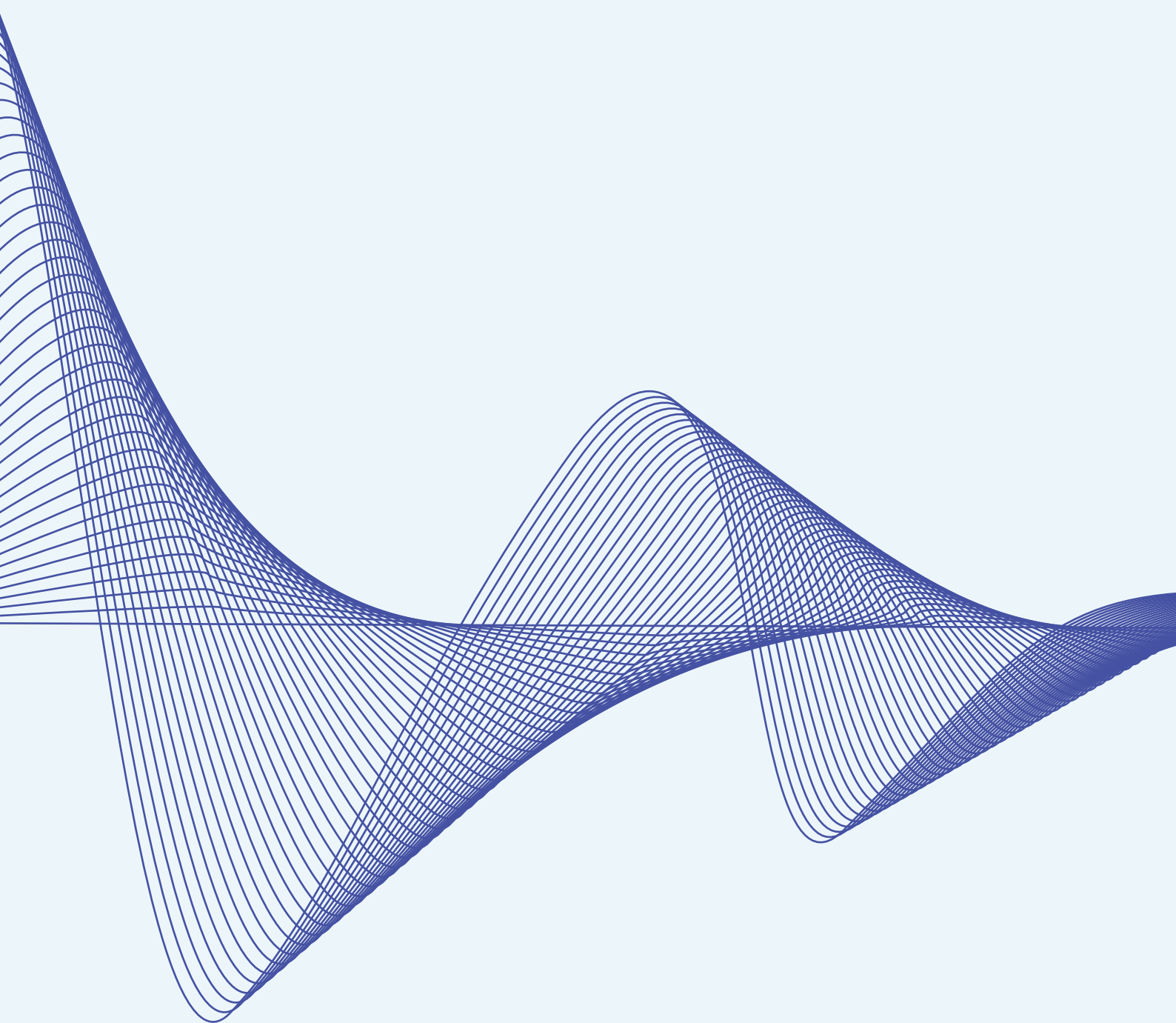


2025 **Correctional Services** Workforce Insights Report



PUBLIC SKILLS
AUSTRALIA
PUBLIC SAFETY SKILLS AUSTRALIA LTD

JSC

Jobs and Skills Council
Public Safety and Government
An Australian Government Initiative

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About Public Skills Australia

Public Skills Australia is the Jobs and Skills Council (JSC) for the Public Safety and Government industry. The primary objective of Public Skills Australia is to support the Correctional Services, Defence, Federal, State/Territory and Local Government, Fire and Emergency Services and Police industry-sectors, to train, develop and promote a highly skilled, effective and efficient Public Safety and Government workforce. To achieve this objective, Public Skills Australia works closely with employer and employee bodies and volunteer associations within these industry-sectors, to identify and mitigate workforce challenges and support future skilling.



Public Skills Australia is committed to:

- undertaking data analysis, research and employing strategic foresight tools to understand current workforce challenges and develop future Workforce Insights Reports (referred to as Workforce Plans in 2024)
- developing quality training products to strengthen the skills and capabilities of these industry-sectors
- monitoring and promoting the implementation of training products
- consulting with, advocating for and promoting the needs of these industry-sectors.

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Acknowledgements
Public Skills Australia acknowledges the contributions of industry representatives, who gave their valuable time and effort to contribute to this Workforce Insights Report. We further acknowledge the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations who provide the funding for workforce planning under the Jobs and Skills Council program.

Executive Summary As a JSC, Public Skills Australia develops annual Workforce Insights Reports relevant to each industry-sector’s evolving workforce challenges. In the development of the 2025 Workforce Insight Reports, Public Skills Australia sought to build upon the existing findings from the 2024 Workforce Plans and develop deeper insights through broader engagement with industry. The 2025 Correctional Services Workforce Insights Report (report) provides a holistic analysis of the Correctional Services industry-sector, its workforce, and the challenges it faces. More importantly, this report communicates industry insights about workforce challenges and identifies strategies to mitigate them.	IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES 1 Workforce Lifecycle Research and consultation identified challenges contributing to increased workforce challenges impacting across all stages of the Correctional Services workforce lifecycle, including: • Attraction: attracting a workforce that reflects the needs of a contemporary corrections environment. • Recruitment: modifying entry requirements to meet recruitment targets, with a targeted focus on the recruitment of First Nations employees. • Onboarding: equipping employees for the complexities of the physical and psychological demands of a Correctional Services role through pre-service training. • Retention: mitigating limitations on learning and development opportunities and effects of mental health impacts (resulting in increased psychological injury claims). • Exit / Separation: building a deeper understanding as to why employees exit, exploring exit/separation data limitations and assessing whether varying processes across organisations may provide additional insights.	
	2 First Nations Workforce High attrition and retention of First Nations employees is a challenge that is impacted by low participation rates of other employees in cultural awareness or competency training. Embedding cultural competency in organisations, with the objective of promoting cultural safety for First Nations employees, may see a positive impact on retention rates.	
	PROPOSED STRATEGIES 1 Review of skills maintenance approaches throughout the workforce lifecycle Explore existing skilling and professional development frameworks adopted by Correctional Services organisations, including non-accredited training, to identify opportunities for harmonisation of approaches.	2 Proposal to investigate barriers to First Nations participation in the Correctional Services workforce Draft a proposal to gain industry support to examine the factors that limit the participation of First Nations people in the Correctional Services workforce, including the reasons for joining, attritional factors and motivation for remaining in the workforce.

Introduction The 2025 Correctional Services Workforce Insights Report explores the unique workforce challenges within the Correctional Services industry-sector. This report presents the approach taken by Public Skills Australia towards data analysis, research, and consultation. The Workforce Insights Report also highlights the depth and breadth of stakeholder engagement activities. Through deeper engagement and consultation with industry, Public Skills Australia has collected diverse and nuanced perspectives regarding workforce challenges within the Correctional Services industry-sector. This includes the mapping of existing strategies and initiatives that are underway in the Correctional Services industry-sector. The research conducted in the development of the 2025 Correctional Services Workforce Insights Report provides the foundation for the proposal of practical strategies to support the Correctional Services industry-sector in mitigating identified workforce challenges. The Workforce Insights Report will be used to mobilise future research and consultation efforts with key industry stakeholders, which will enable Public Skills Australia to build on a deeper analysis of current and emerging workforce challenges in the Correctional Services industry-sector.	
Methodology Public Skills Australia’s Workforce Insights Reports are supported by a combination of qualitative and quantitative data obtained from primary and secondary sources. Insights from stakeholder consultations have been thematically analysed to identify common challenges and trends, while quantitative data from publicly available datasets were used to validate these findings and provide measurable evidence of workforce trends. This integrated approach ensures that the experiences and observations of industry stakeholders and empirical data inform the analysis and recommendations within this Workforce Insights Report. A range of consultation methods were utilised to support effective stakeholder engagement. Public Skills Australia leveraged established relationships and governance arrangements to: • invite participation in consultation • identify additional stakeholders • verify and validate research and data findings • seek feedback on the Workforce Insights Report. Stakeholder engagements included both in-person and online meetings and presentations in a range of formats, written reviews, and feedback from Public Skills Australia governance group members. Specific to the Correctional Services industry-sector, and in alignment with the tripartite approach to industry engagement, Public Skills Australia consulted with employee and employer stakeholders relevant to the Correctional Services industry-sector.¹ In addition to this, publicly accessible information in the form of datasets obtained from Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) have been cited throughout to validate industry challenges and inform the narrative of this Workforce Insights Report. Due to the complexity of large-scale workforce data, accurate data cannot be derived from a single source only. As such, multiple data sources are preferred, however, this can magnify data discrepancies. Where possible, this Workforce Insights Report prioritises the data source, or combination of data sources, that provide the most accurate representation of the workforce possible.² Research articles on relevant topics, government online sources and annual reports have also been referenced throughout this Workforce Insights Report.	

⁰¹ For further information on stakeholder engagements undertaken for the development of this report, refer to 2025 Stakeholder Engagement section.

⁰² When using the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) it should be noted that employment within industry subsectors typically includes a range of occupations, some of which may not be covered by Public Skills Australia’s remit.

Industry Overview

Correctional Services is one of the three pillars of the criminal justice system that support and promote public safety in Australia. This industry-sector delivers custodial and community-based services aimed at rehabilitation and reducing reoffending to help keep communities safe.³ The workforce spans a broad range of occupations, including frontline roles and supporting functions. This includes Correctional Officers (COs),⁴ who deliver custodial services in secure facilities, and Community Corrections Officers (CCOs), who supervise offenders serving non-custodial sentences or parole in the community. Community Corrections Officers typically engage in case management, risk assessment, and compliance monitoring. The broader workforce also includes public servants working inside and outside correctional environments across functions such as administration, education, policy, and intelligence.

⁰³ Department for Correctional Services South Australia, [Our purpose](#), Department for Correctional Services South Australia, n.d., accessed 20 December 2024; Corrections Victoria, [About Corrections Victoria](#), Corrections Victoria, n.d., accessed 20 December 2024.

⁰⁴ Some national data sources recognise, collect or present data on the workforce as 'Prison Officer', however for consistency with the 2024 Correctional Services Workforce Plan the occupation will be identified as Correctional Officer per the OSCA codes.

DIVERSE RANGE OF DUTIES UNDERTAKEN BY CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS



Facilitating participation in work and learning



Focus on Restorative and Rehabilitative Actions



Understanding complex mental health behaviours



Maintain Safety and Security



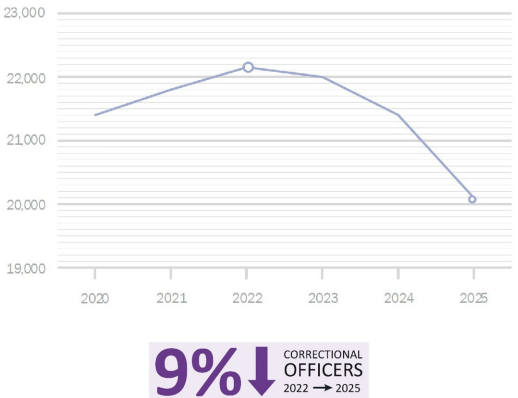
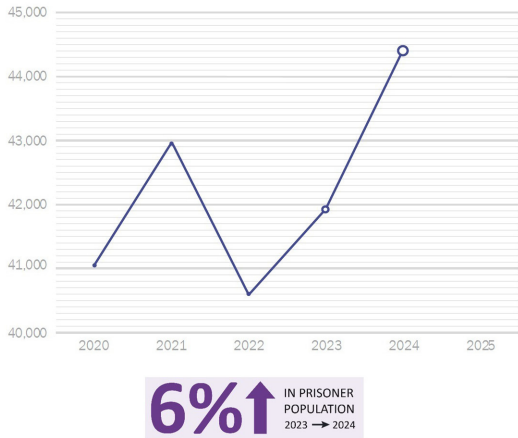
Emergency Response



Wellfare and Support

INDUSTRY OVERVIEW

YEARLY NUMBER OF CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS AND PRISONERS NATIONWIDE

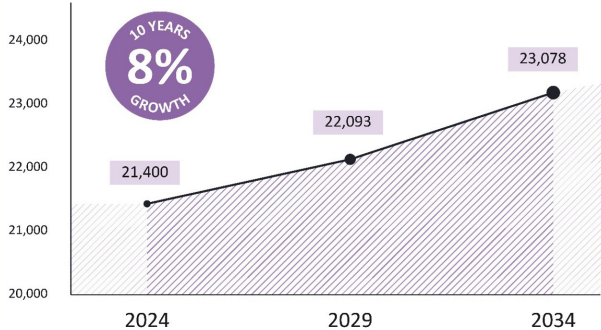


Between 2013 and 2024, the adult imprisonment rate increased by 21 per cent, from 172.2 per 100,000 population to 208.0 per 100,000 population.⁵ With a six per cent increase in the prison population in 2024 alone,⁶ projections continue to predict that the rate of the prison population will grow at a rate double that of the Australian population.⁷ These projections will be impacted by likely prison population increases driven by state-based crime and justice policies around policing, bail laws, minimum age of criminal responsibility, and 'tough on crime' policies. In contrast, the CO workforce is projected to grow by only 3.2 per cent between 2024 to 2029.⁸ While this projection reflects both supply and demand factors, it may present a workforce challenge if prisoner population growth or policy settings shift more rapidly than anticipated.

CORRECTIONAL SERVICES OCCUPATIONAL ROLES



PROJECTED NATIONAL GROWTH OF CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS



Stricter Bail Laws



Lowering the Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility



Tough on Crime Policies

DRIVERS OF INCREASING PRISON POPULATIONS

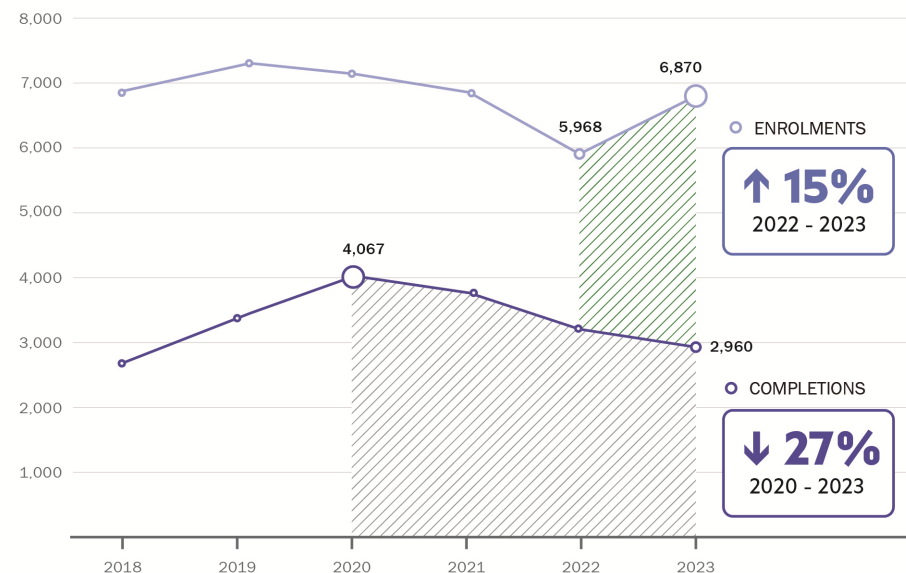
Figure 1: Dashboard overview of key Correctional Services industry-sector data. Please note – source list for data appears in Appendix A

⁰⁵ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, [Adults in prison](#), Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2023, accessed 10 February 2025.

⁰⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), [Prisoners in Australia](#), ABS, 2024, accessed 10 February 2025.

⁰⁷ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, [Adults in prison](#), Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2023, accessed 10 February 2025.

⁰⁸ Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), [Employment Projections](#), JSA, 2025, accessed 10 February 2025.



NATIONAL YEARLY ENROLMENTS AND COMPLETIONS IN THE CSC TRAINING PACKAGE

Further data from the JSA Occupation Shortage List (OSL) shows that Northern Territory and New South Wales both have occupational shortages in Correctional Officers.^{9 10} Although JSA employment projections incorporate both supply and demand considerations, the comparatively low projected growth in the Correctional Officer workforce suggests that some jurisdictions may face workforce pressures, particularly if prison populations continue to grow or if attrition remains high. These dynamics may elevate the risk of future occupational shortages in some states and territories. The Correctional Services industry-sector is facing workforce pressures due to a declining labour supply, alongside a growing prisoner population and projected increases in employment demand. These factors combined highlight the need for critical support for this industry-sector. This report will consider the training needs of this workforce, which presents data on the use of the CSC Correctional Services Training Package (CSC Training Package).

1.6x



More males enrolled in the CSC Training Package than female and gender diverse students (2019-2023)

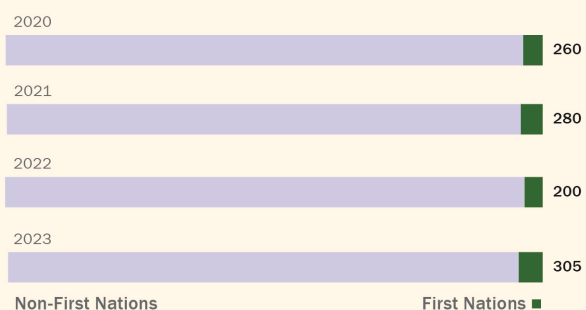


FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE PARTICIPATION

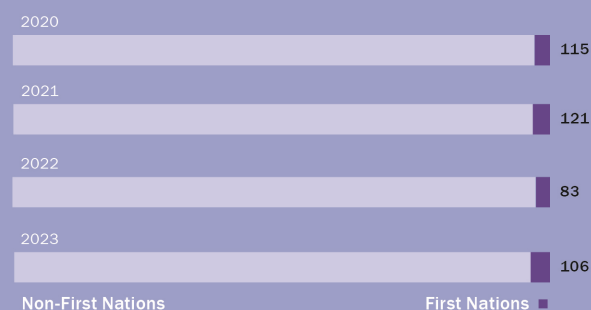
4.8 % OF THE CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS THAT ARE FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE (2023)

4% OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN CSC TRAINING PACKAGE ARE FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE (2023)

FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE ENROLMENTS IN CSC TRAINING PACKAGE



FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE COMPLETIONS OF CSC TRAINING PACKAGE



Correctional Services Training Package

The Correctional Services Training Package (the training package) provides training and development for employees working in Correctional Services roles. It includes a range of qualifications and units of competency that cover aspects of Correctional Services operations. The training package aims to ensure that correctional services employees have the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their roles effectively.

ENROLMENTS AND COMPLETIONS

Enrolment in the training package has steadily decreased since 2019 yet saw a 15-per cent increase in 2023 (Figure 2).¹¹ Training package completions have continued to decline since 2020.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

The 2024 Correctional Services Workforce Plan identified demographic data gaps in the CSC Training Package. This remains a challenge for the Correctional Services industry-sector.

The most recent learning data indicates that male learners make up the greatest proportion of enrolments and completions in 2023 (Figures 3 and 4).¹² The data also suggests that male learners are enrolling in the CSC Training Package, on average, at a rate of 1.6 times more than female and gender diverse learners (from 2019 to 2023), which may present gender equity challenges for the Correctional Services industry-sector.

Similar to the Correctional Services industry-sector workforce representation data,¹³ First Nations people represent approximately four per cent of the total national CSC Training Package enrolments in 2023 (Figure 2).¹⁴

An examination into the *Certificate III of Correctional Practice* is currently underway, which is likely to have a bearing on the utility of the CSC Training Package.

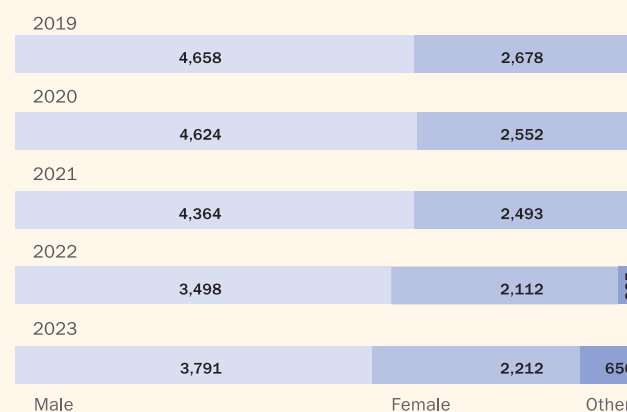


Figure 3: Enrolments in the CSC Training Package by gender¹⁵

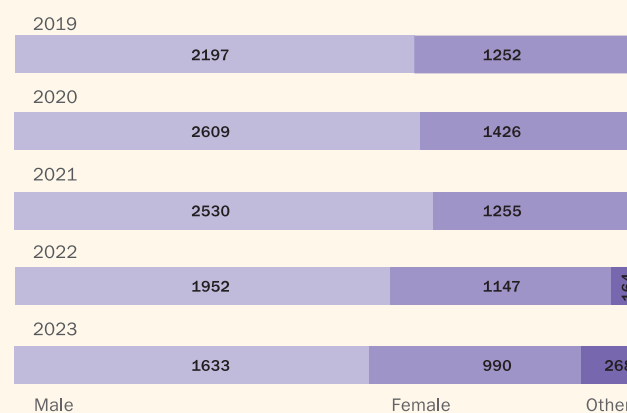


Figure 4: Completions of the CSC Training Package by gender¹⁶

Figure 2: Dashboard overview of key Correctional Services industry-sector data. Please note – source list for data appears in Appendix A

⁹ Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), *Employment Projections*, JSA, 2025, accessed 10 February 2025.

¹⁰ The OSL is a national labour market analysis tool that demonstrates labour market and skills shortages; however, it does not provide a metric of service delivery within the Correctional Services industry-sector.

¹¹ National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), *Total VET students and courses 2023: VOCSTATS*, [data set], NCVER, 2025, accessed 21 January 2025.

¹² NCVER, *Total VET students and courses 2023: VOCSTATS*, [data set], NCVER, 2025, accessed 21 January 2025.

¹³ Public Skills Australia, *Correctional Services Workforce Plan*, Public Skills Australia, 2024.

¹⁴ NCVER, *Total VET students and courses 2023: VOCSTATS*, [data set], NCVER, 2025, accessed 21 January 2025.

¹⁵ NCVER, *Total VET students and courses 2023: VOCSTATS*, [data set], NCVER, 2025, accessed 21 January 2025.

¹⁶ NCVER, *Total VET students and courses 2023: VOCSTATS*, [data set], NCVER, 2025, accessed 21 January 2025.

2024 Megatrend Recap

The 2024 *Correctional Services Workforce Plan* identified nine megatrends impacting across the Public Safety and Government industries. Through consultation with Correctional Services stakeholders, a range of workforce insights were gathered in relation to each of the megatrends. A brief overview of the key findings from 2024 are detailed below.



CAREER PATHWAYS

Limited pathway opportunities for Correctional Officers.

Jurisdictional variation on the use of the *Certificate III in Correctional Services* qualification.



CLIMATE CHANGE

Ensuring adequate preparedness procedures are in place given the increasing frequency and intensity of climate disasters.



COMPETITION FOR LABOUR

Public and private sector compete for the same labour.

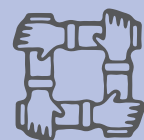
Correctional Services is a stepping stone for other public safety careers.



DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFTS

Employees leave other public safety careers and join the Correctional Services later in life.

Median age of a Correctional Officer is 43 years old.



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

First Nations representation remains a challenge.

Equitable gender composition is an ongoing consideration in recruitment.



EXPANSION OF

CORE DUTIES

Increased expectation for Correctional Officers to understand complex mental health and behaviours of persons in custody.



PUBLIC TRUST

AND PERCEPTION

Public trust and perception are tied to death or injury of persons in custody.

Reform work is ongoing in the Correctional Services industry-sector.



RECRUITMENT AND

RETENTION

High levels of burnout and separation rates.

Size of recruitment pools not necessarily equating to suitable candidates for recruitment.



TECHNOLOGICAL

DEVELOPMENT

New technologies can increase safety.

2025 Workforce Insights

In the development of the 2025 *Correctional Services Workforce Insights* Report, Public Skills Australia undertook extensive research and industry consultation to generate insights on the workforce challenges currently impacting the Correctional Services industry-sector.

The following insights highlight the current and most significant challenges within the Correctional Services workforce in 2025.

→ Workforce Lifecycle

→ First Nations Workforce

Workforce Lifecycle

Workforce planning is an ongoing process that informs workforce strategies and enables flexible interventions throughout the workforce lifecycle.

A workforce lifecycle has five main components that address each stage of an employee's career (Figure 7).¹⁷

ATTRACTION

The first stage of a workforce lifecycle is attraction, which at its core is about branding, the building of a self-sustaining appeal that naturally encourages new workers to join the industry with little effort.¹⁸ One of the keys to supporting attraction is a strong educational pipeline into the workforce.¹⁹

Although it is projected that the CO workforce will grow by 3.2 per cent over the next 5 years, between 2022 and 2025 there was a nine per cent decrease (Figure 5).²⁰ Given the increasing prison population (approximately 2.8 per cent per year [Figure 6]),²¹ it is critical for the Correctional Services industry-sector to develop a strong attraction model to meet future demand.

In the past, a career in Correctional Services was seen as financially secure, offering a steady income with minimal educational requirements.²² Stakeholders largely agree that there are negative historical perspectives about working in the Correctional Services industry-sector. CO work is seen as physically, morally and emotionally intensive, which broader society prefers to disassociate from, rather than consider it

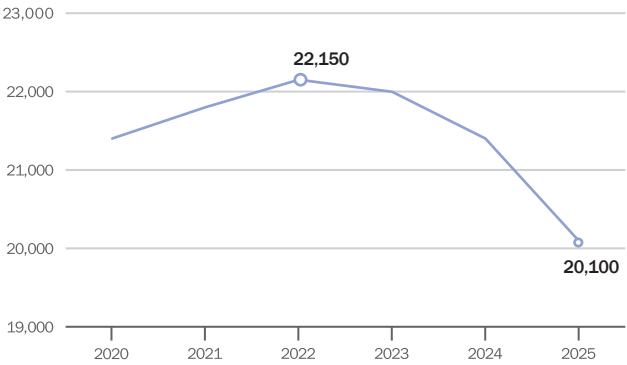


Figure 5: Yearly number of correctional officers nationwide²³

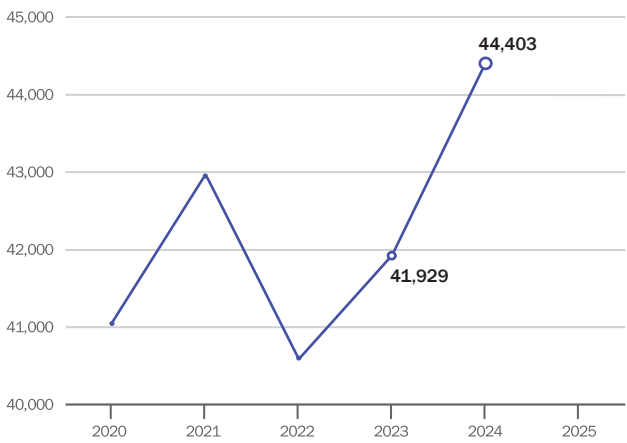


Figure 6: Yearly number of prisoners nationwide²⁴

as a role with an essential social function.²⁵ As such, a shift in public perception is required for individuals to view CO work in the same vein as that of a nurse, teacher or social worker.

As the industry-sector shifts to embrace a restorative and rehabilitative approach, the attraction methods and target audience should evolve accordingly. For example, Corrections Victoria partnered with the 'I Catch Killers' podcast to create a series that 'goes behind prison walls'. This pivot in attraction method enables a realistic depiction of the industry-sector to a potential audience of over 3.8 million Australian podcast listeners.²⁶ The Correctional Services industry-sector will need to consider innovative and diversified recruitment models like this to meet the needs of the future Correctional Services workforce.

RECRUITMENT

Recruitment as a component of the workforce lifestyle refers to the action-orientated process that focuses on both a broad and targeted pool of candidates. The general jurisdictional processes for Correctional Services recruitment include variations of the following:

- resume and cover letter
- psychological testing
- fitness testing
- criminal history / police check
- medical examinations
- language, literacy and numeracy testing (LLN)
- panel interviews
- reference checks.

Targeted recruitment programs, like the *Northern Territory Skilled Migration Program* provide organisations the opportunity to access a pool of experienced New Zealand Correctional Officers looking to migrate to Australia. In 2024, Northern Territory Department of Corrections reported 51 successful candidates for this program to boost the workforce in their Alice Springs facilities.²⁷ Despite the success of this program, skilled migration programs are expensive and often include visa costs, potential medical requirements, skill assessments, relocation costs and / or bonuses to the candidate.

Some Correctional Officer roles may not be eligible under standard skilled migration pathways, as they are typically classified at Skill Level four, commensurate with a Certificate II or Certificate III under the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF).

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Stakeholder representatives noted that the baseline requirements that enable candidates to progress through the recruitment process may be adjusted to meet recruitment targets. **Fitness testing and psychological testing** were the areas most flexible in the recruitment process and may be contributing to retention rates within the industry-sector.

Figure 7:
Stages of the workforce lifecycle



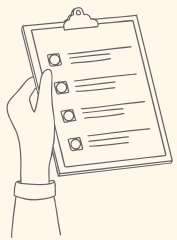
1. ATTRACTION

Selling the sector and the role to an audience of potential future employees.



2. RECRUITMENT

Engaging with the potential employee through an end-to-end recruitment process.



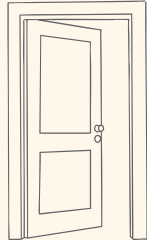
3. ONBOARDING

12-month period which includes baseline process and policy training. It is vital this extends beyond the probation period.



4. RETENTION

Ongoing process that focuses on learning and career development, underpinned by support systems for wellbeing.



5. EXIT/SEPARATION

Employee process to leave a position, organisation or sector.

¹⁷ O Gladka, V Fedorova and Y Dohadailo, *Development of conceptual bases of the employee life cycle within an organization*, Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, 2022, accessed 10 February 2025.
¹⁸ Jobs and Skills Western Australia, *Building a good employer brand*, Department of Training and Workforce Development, 2024, accessed 17 January 2025.
¹⁹ A Registered Training Organisation (RTO) or qualification that provides a pathway from learning environment to working environment.
²⁰ JSA, *Employment Projections*, JSA, 2023, accessed 20 January 2025.
²¹ Productivity Commission, *Report on Government Services – Corrective Services - Table 8A.4*, [data set], Productivity Commission, 2024, January 2024, accessed 20 January 2025.
²² H Arnold, A Liebling and S Tait, *Handbook on prisons: Prison officers and prison culture*, Willan Publishing, 2012, accessed 28 January 2025.
²³ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *Table EQ08*, [data set], employed persons by Occupation unit group of main job (ANZSCO), Sex, State and Territory, August 1986 onwards [time series spreadsheet], Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, data trended by Jobs and Skills Australia, ABS, 2024, accessed 6 March 2025.
²⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *Prisoners in Australia*, ABS, 2024, accessed 10 February 2025.

²⁵ A Eriksson, *The Taint of The Other: Prison Work as 'Dirty Work' in Australia*, Punishment and Society, 2023, accessed 28 January 2025.
²⁶ Podcast Services Australia, *Podcast Popularity and Listener Demographics 2023-2024*, Podcast Services Australia, n.d., accessed 28 January 2025. Data refers to total download numbers for all podcasts in 2023/2024.
²⁷ Northern Territory Department of the Attorney-General and Justice, *Annual Report 2023-24*, Northern Territory Department of the Attorney-General and Justice, 2024, accessed 17 January 2025.

The Occupation Shortage List (OSL) indicates the Correctional Officer (ANZSCO 442111) shortage is only evident in New South Wales and Northern Territory,²⁸ however that data is unable to capture the impact of parental leave, sick leave, suspension (with or without pay) or workers compensation leave. As noted in stakeholder consultation, this means that decisions made to fund recruitment of Correctional Officers needs to consider other factors of diminished workforce capacity.

Recruitment challenges are further compounded given the location of regional and rural facilities. For COs living and working in a regional Correctional Services facility they may engage with prisoners who are friends or family. Whilst some jurisdictions have relocation policies or relocation funding to attract recruitment in regional locations,²⁹ it may be insufficient to engage the full requisite of employees.

ONBOARDING

The onboarding process of a Correctional Officer can be lengthy, with stakeholders reporting this may take up to 12 months. This period is to enable the appropriate amount of time to learn, apply and grow an employee within an organisation. It enables a period where growth opportunities can be developed, and organisational values can be reinforced through key leadership engagement.³⁰

A core activity within the onboarding period for a Correctional Officer is the delivery of the pre-service/initial training course prior to commencement in a prison.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Correctional Services stakeholders and union representatives noted that pre-service training content is similar across jurisdictions, with delivery location and methods being the distinguishing factor. **Most stakeholders acknowledged that the course content inadequately prepares new recruits for the psychological demands of the role.**

Stakeholder representatives acknowledged that where there has historically been consistent reinforcement of organisational values, new recruits may revert to behaviours they see demonstrated from other employees.

Pre-service training ensures that Correctional Officers understand the fundamentals of the role, but this training is limited to the location of delivery versus the location of their employment (e.g. training centre vs regional facility). Stakeholders acknowledged that in some instances a pre-service training course is implemented, however, these courses have not fully prepared recruits for the type of emotional work a Correctional officer will engage in. Additionally in the onboarding period in some States/Territories, employees must undertake the *Certificate III in Correctional Practice* (currently under review).

RETENTION

Clearly defined career pathways supported through learning and development plans are crucial to support employee value propositions and to retain employees. A career pathway enables workers to identify career goals within an organisation and align with their strategic goals. Overall, learning and development opportunities vary between jurisdictions, yet each offer combinations of accredited training opportunities and non-accredited micro-credentials. Whilst a micro-credential has value in providing a learning opportunity, they do not always result in a transferable or recognised credential.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Support Systems

Within the Public Safety and Government industries, Correctional Services has the second highest number of psychological injury work cover claims.³³ In the last 10 years Correctional Services has seen over a 300 per cent increase in psychological injury work cover claims and over a 110 per cent increase in physical injury work cover claims (Figures 8 and 9).³⁴

Similarly to many industry-sectors, gaps in staffing numbers can burden other elements of business operations, including impacts to those in the workforce with the ability to continue working.³⁵ Stakeholders consulted recognised the impact of additional Workcover claims on operational capacity.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Stakeholder industry-representatives identified that **operational capacity is often a barrier for accessing learning opportunities** that fall outside of the mandatory requirements.

Multiple employer and employee bodies noted that the **accredited learning and development opportunities available are solely aligned with role progressions**. Non-accredited learning opportunities that are available through micro-credentials are often limited and these must be undertaken at the employee's own direction and in their own time.

Private sector representatives identified that resource constraints impact their ability to provide diverse learning and development opportunities in addition to their contractually mandated training.

Figure 8: National Correctional and Detention Services work cover psychological injury claims from 2011-2022³¹

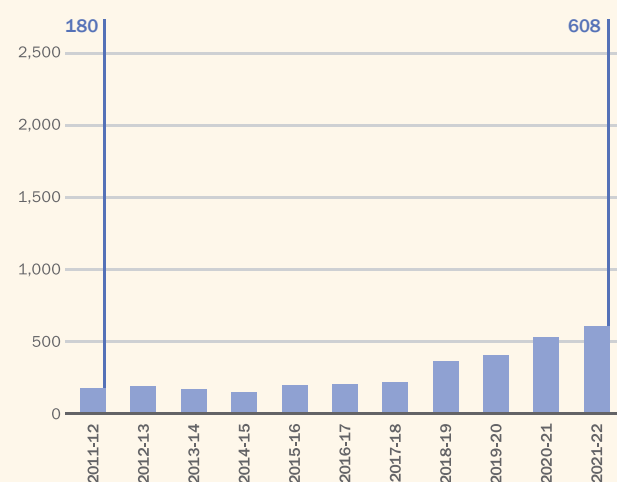
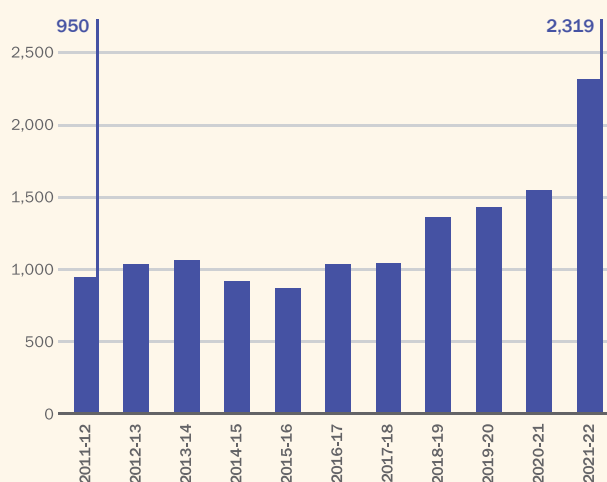


Figure 9: National Correctional and Detention Services work cover physical injury claims from 2011-2022³²



²⁸ Jobs and Skills Australia, [Occupation Shortage List](#), JSA, 2024, accessed 17 January 2025. Please note that the Occupation Standard Classification for Australia (OSCA) replaced the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) in 2024, however, most data are available under ANZSCO at this stage.

²⁹ Victorian Department of Justice and Community Safety, [Become a prison officer](#), Corrections Victoria, n.d., accessed 17 January 2024.

³⁰ Australian Human Rights Commission, [Current Issues in Prison Management: Submission to United Nations Rapporteur on Torture](#), Australian Human Rights Commission, 2023, accessed 30 October 2024.

³¹ Safe Work Australia (SWA), Serious claims (count) by select Industry class, Mechanism major group, and Mechanism sub-major group, SWA, 2008-09 to 2022-23p. [unpublished dataset], 2024.

³² SWA, Serious claims (count) by select Industry class, Mechanism major group, and Mechanism sub-major group, SWA, 2008-09 to 2022-23p. [unpublished dataset], 2024.

Within the Public Safety and Government industries, Correctional Services has the **2nd Highest** number of psychological injury work cover claims

↑ 110%
in physical injury work cover claims in the last 10 years.

↑ 300%
in psychological injury work cover claims in the last 10 years.

³³ Safe Work Australia (SWA), Serious claims (count) by select Industry class, Mechanism major group, and Mechanism sub-major group, SWA, 2008-09 to 2022-23p. [unpublished dataset], 2024.

³⁴ SWA, Serious claims (count) by select Industry class, Mechanism major group, and Mechanism sub-major group, SWA, 2008-09 to 2022-23p. [unpublished dataset], 2024.

The role of a Correctional Officers is diverse, varying from rehabilitative and care related functions to the enforcement of rules within prisons. The work environment within Correctional Services can be ever-changing for the workforce it employs,³⁶ with potential exposure to unpredictable events increasing the likelihood of psychological trauma, in turn increasing burnout and gaps in staffing.³⁷

There are certain aspects of the roles of Correctional Service workers, that may have a higher likelihood of increasing emotional stressors.³⁸ In addition, multiple Australian Correctional Services jurisdictions have reported increases incidents that have been challenging for both the physical and mental safety for both Correctional Officers and prisoners.^{39 40} With these increased challenges to mental health and wellbeing within the Correctional Services industry-sector, a variety of categories for psychological injuries, are now included in Workcover data (Figure 10).⁴¹

The Correctional Services industry-sector has taken steps in the creation of jurisdictional mental health and wellbeing frameworks,⁴² and Safe at Work Strategies,⁴³ in response to these ongoing challenges for the Correctional Service workforces. Staying consistent and proactive in mitigating mental health and wellbeing challenges is crucial to ensure

continued and appropriate support systems are provided to the industry-sector.

EXIT / SEPARATION

A key component of the workforce lifecycle is building supportive processes around a worker exiting from an organisation. Stakeholders have noted that a smooth exit from an organisation increases the likelihood that an employee will engage in exit interviewing and other data collection processes, which can feed into future workforce planning activities. When an employee leaves the Correctional Services industry-sector, they do so with a range of skills that may transfer to work in other industries. Should these employees return to Correctional Services at a later stage, they should be able to reintegrate back into the industry with their existing skills.

PSYCHOLOGICAL INJURY WORK COVER CLAIMS 2008 TO 2022

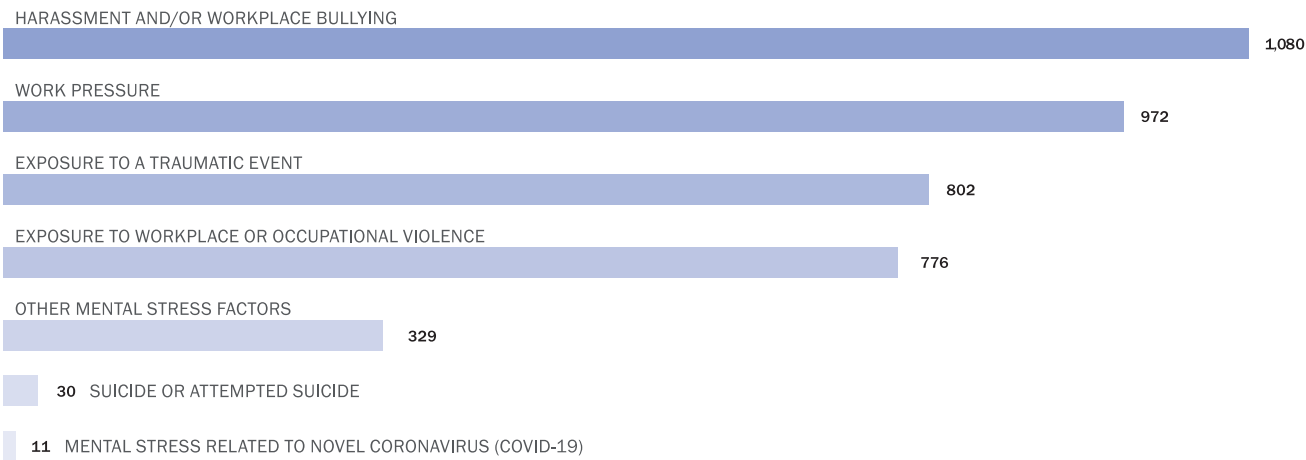


Figure 10: Number of Correctional and Detention Services psychological injury work cover claims by category from 2008-09 to 2022-23⁴⁴

³⁵ O Miller, D Bruenig and J Shakespeare-Finch, *Wellbeing in frontline correctional officers: a mixed-method systematic review*, Criminal Justice and Behaviour, 2022, accessed 17 January 2025.

³⁶ N Fusco et al., *When our work hits home: trauma and mental disorders in correctional officers and other correctional workers*, Frontiers in Psychology, 2021, accessed 17 January 2025; O Miller, D Bruenig and J Shakespeare-Finch, *Wellbeing in frontline correctional officers: a mixed-method systematic review*, Criminal Justice and Behaviour, 2022, accessed 17 January 2025.

³⁷ O Miller, D Bruenig and J Shakespeare-Finch, *Wellbeing in frontline correctional officers: a mixed-method systematic review*, Criminal Justice and Behaviour, 2022, accessed 17 January 2025.

³⁸ Australian Human Rights Commission, *Current Issues in Prison Management: Submission to United Nations Rapporteur on Torture*, Australian Human Rights Commission, 2023, accessed 31 January 2025; J Trounson, J Pfeifer and C Critchley, *Correctional officers and work-related environmental adversity: a cross-occupational comparison*, Applied Psychology in Criminal Justice, 2016, accessed 17 January 2025; United Workers' Union, Legislative Council Government Administration Committee 'B', Submission: Inquiry into Tasmania adult imprisonment and youth detention matters, 2023.

³⁹ K Hilton, T Cartwright, J Gallagher and G Smith, Cultural review of the adult custodial corrections system. Safer prison, safer people, safer communities: final report of the cultural review of the adult custodial corrections system, report to the Victorian Government, Independent Review, 2022; Queensland Corrective Services, Submission to Taskforce Flaxon, 2018.

⁴⁰ Australian Human Rights Commission, *Current Issues in Prison Management: Submission to United Nations Rapporteur on Torture*, Australian Human Rights Commission, 2023, accessed 30 October 2024; Queensland Corrective Services (2018) Submission to Taskforce Flaxon.

⁴¹ Safe Work Australia (SWA), Serious claims (count) by select Industry class, Mechanism major group, and Mechanism sub-major group, SWA, 2008-09 to 2022-23p. [unpublished dataset], 2024.

⁴² Queensland Government, Mental Health Strategy 2022-2027, Queensland Corrective Services.

⁴³ Government of South Australia, Safe at Work 2024-2026, Department for Correctional Services.

⁴⁴ SWA, Serious claims (count) by select Industry class, Mechanism major group, and Mechanism sub-major group, SWA, 2008-09 to 2022-23p. [unpublished dataset], 2024.

First Nations Workforce

First Nations⁴⁵ people represent 3.8 per cent of the overall Australian population,⁴⁶ they make up 36 per cent of the total prisoner population.⁴⁷ This contrasts with the 4.8 per cent of First Nations people that comprise the CO workforce.⁴⁸

The National Agreement on Closing the Gap (CTG) sets the national priority reforms and targets aimed to improve outcomes for First Nations peoples in Australia.⁴⁹ Approximately 55 per cent of First Nations peoples aged between 25 and 64 years old are employed in Australia, and Target 8 of the CTG aims to increase that to 62 per cent.⁵⁰ In support of these targets Correctional Services in each State/Territory set internal targets largely underpinned by First Nations Workforce Strategies and Frameworks to support culturally appropriate recruitment and retention practices.

ADMINISTRATIVE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

The challenges highlighted in 'Recruitment' insights, represent a baseline that every general Correctional Services applicant deals with. For First Nations peoples, these challenges can be exacerbated, leading to additional layers of difficulty unique to their experiences. Generalised Correctional Services recruitment processes are designed to capture specific 'desirable' traits for the industry-sector, but these may not necessarily be the most effective tool for the recruitment of First Nations people.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Employer and union bodies identified the ongoing challenge with recruitment of First Nations People from the local areas surrounding regional facilities. There is an increased likelihood of engagement with friends or family in the custodial setting, which can pose cultural and psychological challenges.

First Nations People represent
3.8%
of the overall Australian population

First Nations People make up
36%
of the total prisoner population

4.8%
of First Nations People
comprise the CO workforce

⁴⁵ First Nations people will be used as preferred terminology inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. When citing a data source (e.g. annual reports, ABS data, or the Productivity Commission's Report on Government Services) the terminology of the data source will be used to maintain accurate data representation.

⁴⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians*, ABS, 2021, accessed 29 January 2025.

⁴⁷ ABS, *Prisoners in Australia*, ABS, 2024, accessed 29 January 2025.

⁴⁸ ABS, *SEXP Sex, INGP Indigenous Status and 6-digit level OCCP Occupation by STATE (POW)*, [data set], ABS, 2021, accessed 29 January 2025; Productivity Commission, *Report on Government Services – Corrective Services Table 8A.5*, [data set], ABS, 2025, accessed 15 February 2025.

⁴⁹ Closing the Gap Partnership, *Closing the Gap Targets and Outcomes*, Closing the Gap Partnership, 2020, accessed 10 January 2025.

⁵⁰ Productivity Commission, *Target 8 Dashboard*, [data set], Productivity Commission, n.d., accessed 10 February 2025.

The use of First Nations employment registration programs that are aligned with the public service recruitment processes enable the merging of both the broad and specific recruitment requirements for the Correctional Services workforce. This approach may support an increase in the recruitment of First Nations people into Correctional Services roles. For example, South Australia Correctional Services uses a public sector First Nations recruitment program, alongside *Aboriginal Employment, Retention and Professional Development Strategy*,⁵¹ with an increase in First Nations recruitment over the last 12 months.

EMBEDDING CULTURAL COMPETENCIES

Cultural competency can be summarised as the application of knowledge and understanding of different cultural backgrounds. In the context of First Nations people, the embedding of culturally competent practices and responses within organisations is key to decreasing experiences of racism.⁵² Despite all jurisdictions delivering First Nations designed cultural competency training, there continues to be high resignation rates of First Nations employees, compared to non-First Nations employees who traditionally leave through retirement (Figure 11).⁵³

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Industry-sector representatives acknowledged that all Correctional Services employees are required to attend mandatory cultural awareness or competency training. Representatives from some States/Territories also provide optional additional learning and development courses in these spaces, but attendance is low given employee resourcing constraints.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Employer and employee body representatives acknowledged that the provision of formal cultural safety and wellbeing supports was a challenge in regional facilities, small facilities, and facilities with low First Nations representation resulting directly from fiscal restraints.

CULTURAL SAFETY AND WELLBEING SUPPORT

The *Cultural Review of Adult Custodial Corrections* suggests that bullying, racism, discrimination, heavy cultural load, burnout and high workloads all contribute to the high attrition of First Nations employees.⁵⁵ There are complex cultural relationships that effect the relationship between First Nations inmates and Correctional Officers.⁵⁶ Thus the value of culturally appropriate safety and wellbeing supports (both frameworks and programs) are vital to the successful retention of a First Nations Workforce.

There is value in both formal and informal cultural safety and wellbeing supports. Some jurisdictions identified formal yarning programs or cultural liaison officer roles that provide formally validated supports. Whilst in some jurisdictions stakeholders acknowledged that informal peer-to-peer support groups enable a private sharing and learning function within the workforce and allowed a self-determined cultural approach to wellbeing and safety.

REFLECTIVE MENTORSHIP AND LEADERSHIP

The availability of leadership opportunities for First Nations peoples within Correctional Services has been identified as a key component to ensure longevity within the workforce. Research shows that jurisdictions that provide First Nations mentorship and leadership programs have a demonstrated increase in retention and career progression.⁵⁷ The participation of First Nations people in the Correctional Services workforce may be increased by a higher representation of First Nations people in leadership and mentorship roles. However, smaller jurisdictions and organisations have identified that reflective mentorship and leadership opportunities are not always available, and in some instances not possible to facilitate.

Figure 11: Reasons for leaving the WA Department of Corrections among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Employees (2009-2015)⁵⁴

	RESIGNED	RETIRED	TRANSFER WITHIN PUBLIC SECTOR
Aboriginal	65.4%	7.6%	9.2%
Non-Aboriginal	57.7%	23.6%	5.9%

DISMISSED	VOLUNTARY SEVERANCE	DECEASED
11.4%	5.4%	0.0%
2.7%	8.1%	1.5%

⁵¹ Department for Correctional Services, *Aboriginal Employment, Retention & Professional Development Strategy 2024-2029*, Government of South Australia, 2024.
⁵² Closing the Gap Partnership, *Priority Reforms*, Closing the Gap Partnership, 2020, accessed 10 January 2025.
⁵³ Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services, *Recruitment and retention of Aboriginal Staff in the Department of Corrective Services*, Government of Western Australia, 2016, accessed 15 February 2025.
⁵⁴ Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services, *Recruitment and retention of Aboriginal Staff in the Department of Corrective Services*, Government of Western Australia, 2016, accessed 15 February 2025.

⁵⁵ Australian Human Rights Commission, *Current issues in prison management*, Australian Human Rights Commission, 2023, accessed 10 December 2025.
⁵⁶ M Nolan, *Correctional Officer Wellbeing in Australia*, Prison Service Journal, 2023, accessed 15 February 2025.
⁵⁷ K Collica-Cox, *Mentoring women in corrections: encouraging the next corrections executive*, Social Sciences, 2024, accessed 15 February 2025.

2024 Strategy Update

Public Skills Australia identified two workforce strategies for the Correctional Services industry-sector in the *2024 Correctional Services Workforce Plan*. An update on the progress of the 2024 strategies is provided below.

Drivers for Recruitment, Attrition and Retention - ONGOING

Project Overview:
Support the Correctional Services industry-sector in understanding and addressing retention and attrition issues within their workforce.

Project Update
A literature review and international benchmarking were conducted to explore how this challenge presents in other jurisdictions. A Technical Working Group was also established, comprising nationally nominated subject matter experts to collaborate with Public Skills Australia on co-designing the project.

Public Skills Australia will work with the Technical Working Group to co-design methods to collect Correctional Services workforce data, with a focus on understanding what attracts employees to the role, the perceived value of their work, and identifying data that can provide insights into the drivers of attrition.

- Key Stakeholders**
- State/Territory Correctional Services Departments
 - Private Prison Providers
 - Employee representatives

Correctional Services Implementation Findings Report - ONGOING

Project Overview:
Address skills gap in Correctional Services capability by initiating a Findings Report into the implementation, delivery, and assessment of *CSC30122 Certificate III in Correctional Practice*.

Project Update
Public Skills Australia has conducted initial consultations with stakeholders, and in-person visits to Corrective Services Academies are being scheduled.

Current work in progress includes a desktop analysis and delivery mapping of the *CSC30122 Certificate III in Correctional Practice*. A data-gathering survey is also being developed, alongside a Job Role Analysis for both Correctional Officers and Community Corrections Officers.

- Key Stakeholders**
- State/Territory Correctional Services Departments
 - Private Prison Providers
 - STTA/SROs
 - RTOs
 - Unions

2025 Proposed Strategies

Public Skills Australia proposes the following strategies to alleviate the identified workforce challenges:

- ➔ **Review of Skills Maintenance Approaches Throughout the Workforce Lifecycle**
- ➔ **Proposal to Investigate Barriers to First Nations Workforce Participation**

1

Review of Skills Maintenance Approaches Throughout the Workforce Lifecycle

Anticipated Timing:
12-18 months approximately.

Challenge:	Skills gap
Strategy:	Support the Correctional Services industry-sector through the review of existing skilling and professional frameworks to identify opportunities for harmonisation of approaches to workforce skills maintenance.
Proposed Project Outline	Key Stakeholders
JSC Function:	• State and Territory Correctional Services • Private Correctional Service organisations • Public Sector Unions • ERTO/RTOs
• Workforce Planning • Implementation, Promotion and Monitoring	
Actions:	
PHASE 1	
Undertake a mapping exercise of skills maintenance and learning and development opportunities throughout the workforce lifecycle (recruitment, onboarding, retention).	
PHASE 2	
Identify opportunities to develop accredited training aligned to outcomes of Phase 1 mapping.	
Impact:	The findings will inform a consistent and strategic approach to skills maintenance across the Correctional Services workforce.

2

Proposal to Investigate Barriers to First Nations Workforce Participation

- PROPOSAL

Public Skills Australia’s Correctional Services Subcommittee recommended the development of a strategy to investigate barriers for First Nations people to participate in the Correctional Services workforce. This work was also considered and supported by the Public Skills Australia Industry Advisory Group.

Challenge:	First Nations workforce participation
Strategy:	Draft a proposal to gain industry support to examine the factors that limit the participation of First Nations people in the Correctional Services workforce, including the reasons for joining, attritional factors and motivation for remaining in the workforce.

Proposed Project Outline	Key Stakeholders
Actions:	• Corrective Services Administrators’ Council • State and Territory Correctional Services • Private Correctional Services organisations • Public Sector and Correctional Services Unions • First Nations Directorates in Correctional Services organisations in each State and Territory • Public Safety industry organisations where cultural safety programs for First Nations people are implemented • Public Skills Australia’s First Nations Network
• Undertake literature reviews and desktop research. • Examine linkages between the proposal and the Drivers for Recruitment, Retention and Attrition Project. • Engage with industry to generate support. • Define a problem statement for inclusion in the proposal, as well as anticipated outcomes and potential deliverable.	
Outcome:	
Develop a proposal for stakeholders to consider Public Skills Australia to undertake this work.	

Potential Focus Areas:	• Recruitment factors • Retention factors • Attrition factors • Workforce participation motivations	• Cultural safety and associated training • Lived experience of First Nations employees • Cultural community perceptions
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2025 Stakeholder Engagement

In the development of the 2025 Workforce Insights Reports, Public Skills Australia undertook extensive industry-sector consultation. The list of stakeholders engaged is found below. The approach adopted by Public Skills Australia towards the engagement of stakeholders, gathering and analysing their insights, and generating themes and challenges across the industry-sector, is summarised in the Methodology section of this report.

ACT Correctional Services	Serco Australia Pty Ltd
Community and Public Sector Union	South Australia Department for Correctional Services
Corrections Victoria	State/Territory Training Authorities and Senior Responsible Officers ⁵⁸
GEO Group	
NSW Corrective Services	Western Australia Prison Officers Union
Public Service Association of NSW	
Queensland Corrective Services	

Existing Strategies

- Existing Strategies in the Correctional Services Industry-sector
- Government Initiatives

Existing Strategies

Aboriginal Employment, Retention & Professional Development Strategy 2024–2029

Department for Correctional Services, Government of South Australia2024–2029

This strategy was finalised in 2024 and aims to recognise and support the unique contributions of Aboriginal staff within South Australia’s correctional system. It focuses on improving employment outcomes through culturally safe practices, professional development, and retention initiatives. The strategy is part of a broader commitment to reducing incarceration rates among Aboriginal people and fostering a culturally inclusive workforce.

HOW IT WILL INFORM PUBLIC SKILLS AUSTRALIA’S WORK

Public Skills Australia will use this strategy to inform to Aboriginal workforce development in correctional services.

General Skilled Migration Program Boost

Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations, Northern Territory GovernmentAnnounced July 2024, ongoing

The Northern Territory’s General Skilled Migration (GSM) program supports the nomination of up to 1,600 overseas skilled workers annually across sectors including health, science, finance, agriculture, construction, IT, and hospitality. It offers both provisional and permanent visa pathways and aims to contribute \$1.4 billion to the Territory’s economy by 2027. The initiative is part of the NT’s broader strategy to grow a \$40 billion economy by 2030 and includes tools like WorkerConnect to match employers with skilled migrants.

HOW IT WILL INFORM PUBLIC SKILLS AUSTRALIA’S WORK

Public Skills Australia will use the GSM program to understand regional workforce attraction strategies and visa-linked employment pathways.

Government of South Australia Department for Correctional Services, Aboriginal Strategic Framework 2020-2025

Government of South Australia, Department for Correctional Services2020 - 2025

The Aboriginal Strategic Framework aims to improve outcomes for Aboriginal people in the correctional system. It focuses on integrating Aboriginal cultural practices into services, enhancing employee cultural competence through training, and strengthening community partnerships for rehabilitation and reintegration. The framework aims to reduce Aboriginal overrepresentation in the justice system and improve cultural safety and support.

HOW IT WILL INFORM PUBLIC SKILLS AUSTRALIA’S WORK

Public Skills Australia has identified barriers that are limiting participation and outcomes of First Nations people in the Correctional Services industry. The Framework will allow Public Skills Australia to continue to examine occupational gaps in the context of First Nations people.

Government of South Australia, Department for Correctional Services, Safe at Work 2024–2026

Government of South Australia, Department for Correctional Services2024 - 2026

The 'Safe at Work' initiative is a key priority within the South Australian Department for Correctional Services (DCS) Strategic Plan 2022–2026, focusing on the safety of employees, partners, and individuals under DCS supervision. This initiative complements other departmental priorities, such as the '20by26' strategy, which aims to reduce reoffending by 20 per cent by 2026, and efforts to address the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in the correctional system. The 'Safe at Work' initiative underscores DCS’s commitment to fostering a secure and supportive environment for all stakeholders.

HOW IT WILL INFORM PUBLIC SKILLS AUSTRALIA’S WORK

Public Skills Australia will continue to develop close relationships with Correctional Services industry-sector representatives to identify how workforce planning and training product development may support and assist with the promotion of safety in the Correctional Services workplace.

Government of South Australia, Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment, Anti-Racism Action Plan 2023-2028

Government of South Australia, Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment2023 - 2028

The South Australian Public Sector Anti-Racism Action Plan 2023–2028 outlines five key priorities: enabling employees to act against racism; embedding anti-racism into leadership and decision-making; strengthening inclusive and safe workplaces; ensuring communications reinforce the commitment to anti-racism; and maintaining accountability for anti-racism efforts. These priorities aim to proactively eliminate racial inequity and foster inclusion within the public sector.

HOW IT WILL INFORM PUBLIC SKILLS AUSTRALIA’S WORK

Public Skills Australia will use this Action Plan to inform future research and strategies. The SA Public Sector Anti-Racism Action Plan identifies that embedding cultural competencies within Correctional Services workforces are needed to decrease experiences of racism.

NT Correctional Services Organisational Review – Executive Summary and Recommendations

Northern Territory Government, Department of the Attorney-General and JusticePublished 2021

This review presents 481 recommendations to improve NT Correctional Services, including workforce development, leadership, and cultural safety. It identifies high attrition rates, unscheduled leave, and gaps in Aboriginal workforce representation, and proposes targeted reforms to address these issues.

HOW IT WILL INFORM PUBLIC SKILLS AUSTRALIA’S WORK

Public Skills Australia will draw on this review to understand systemic workforce challenges and reform priorities in remote and regional correctional settings.

Prison Workforce Strategy 2024–2034

Corrections Victoria, Department of Justice and Community Safety **2024–2034**

This 10-year strategy outlines a comprehensive plan to build a skilled, diverse, and culturally safe prison workforce. It includes initiatives for recruitment, retention, professional development, and leadership pathways, with a strong focus on Aboriginal workforce participation and wellbeing.

HOW IT WILL INFORM PUBLIC SKILLS AUSTRALIA'S WORK

Public Skills Australia will use this strategy to guide national workforce planning and capability development for correctional officers. The strategy's emphasis on cultural safety, career progression, and inclusive recruitment practices will inform future consultation and skills development frameworks across jurisdictions.

Queensland Corrective Services Mental Health Strategy 2022–2027

Queensland Corrective Services **2022 - 2027**

The Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) *Mental Health Strategy 2022–2027* aims to improve mental health support for individuals in custody by enhancing existing initiatives and establishing new ones. It emphasises case management and the development of health-focused facilities, like the Southern Queensland Correctional Precinct Stage 2, to elevate correctional mental health care standards. The strategy seeks to create a system that recognises and supports all individuals in custody.

HOW IT WILL INFORM PUBLIC SKILLS AUSTRALIA'S WORK

Public Skills Australia will use this strategy to assist in aligning the proposed review of skills maintenance across the workforce lifecycle with future research, when assessing psychological injury impacts.

Queensland Corrective Services, Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan July 2024 - July 2026

Queensland Corrective Services **2024 - 2026**

The *Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)* aims to reduce the number of First Nations people in custody by fostering respect, equity, and equality.

It focuses on building relationships with First Nations communities, ensuring culturally safe environments, increasing workforce representation, and maintaining governance and accountability through a RAP Working Group.

HOW IT WILL INFORM PUBLIC SKILLS AUSTRALIA'S WORK

Public Skills Australia will use the Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan to inform future engagement and consultation with First Nations Correctional Services officers and community members.

Recruitment and Retention of Aboriginal Staff – Report to Parliament

Government of Western Australia, Department of Corrective Services **Published 2016**

This report investigates the barriers to recruiting and retaining Aboriginal staff in WA's correctional system. It highlights high attrition rates, lack of cultural safety, and limited career progression, and recommends targeted incentives, mentorship, and inclusive workplace reforms.

HOW IT WILL INFORM PUBLIC SKILLS AUSTRALIA'S WORK

Public Skills Australia will use this report to inform strategies that support Aboriginal correctional officers nationally. The findings will guide the development of culturally responsive recruitment and retention models, and help shape inclusive workforce policies across jurisdictions.

Government Initiatives

2024 Core Skills Occupation List – Key Findings Report

Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA)2024 - ongoing

The Core Skills Occupation List (CSOL) provides labour market analysis that informs the identification of occupations that are considered appropriate for employer-sponsored temporary migration through the Core Skills Stream of the Skills in Demand (SID) Visa.

HOW IT WILL INFORM PUBLIC SKILLS AUSTRALIA'S WORK

Public Skills Australia will continue to work closely with JSA to ensure the CSOL is reflective of Public Safety and Government occupations. Additionally, Public Skills Australia will continue to communicate with industry to ensure there is transparency on any relevant occupations that can be filled through skilled migration channels.

Australian Cyber Security Strategy

Department of Home Affairs2023 - 2030

The 2023 - 2030 Australian Cyber Security Strategy serves as a roadmap to achieve the Australian Government’s vision of becoming a world leader in cyber security by 2030.

HOW IT WILL INFORM PUBLIC SKILLS AUSTRALIA'S WORK

Public Skills Australia will aim to support the Cyber Security Strategy in its work with Public Safety and Government industry-sectors. Ensuring that Public Safety and Government industries have the requisite workforce skills and expertise to fulfil the Cyber Security Strategy is of critical importance for the safety of the Australian public and businesses.

Better Together - The Jobs and Skills Report 2024

Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA)2024 - ongoing

As part of JSA’s mandated obligations to provide insight on the Australian labour market and advice on workforce needs and priorities, this report details evidence aligned to five strategic pillars to enable a more prosperous economic future. Specifically, this report outlines JSA’s key current and emerging datasets that provide useful insight on the intricacies of Australia’s labour market. This includes, but is not limited to, insight on the current VET workforce, First Nations employment participation, regional workforce investment, emerging roles and employment projections.

HOW IT WILL INFORM PUBLIC SKILLS AUSTRALIA'S WORK

Public Skills Australia will continue to be guided by workforce insights provided by JSA and continue to align efforts to JSA’s identified jobs and skills focus areas.

Closing the Gap

Council of Australian Governments2019 - 2029

The Closing the Gap Report informs the development of recruitment, health and social programs specific to First Nations peoples. These programs are deployed across the Public Safety and Government industry-sectors.

HOW IT WILL INFORM PUBLIC SKILLS AUSTRALIA'S WORK

Public Skills Australia acknowledges that representation of First Nations peoples within the five Public Safety and Government industries varies greatly. Improving the quality of workforce data pertaining to First Nations people’s representation is an ongoing priority in workforce planning.

Occupation Standard Classification for Australia (OSCA)

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)2024 - ongoing

Formally known as ANZSCO, the OSCA is a standardised framework for classifying occupations within Australia. As part of the replacement process from ANZSCO to OSCA in 2024, the ABS announced that OSCA will undergo regular updates in accordance with the OSCA Maintenance Strategy.

HOW IT WILL INFORM PUBLIC SKILLS AUSTRALIA'S WORK

Public Skills Australia will continue to play an active role in providing feedback to the ABS on the relevance and accuracy of OSCA as it relates to Public Safety and Government occupations.

Occupational Shortage List (OSL)

Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA)Ongoing

The OSL (formerly the Skills Priority List) offers an annual point-in-time review of the status of Australian occupations. Specifically, the OSL reports on whether occupations (at the four-digit and six-digit ANZSCO level) are experiencing shortages nationally and for each State and Territory in regional or metropolitan areas.

HOW IT WILL INFORM PUBLIC SKILLS AUSTRALIA'S WORK

This information enables Public Skills Australia to tailor workforce development strategies and training programs to address critical gaps in the Australian labour market. The OSL provides Public Skills Australia with valuable insights into current labour market trends, helping to identify skills shortages within our industry-sectors across Australia.

The Australian Government’s Strategic Priorities

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet **2022 - 2026**

The Federal Government’s strategic priorities provide a four-year (2022 - 2026) policy direction for the Australian Public Service (APS) and sets targets across key areas. These key areas include the economy, public health and climate change.

HOW IT WILL INFORM PUBLIC SKILLS AUSTRALIA’S WORK

Public Skills Australia will support the implementation of the Federal Government’s strategic priorities, particularly those which seek to strengthen the workforces within Public Skills Australia’s remit.

**The Clean Energy Generation:
Workforce needs for a Net Zero Economy**

Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) **2023 - 2025**

This series of reports considers emerging and future clean-energy workforce requirements as Australia strives to reach net-zero emissions by 2050. JSA’s preliminary modelling estimates Australia’s clean-energy workforce will need to grow from the current 53,000 workers to 84,000 workers by 2050.

HOW IT WILL INFORM PUBLIC SKILLS AUSTRALIA’S WORK

Public Skills Australia will consider the impact of Net Zero and emerging workforce requirements on the Public Safety and Government industry, as the impact of climate change and more frequent natural disasters flows into the related challenges of competition for labour, and recruitment and retention.

Looking Ahead to 2026

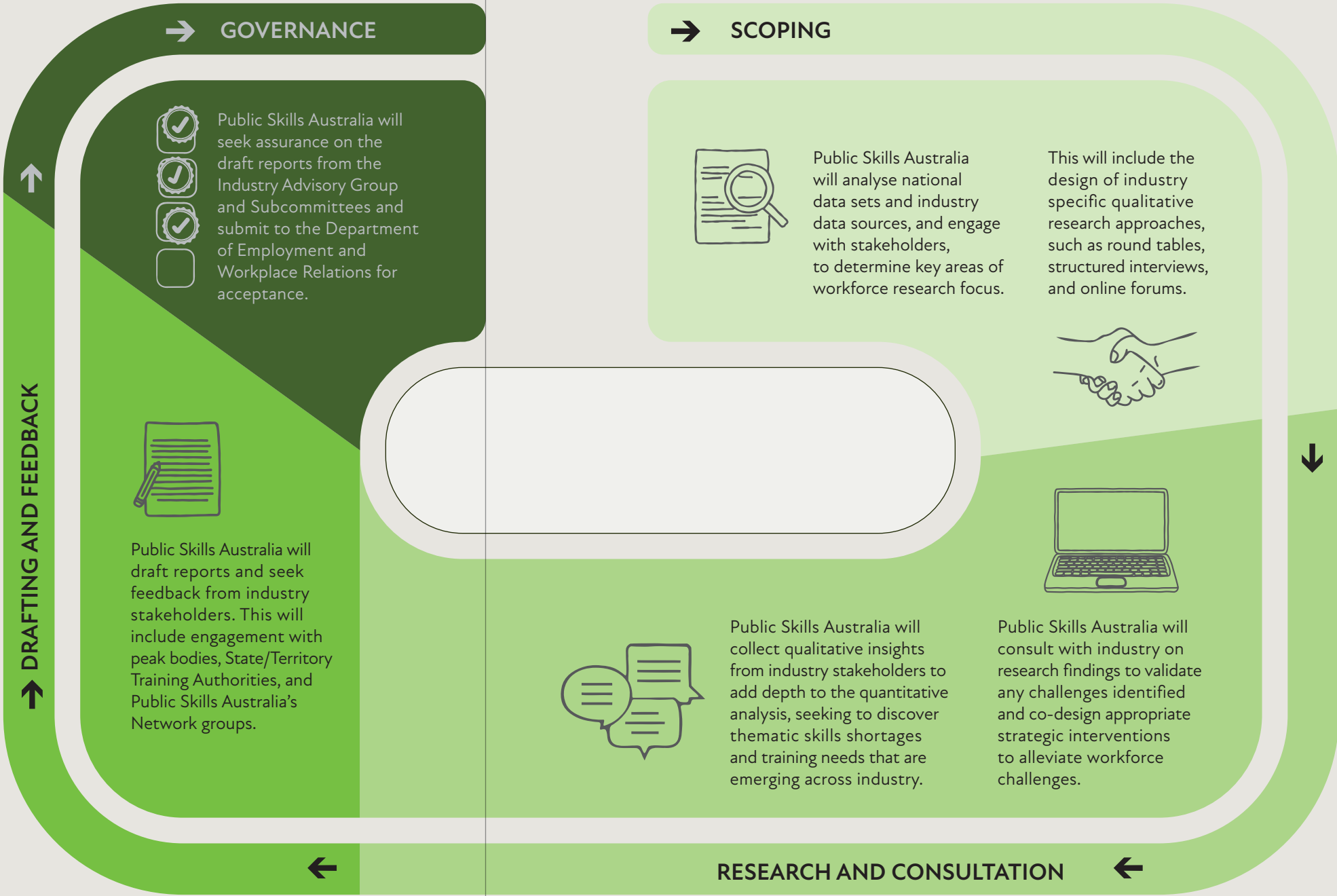
Public Skills Australia has built on its 2024 Workforce Plans in delivering this 2025 Workforce Insights Report.

Looking forward to future workforce planning activities, Public Skills Australia will continue to deepen and broaden engagement with industry employers, employee union representatives, and Government organisations.

In doing this, Public Skills Australia will sharpen its focus towards new and emerging workforce challenges that are impacting across the Public Safety and Government industry-sector, including the analysis of nuanced skills gaps and workforce shortages across regional and niche parts of industry.

By taking a deeper dive into the Public Safety and Government industry, Public Skills Australia will ensure that any identified workforce challenges and proposed strategies are robust and supportive of the contemporary needs of the workforces within Public Safety and Government.

Public Skills Australia will explore innovation in the delivery of workforce planning products in 2026 to enhance accessibility and practicality for stakeholders.



Appendix A

List of Data Overview Sources

Figure 1

Diverse range of duties undertaken by Correctional Officers

Training.gov.au, [Qualification - CSC30122 Certificate III in Correctional Practice](#), Australian Government, 2022, accessed 13 January 2025.

Yearly number of Correctional Officers and prisoners nationwide

Top Chart: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), [Prisoners in Australia 2024](#) [data set], ABS, 2024, accessed 21 February 2025.

Bottom Chart: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), [Table EQ08](#), [data set], employed persons by Occupation unit group of main job (ANZSCO), Sex, State and Territory, August 1986 onwards [time series spreadsheet], Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, data trended by Jobs and Skills Australia, ABS, 2024, accessed 6 March 2025.

Projected national growth of Correctional Officers

Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), [Employment Projections](#) [data set], JSA, 2025, accessed 10 February 2025.

Figure 2

National yearly enrolments and completions in the CSC Training Package

National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), [Total VET students and courses 2023: VOCSTATS](#) [data set], NCVER, 2025, accessed 21 January 2025.

Current shortage of Correctional Officers (JSA Occupational Shortage List)

Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) [Occupational Shortage List](#) [data set], JSA, 2025, accessed 3 March 2025.

First Nations People participation

ABS, [SEXP Sex, INGP Indigenous Status and 6-digit level OCCP Occupation by STATE \(POW\)](#), [data set], ABS, 2021, accessed 29 January 2025; National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), [Total VET students and courses 2023: VOCSTATS](#) [data set], NCVER, 2025, accessed 21 January 2025.

First Nations People enrolments in CSC Training Package

National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), [Total VET students and courses 2023: VOCSTATS](#) [data set], NCVER, 2025, accessed 21 January 2025.

First Nations People completions in CSC Training Package

National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), [Total VET students and courses 2023: VOCSTATS](#) [data set], NCVER, 2025, accessed 21 January 2025.

Public Skills Australia is one of ten Jobs and Skills Councils.

Jobs and Skills Councils enable the modern and responsive skilled workforces that are required for Australia to prosper. Skilled workforces underpin our strong economy, allowing us to keep living standards high.

We lead efforts to make sure Australia has the right workers, with the right skills, that our nation needs.

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