and associated governance, and the Annual Report. The division is also responsible for supporting the department's internal governance and all aspects of parliamentary engagement, including support for our ministers' offices and appearances before parliamentary committees.

Corporate and Enabling

Corporate and Enabling Services provides whole-of-department and ministerial office corporate support, including digital and technology, property, legal, media, finance and parliamentary support, as well as digital and technology and property services to certain Commonwealth agencies located around Australia.

Deborah Jenkins – Deputy Secretary, Corporate and Enabling Services, Chief Operating Officer

2024-25 operating budget (appropriation):

- Department-wide overheads: \$160.2m
 - Corporate and enabling services: \$157.2m
- 2024-25 ASL: 1,173

Key functions:

- Ministerial support
- Communications support
- Finance, Budget and Governance
- People services
- Legal and Assurance
- Technology and Services Division (*ICT operations and property*)
- Digital Solutions Division (*ICT development*)

Corporate shared services

DEWR provides ICT services and/or digital solutions support to around 50 Commonwealth agencies, including:

- Department of Education
- Department of Social Services
- Australian Skills Quality Authority
- National Indigenous Australians Agency

Jobs and Skills Australia

David Turvey
Executive Director
§ 22(1)

2024-25 operating budget: \$45.0m
2024-25 ASI: 209

Office of the JSA Commissioners

The Office of the JSA Commissioners provides high quality executive support to the Executive Director, Deputy Commissioners, and Commissioners.

Megan Lilly and Trevor Gauld
Deputy Commissioners
§ 22(1)

Barney Glover
Commissioner, Jobs and Skills Australia
§ 22(1)



Cliff Bingham
Assistant Secretary
§ 22(1)

Bjorn Jarvis
Assistant Secretary
§ 22(1)

Maria Shanahan
Assistant Secretary
§ 22(1)

Fan Xiang
Assistant Secretary (a/g)
§ 22(1)

Labour Market and Migration

Labour Market and Migration branch provides advice on the current dynamics of the Australian labour market.

The branch monitors, researches and analyses developments in the labour market overall, with a focus on understanding employer perspectives and demand for skills at an industry, occupation and regional level.

The branch considers how movements in the labour market will impact current, emerging and future jobs and skills needs. It provides advice on current domestic skills shortages and underlying drivers of these shortages, along with advice to the Australian Government on areas where skilled migration may form part of an effective policy response to meeting current and future skills needs.

Workforce Futures

Workforce Futures Branch analyses occupational, industry and regional labour force data and produces projections of employment demand and supply

The branch delivers major studies that explore future workforce needs for critical sectors and priority cohorts. It also leads JSA's engagement with Jobs and Skills Councils and works closely with other Commonwealth agencies to support national priorities.

Enterprise and Systems

Enterprise and Systems Branch supports the work of JSA and upholds several legislative requirements.

The branch provides an integrated and consistent JSA experience through data management and development and provision of digital services, supporting legislatively required Freedom Of Information, Privacy and Data Availability and Transparency Act functions.

Responsible for media management and external communication, including the website and social media channels.

The branch supports stakeholder engagement functions including the secretariat support of the Ministerial Advisory Board and top tier stakeholder engagement.

National Skills System

National Skills System Branch provides data, analysis and advice on the architecture, performance and outcomes of Australia's skills system.

The branch leads the development of the national skills taxonomy and tertiary harmonisation roadmap. It undertakes extensive analysis using integrated national data assets to examine the impact of insecure work, and the contribution of VET and higher education systems to meeting Australia's current, emerging, and future skills needs.

The branch also manages a national study to improve understanding of adult foundation skills across the population.

1.2 People

The department has 4,443 APS employees (headcount measure) delivering on our purpose. Over the forward estimates to 2028–29, the department's total staffing numbers will decrease as measures terminate.

Figure 1.2.1: Departmental staffing profile as at 31 March 2025

			APS employees	
			4,443	
APS		Executive Level (EL)	Senior Executive Service (SES)	
2,419		1,890	134	
		ongoing	non-ongoing	
		4,217	226	
		full time	part time	
		3,859	584	
female		male	indeterminate	
2,659		1,776	8	

61.9% of the workforce has agreed work-from-home arrangements for one or more days a week, with an average of 2.6 days worked remotely. 3.8% of staff work entirely remotely.

Contractors

- The department employs 3 types of contractors to assist in the delivery of its functions:
 - ICT: used to fill specialised IT-type roles
 - professional contractors: specialist professionals, including individuals, sole traders and service providers, who undertake a specialist role within the department, i.e. auditors, legal.
 - non-ICT: general labour hire contractors used to fill shortfalls in APS staffing.

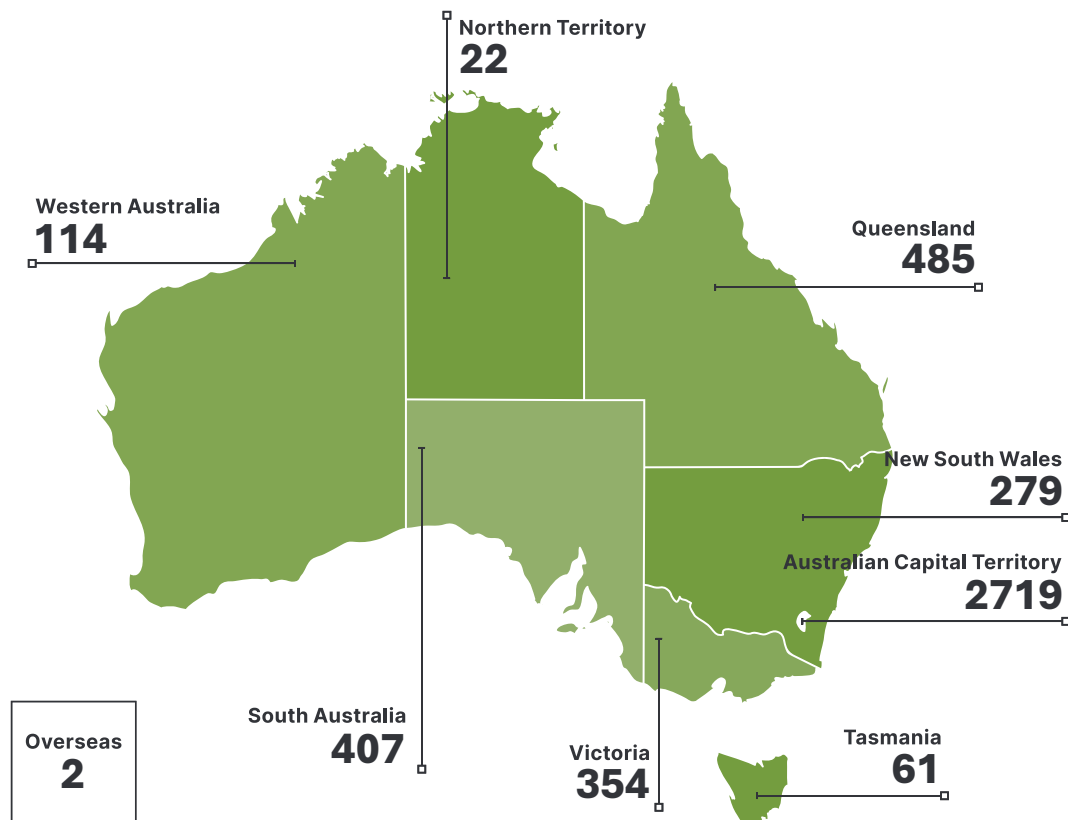
Figure 1.2.2: Contractors as at 31 March 2025

Contractors		
961		
ICT	Professional contractor	non-ICT
679	153	129

Locations

The department's staffing profile is significantly geographically dispersed partly as a result of our service delivery responsibilities, as well as our location-agnostic hiring practices, aimed at improving productivity by hiring the best person for the job, regardless of where they are based. This has led to a large number of staff in 2023–24 and 2024–25 being hired from outside of the ACT, with the proportion of ACT-based staff having decreased by 20.3% since 31 July 2022.

Of the staff based outside of the ACT, the majority work from state or territory-based offices. The department maintains an office presence in each capital city in Australia, as well as smaller regional offices in cities such as Bendigo, Newcastle and Townsville.

Figure 1.2.3: Staff locations as at 31 March 2025

2. Stakeholders

2.1 Key meetings

Workplace Relations meetings

National Workplace Relations Consultative Council (NWRCC)

Minister's role	Chair
Basis for existence	<i>National Workplace Relations Consultative Council Act 2002 (NWRCC Act)</i>
Purpose of meeting	
The NWRCC provides a regular forum for representatives of the Australian Government, employers and employees to consult on workplace relations matters of national concern. NWRCC is not a decision-making body.	
Membership of meeting	
Membership, determined by the NWRCC Act, comprises: • the minister responsible for workplace relations as Chair • 7 members from the Australian Council of Trade Unions • 3 members from the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry • one member each from the Australian Industry Group, Business Council of Australia, Master Builders Australia, and the National Farmers' Federation. The NWRCC Act allows for additional representatives to attend meetings. Since mid-2022, the Council of Small Business Organisations of Australia has been invited to attend NWRCC meetings.	
Future opportunities	
NWRCC consults on matters of national interest and provides members with advanced notice of proposed government reforms. Consultations on reforms occur through dedicated processes organised by the department, such as on draft legislation through NWRCC's Committee on Industrial Legislation. s 47C(1)	
Frequency of meetings and historical attendance	
The Chair is required under legislation to convene at least 2 meetings of the NWRCC in a calendar year – once in the first half and once in the second half. As at 3 May 2025, the NWRCC had not yet met in 2025.	

Digital Labour Platform Consultative Committee (DLPCC)

Minister's role	Chair
Basis for existence	NWRCC Act, as a result of the <i>Fair Work Legislation Amendment (Closing Loopholes No. 2) Act 2024</i> (Closing Loopholes No. 2 Act)
Purpose of meeting	
A committee of the NWRCC, the DLPCC provides a forum for representatives of the Australian Government, digital labour platform operators and digital platform workers to consult on workplace relations matters relating to digital platform work. The DLPCC is not a decision-making body.	
Membership of meeting	
The NWRCC Act requires that the DLPCC includes: - the minister responsible for workplace relations, as Chair - at least 6 members who the minister is satisfied represent digital labour platform operators - at least 6 members who the minister is satisfied represent workers performing digital labour platform work (there are currently 7 representatives in this category as at May 2025). The minister must be satisfied that persons appointed represent the care economy sector, the on-demand delivery sector and the rideshare sector.	
Future opportunities	
The DLPCC has met once, in December 2024, since it was established. At that meeting, members discussed governance arrangements and updates on the implementation of the employee-like framework. s 47C(1)	
Frequency of meetings and historical attendance	
For the first 24 months since its commencement on 26 August 2024, the DLPCC is required, by legislation, to meet twice a year. The DLPCC is required to meet by 30 June 2025. After the first 24 months, a meeting of the DLPCC is to be held at least once each further 12-month period. The Chair may convene a meeting at any time.	

Meeting of Workplace Relations / Work Health and Safety Ministers

Minister's role	Chair
Basis for existence	The Workplace Relations and Work Health and Safety Meetings of Ministers (WR-MoM, WHS-MoM) support the <i>Inter-Governmental Agreement for a National Workplace Relations System for the Private Sector 2009</i> (WR-IGA) and the <i>Intergovernmental Agreement for Regulatory and Operational Reform in Occupational Health and Safety 2008</i> (WHS-IGA)
Purpose of meeting	
These meetings are convened with responsible state and territory ministers to discuss and advance workplace relations matters of national importance.	
Membership of meeting	
The members for both meetings are the responsible ministers in each state and territory with the federal minister responsible for workplace relations as Chair. Some jurisdictions have different ministers responsible for workplace relations and work health and safety matters.	
Future opportunities	
Meetings facilitate consultation on matters of national importance and provide ministers with advance notice of proposed government reforms.	
s 47C(1)	
Frequency of meetings and historical attendance	
The Chair can convene a meeting at any time and as needed. Depending on matters requiring consultation, the Chair may seek to hold meetings with workplace relations ministers together with work health and safety ministers, or separately.	

National Construction Industry Forum (the NCIF)

Minister's role	Chair
Basis for existence	<i>Fair Work Act 2009</i> (Fair Work Act), by amendments made under the <i>Fair Work Legislation Amendment (Secure Jobs, Better Pay) Act 2022</i> , and the Terms of Reference as endorsed by members on 20 October 2023
Purpose of meeting	
The NCIF advises government on how to improve the building and construction industry. Matters examined include productivity, safety, workplace relations, skills and training, industry culture, and gender equity.	
Membership of meeting	
The NCIF's membership includes: - the minister responsible for workplace relations, as Chair - the minister responsible for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government - the minister responsible for industry and science - one or more members with experience representing employees in the building and construction industry - an equal number of members with experience in representing employers in the building and construction industry, including at least one member who has experience representing contractors and one member in small- to medium-sized businesses in the residential building sector (currently 8 members are appointed). The minister may appoint other members. Members hold office for a maximum of 3 years.	
Future opportunities	
Non-ministerial members of the Forum have been working through a series of workshops, to develop the Building and Construction Industry Blueprint, with a draft released on 27 March 2025. Given the adversarial nature of relationships in the industry, allegations of corruption, gender-based violence, and criminal conduct, and the industry's critical contributions to the economy and jobs, the Blueprint provides an opportunity for timely reform. Convening a meeting of the Forum as soon as possible is an opportunity to consolidate the work and relationships strengthened in the development of the Blueprint, as well as to outline the government's position and proposed reforms.	
Frequency of meetings and historical attendance	
The Chair is required to convene at least 2 meetings of the NCIF in a calendar year – once in the first half and once in the second half. The Chair may otherwise convene a meeting at any time. The NCIF last met in March 2025. Forum meetings are held in person.	

Employment and Workforce meetings

PALM Pacific and Timor-Leste Heads of Mission Bi-annual Roundtable

Minister's role	Chair
Basis for existence	In 2023, the then-minister responsible for employment committed to meeting with Pacific and Timor-Leste Heads of Mission (HoMs) bi-annually
Purpose of meeting	
The HoMs Roundtable is an opportunity to highlight areas of focus and positive program outcomes. The roundtable strengthens the dialogue between HoMs and the minister responsible for employment providing an avenue to address key areas of interest or concern.	
Membership of meeting	
DEWR Ministerial: Minister for responsible for employment and relevant advisors Heads of Mission: Fiji, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu, Timor-Leste DEWR: Senior executive staff DFAT: Relevant ministerial advisors and senior executive staff	
Future opportunities	
s 47C(1)	
Frequency of meetings and historical attendance	
Commitment to meet with Pacific and Timor-Leste Heads of Mission (HoMs) bi-annually. - No meetings have been held in 2025. - Senator the Hon. Murray Watt, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations met with HoMs: 9 December 2024. - The Hon. Tony Burke MP, former Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations met with HoMs on: 12 June 2024, 5 December 2023, 11 July 2023.	

G20 Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting

Minister's role	Participant
Basis for existence	Labour and Employment Ministers from Group of 20 (G20) member countries have met annually since 2010. These meetings are held at the request of the leaders of G20 nations. The G20 is the premier forum for international economic cooperation
Purpose of meeting	
The LEMM provides a unique forum for ministers from major economies to discuss national and international employment issues. The focus is usually on key issues which the annual G20 host has chosen to focus on (in 2025 South Africa is focused on youth employment, women's employment, the labour income share, and social protection for platform workers). Ministers also usually consider progress against long-running G20 agendas, such as closing the gender gap in labour force participation. At the end of the meeting ministers usually adopt a non-binding declaration that sets out common priorities.	
Membership of meeting	
Cabinet level labour and employment ministers from G20 member countries and G20 guest countries are invited to attend. Over recent years, most G20 countries have been represented by cabinet level ministers or junior ministers, with the remaining countries being represented by senior officials. The Director-General of the International Labour Organization and senior representatives from other key international organisations also attend.	
The meeting is chaired by the cabinet-level minister with responsibility for employment in the annual G20 host. Other ministers from the host country usually attend, and the national leader of the host country typically provides a video message.	
Future opportunities	
s 47C(1)	
Frequency of meetings and historical attendance	
- The timing of the LEMM varies from year to year depending on the G20 host country's meeting schedule. The 2025 LEMM will be held from 30-31 July in South Africa, with the specific location to be confirmed. The department will engage with your office regarding Australia's representation. - Minister O'Connor attended the 2023 LEMM in India and Deputy Secretary Tania Rishniw attended the 2024 LEMM in Brazil on behalf of Minister Burke. - Attendance by a minister or a senior representative at the Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting (LEMM) is recommended to demonstrate Australia's ongoing commitment to the G20.	

Skills and Training meetings

Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council

Minister's role	Chair
Basis for existence	Established by National Cabinet
Purpose of meeting	Provides a forum for national cooperation and stewardship of the VET system and on the intersection of skills and training policy with workforce issues. The Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council (SWMC) collaboratively progresses items of national importance to achieve agreed objectives, outcomes and priorities.
Membership of meeting	Skills and training ministers from the Commonwealth, states and territory governments. Members may have a maximum of one official, and where appropriate one advisor to support them at a meeting.
Future opportunities	SWMC's forward workplan is to be finalised at its next meeting with the opportunity to shape 2025 priorities prior to endorsement. All meeting agendas are set by the federal minister responsible for skills and training as Chair. SWMC reports annually to National Cabinet on delivery against agreed objectives and to set priorities for the next cycle. There are no alternative forums for engagement.
Frequency of meetings and historical attendance	Generally, dates for meetings for the upcoming year are agreed the previous year. Meetings are scheduled at least 3 times a year, with additional extraordinary meetings scheduled as needed. Meetings consistently reach quorum with very few apologies occurring. The last meeting was attended by all members (December 2024). The next meeting is scheduled for 13 June 2025.

National Centre for Vocational Education Research Annual and Extraordinary General Meetings

Minister's role	Voting as a shareholder. Attend and make decisions representing the Commonwealth's interest as one of the 9 members of the company, or nominating a proxy
Basis for existence	Established in 1981, owned by the Commonwealth, states and territories, and represented by the ministers responsible for VET
Purpose of meeting	
The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) is an independent, not-for-profit Australian company and the Commonwealth, state and territory governments are company members, with the Commonwealth as the major funder. Under the <i>Corporations Act 2001</i> , NCVER is required to hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) and also hold Extraordinary General Meeting(s) (EGM) when required.	
Membership of meeting	
Membership comprises the company members which are the Commonwealth, state and territory ministers responsible for their government's VET portfolio.	
Future opportunities	
s 47C(1)	
Frequency of meetings and historical attendance	
Annually for AGMs, with EGMs held as necessary. The AGM is generally held during November/December and at least one EGM is generally held between March and May the following year. Traditionally, the minister responsible for skills and training has nominated a proxy to attend these meetings on their behalf. This proxy practice is also undertaken by state and territory ministers.	

Australia India Education and Skills Council

Minister's role	Co-chair, between Australian minister responsible for education and India's Minister for Education
Basis for existence	The Australia India Education and Skills Council (the Council) is the primary forum for bilateral dialogue between Australia and India on education, skills and research
Purpose of meeting	
The Council aims to set the strategic direction of the Australia-India bilateral education, training and research partnership and to develop strategic advice to focus and shape collaborative efforts. Ministers agreed that the next meeting will have a focus on schools, skills and higher education.	
Membership of meeting	
Membership consists of senior ministers from India and Australia with responsibilities for education and skills, with other attendees invited based on the meeting agenda. Meetings are managed jointly by the federal department responsible for education and India with secretariat functions the responsibility of the federal department responsible for education.	
Future opportunities	
At the previous meeting, ministers recognised that education and skills development are a cornerstone of the bilateral relationship between Australia and India and that it fosters lasting connections between their people, institutions, and nations. Ministers welcomed further strengthening of education, skills and research cooperation which is consistent with the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the 2 nations.	
Frequency of meetings and historical attendance	
The Council meets annually with the most recent meeting held in October 2024.	
The 2025 meeting is in India with a date yet to be agreed.	
Attendees at the October 2024 meeting were: The Hon. Jason Clare MP, Minister for Education, Mr Tony Cook PSM, Secretary, Department of Education, Mr Mathew Johnston, Minister-Counsellor (Education and Research), New Delhi, Department of Education.	

Council of International Education

Minister's role	The Australian minister responsible for skills is a member; the Australian minister responsible for education is the Chair. The meeting in February 2024 was chaired by the Hon. Julian Hill MP, Assistant Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, and Phil Honeywood, CEO, International Education Association of Australia (Co-Convener)
Basis for existence	Established in 2016 to help government set the direction for Australia's role in international education and training
Purpose of meeting	
The Council of International Education (the Council) is the primary consultative mechanism for developing Australian education and training policy. In consultation with the international education sector, the Council provides leadership and coordination across government and provides advice to the minister responsible for education on priorities and implementation of government policy for the sector.	
Membership of meeting	
Council membership includes experienced international education experts and practitioners and Australian ministers with portfolio responsibilities in international education as well as CEOs of relevant education bodies.	
Future opportunities	
At the meeting of the Council in November 2024, the government committed to releasing the final International Education and Skills Strategic Framework (the Framework) in order to provide certainty to the sector regarding its proposed arrangements and management of international students' policy. The draft Framework was released for consultation on 11 May 2024. Ministers for Education and Skills have consistently sought the views of and worked closely with Expert Members of the Council on how the Framework could be taken forward in a positive way for the sector in the future. There is an opportunity to use this forum to inform your skills and training agenda.	
Frequency of meetings and historical attendance	
At its most recent meeting in February 2025, it was agreed the Council would convene again as soon as possible immediately following the federal election and the appointment of relevant ministers.	

Jobs and Skills Australia meetings

Ministerial Advisory Board

Minister's role	Participant
Basis for existence	Established by the <i>Jobs and Skills Australia Act 2022</i> . There are no implications for non-attendance at these meetings
Purpose of meeting	
Meetings occur approximately every 2 months. The Ministerial Advisory Board's role at these meetings is to: • support the Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) Commissioner in developing independent advice to Government on the legislated functions, and ensure a voice for tripartite partners and others in addressing skills, labour market and workforce development needs • provide advice to the Commissioner during the development of annual work plans • provide feedback on terms of reference for capacity studies, cohort analyses and regional assessments • make recommendations to the Commissioner to inform the key outcomes and priorities of JSA's work.	
Membership of meeting	
Members are appointed by the Minister. The Advisory Board consists of: • the Chair • 2 members representing the states and territories • 4 members representing employee organisations • 4 members representing employer organisations • no more than 4 other members (who must not be a representative of employee or employer organisations).	
Future opportunities	
Attendance at Ministerial Advisory Board meetings provides an opportunity for the minister to meet with board members, set out their expectations for JSA, and hear members' views on JSA's work and priorities.	
Frequency of meetings and historical attendance	
• The Ministerial Advisory Board is ministerially appointed and required to meet a minimum of 4 times per year. • 5 meetings were held in 2024: 20 May, 21 June, 26 August, 28 October and 2 December. • The first meeting for 2025 was held on 19 February. • The next meeting is scheduled for 16 June 2025.	

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Appendix A – Ministerial appointments over the next 12 months

Workplace Relations

Expiring appointments and vacancies (1 May 2025 – 30 April 2026)

Portfolio body	Position	Person currently appointed	End date
Comcare	Chief Executive Officer	Vacant	
Coal Mining Industry (Long Service Leave Funding) Corporation	Board member representing companies mining black coal in NSW or Tasmania	Christina Langby	4/06/2025
National Workplace Relations Consultative Council	Member representing the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Melissa Byrne	16/08/2025
		Tara Diamond	
		Jessica Tinsley	
	Member representing the Business Council of Australia	Wendy Black	16/08/2025
Seacare Authority	Member representing the ACTU	Liam O'Brien	16/08/2025
		Joseph Mitchell	15/09/2025
		Anne Butler	17/02/2026
	Chair	Barry Sherriff	21/10/2025
Safe Work Australia	Member representing employers	Sarah Cerchè	9/10/2025
	Deputy to member representing employers	Angela Gillham	9/10/2025
	Member representing the ACTU	Liam O'Brien	18/12/2025

* acting

Skills and Training

Expiring appointments and vacancies (1 May 2025 – 30 April 2026)

Portfolio body	Position	Person currently appointed	End date
National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Advisory Council	Chair	Peter Costantini *	6/07/2025
		Don Zoellner *	
	Member	Neil Quarmby *	
		Adrienne Nieuwenhuis *	
		Grant Klinkum *	
		Renee Hindmarsh *	
Australian Skills Quality Authority	Chief Executive Officer	Valerie Braithwaite *	31/12/2025
		Saxon Rice	
Jobs and Skills Australia Ministerial Advisory Board	Deputy Chair	Liam O'Brien	24/03/2026
		Bran Black	
	Member	Nyadol Nyuon	
		Annie Butler	
		Luke Achterstraat	
		El Gibbs	
		Jodie Wallace	
		Jack Beetson	
		Rachel Cooper	
		Correna Haythorpe	
		Lill Healy	
		Jodie Trembath	
		Caroline Smith	
		David Henry	

* acting