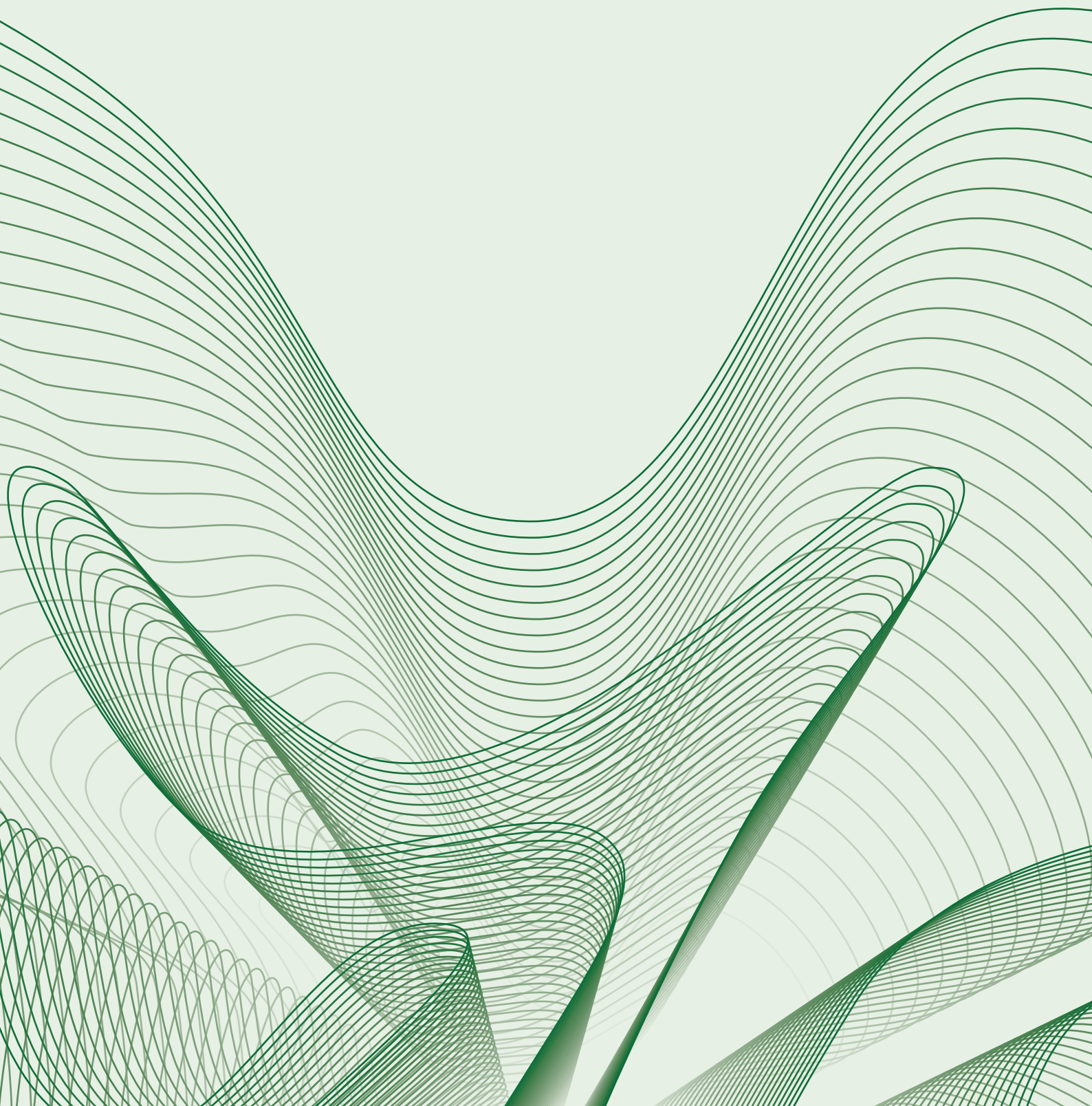


2025 **Local Government** Workforce Insights Report



**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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Public Safety Skills Australia Limited has made every effort to ensure that the information and data contained in this report is accurate, up to date and have been sourced and referenced appropriately. Whilst care and diligence has been taken in the preparation of this Workforce Insights Report, Public Safety Skills Australia Limited does not accept responsibility for inaccuracies contained in external data sources or responsibility for any loss or damage suffered resulting from this information.

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 Local Government Workforce Insights report provides a holistic analysis of the Local Government 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 Access to Training Local Government workforces in regional, rural and remote areas are often limited in where and how they can access training needs. This includes limited access to RTOs that offer the LGA Local Government Training Package, directly impacting the uptake of this Training Package.
	2 Skills Gaps The Local Government industry-sector is facing significant occupational shortages in certain occupations that require long training pathways, such as urban and regional planners, prompting growing interest in training products that require shorter timeframes for delivery for faster upskilling of priority areas. One key occupational area experiencing significant skills gaps is emergency management.
	3 Resourcing and Recruitment Access to adequate and affordable housing and social infrastructure remain key challenges in recruiting Local Government workforces in regional, rural and remote areas. Financial constraints imposed by other tiers of government also impact on the ability of Local Governments to sustain resourcing.
	PROPOSED STRATEGY Skill Set Development for Priority Skilling Areas Identify whether any existing training products can be used for priority skilling needs in Local Government. Should no training products exist, training products may be developed to support the priority skilling needs in Local Government

Introduction	
The 2025 Local Government Workforce Insights Report explores the unique workforce challenges within the Local Government industry-sectors. 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 Local Government industry-sector. This includes the mapping of existing strategies	and initiatives that are underway in the Local Government industry-sector. The research conducted in the development of the 2025 Local Government Workforce Insights Report provides the foundation for the proposal of practical strategies to support the Local Government 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 Local Government industry-sector.
Methodology	
Workforce Insights Reports developed by Public Skills Australia are supported by a combination of qualitative and quantitative data obtained from primary and secondary sources. Insights from stakeholder consultations were 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 informed 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 Local Government industry-sector, and in alignment with the tripartite approach to industry engagement, Public Skills Australia consulted with Local Government Associations, Employee unions, and State and Territory Training Authorities.¹ In addition, publicly accessible datasets from Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), along with documentation, information, and data from State/Territory Local Government Association websites and other relevant government and non-government sources, have been referenced throughout 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

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

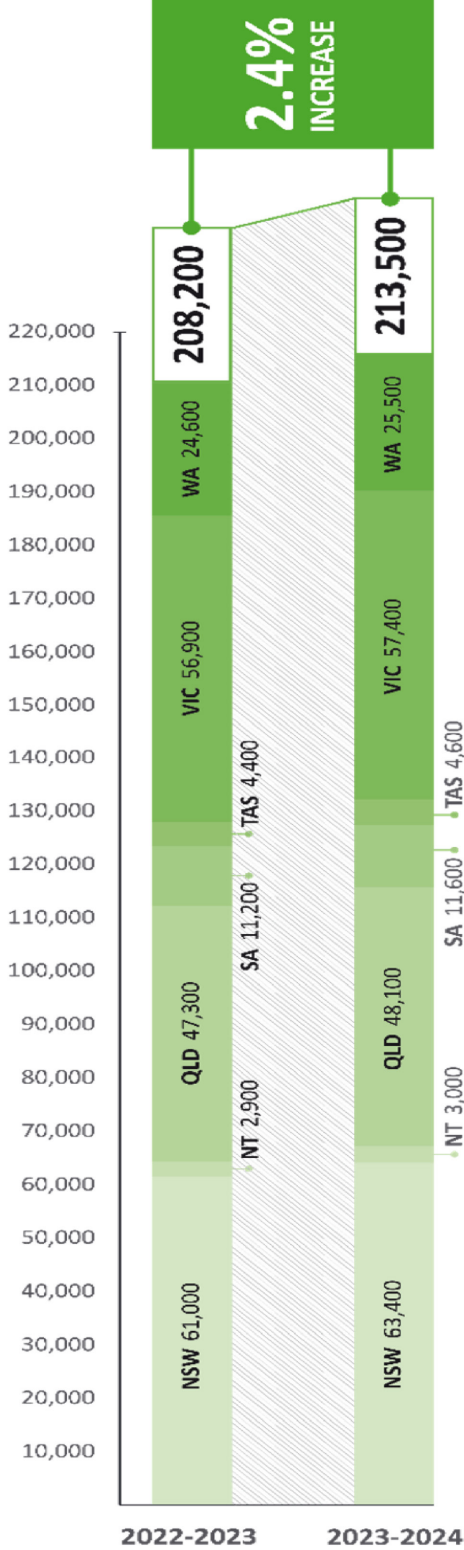
⁰² When using the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) it should be noted that employment within industry subsectors typically includes a range of occupations, some of which may not be covered by Public Skills Australia’s remit.

Industry Overview

The Local Government industry-sector spans a wide range of roles, occupations and skills. The workforce needs are expansive, and reflect the diversity of each Local Government area, the roles they are responsible for, and the communities they represent. Across Australia, the growth of the Local Government workforces continuously climbs (Figure 1). Contemporary challenges such as climate change, demographic shifts and the continued development of technology, see new skills and training needs emerge for the Local Government workforces. With this rapid change, factors unique to some Local Governments such as remoteness and role creep, are increasing the strains on Local Governments to meet needs of their communities.

The LGA Local Government Training Package uptake for both enrolments and completions is lessening (Figure 3 & 4) showing a decline in the support this training package may offer to address these challenges. Public Skills Australia has worked with Local Government stakeholders to address these skills and training challenges for the workforce in 2025 and will discuss these challenges further in the report.

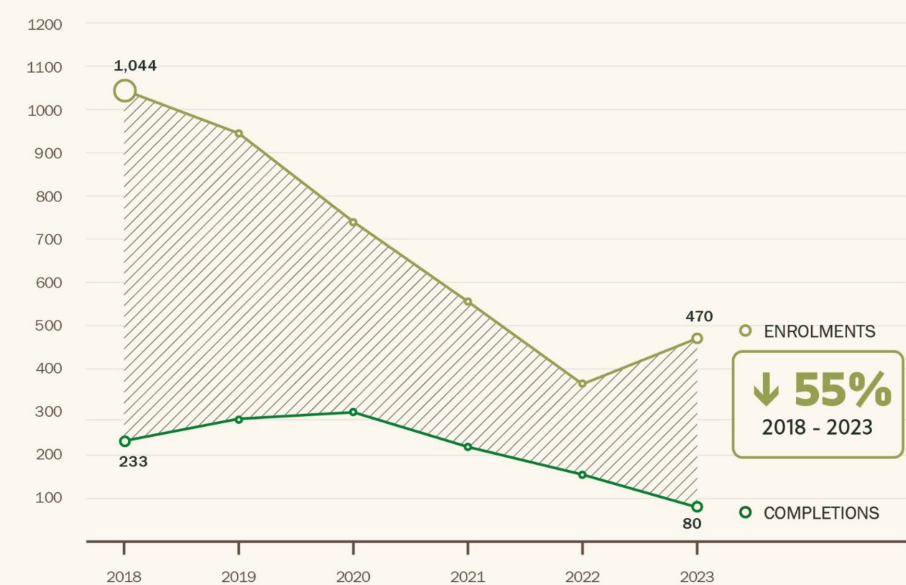
Local Governments play a significant role in building and maintaining cohesive and connected communities. This industry-sector has a broad remit, such as local infrastructure, town planning and land development, essential waste and water services, community services, health and cultural institutions, local regulations and by-law enforcement, environmental management and local economic development.³ The breadth of these core services demonstrates that Local Government is an industry-sector that employs occupations from across the labour market, requiring a range of skills and training to support this workforce.



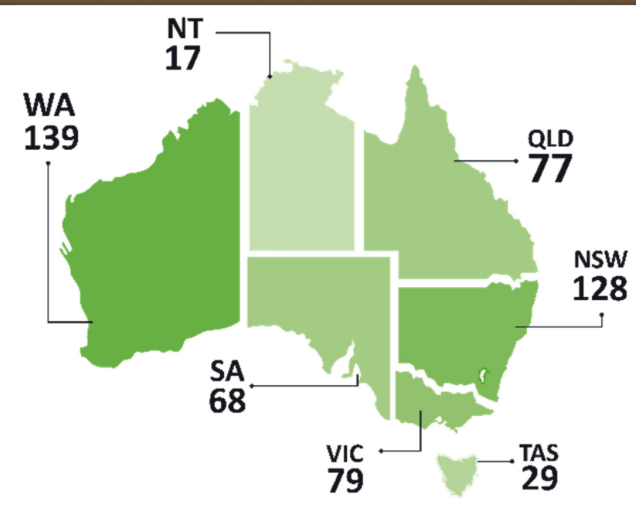
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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

⁰³ Public Skills Australia, 'Federal, State/Territory & Local Government Workforce Plan 2024', Public Skills Australia, 2024.



YEARLY UPTAKE OF THE LGA LOCAL GOVERNMENT TRAINING PACKAGE



SPREAD OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ACROSS EACH STATE AND TERRITORY

There are 537 Local Governments across Australia which are primarily concentrated on the east coast.⁴ Within these Local Governments, the top employing occupation is administration, with 151,000 employed across Australia.⁵ Occupational shortages are also present within the Local Government industry-sector, in particular, engineers, town planners, building surveyors, environmental health officers, accountants and human resources professionals.⁶ These shortages can be caused by regionality, competition for labour and recruitment and retention efforts, all of which will be discussed further in this report.

SPREAD OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ACROSS EACH STATE AND TERRITORY



OCCUPATIONAL SHORTAGES IN THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT INDUSTRY-SECTOR

Local Government Training Package

The LGA Local Government Training Package (the training package) provides training and development for employees working in Local Government roles. It includes a range of qualifications and units of competency that cover aspects of local government operations, such as governance, community engagement, environmental management, and regulatory services. The training package aims to ensure that local government employees have the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their roles effectively.

ENROLMENTS AND COMPLETIONS

There has been a steady decrease in training package total enrolments since 2018.⁷ Although completion rates have remained steady, there has been a 55 per cent decline in enrolments from 2018 to 2023 (Figure 2).⁸

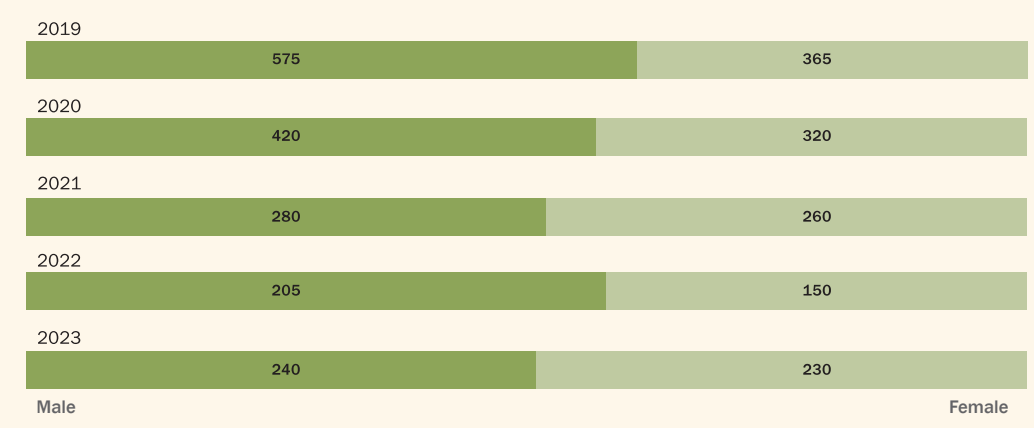


Figure 3: Enrolments in the training package by gender⁹

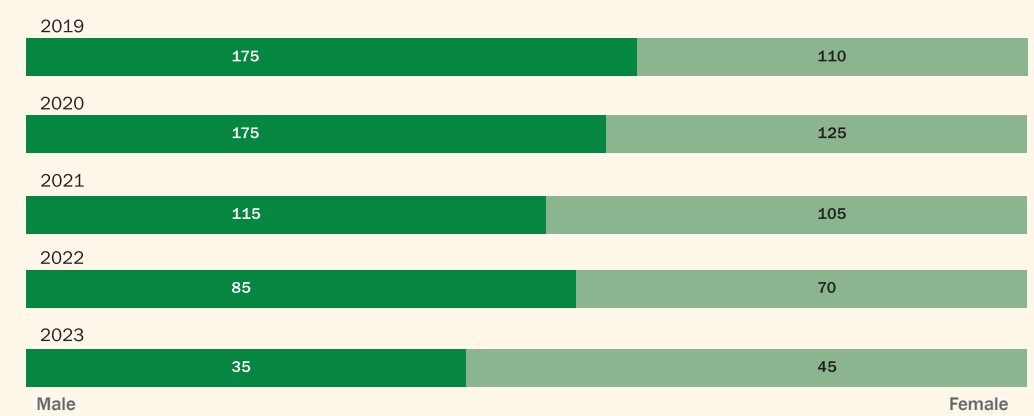


Figure 4: Completions of the training package by gender¹⁰

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

⁰⁴ Australian Local Government Association (ALGA), 'Facts and Figures', ALGA, 2023, accessed 21 January 2025.
⁰⁵ Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), 'Public Administration and Safety', JSA, 2025, accessed 28 April 2025.
⁰⁶ ALGA, 'Facts and Figures', ALGA, 2023, accessed 21 January 2025.

⁰⁷ National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), 'Total VET students and courses 2023: DataBuilder' [data set], 2023, accessed 20 February 2025.
⁰⁸ NCVER, 'Total VET students and courses 2023: DataBuilder' [data set], NCVER, 2023, accessed 20 February 2025.
⁰⁹ NCVER, 'Total VET students and courses 2023: DataBuilder' [data set], NCVER, 2023, accessed 5 March 2025.
¹⁰ NCVER, 'Total VET students and courses 2023: DataBuilder' [data set], NCVER, 2023, accessed 5 March 2025.

2024 Megatrend Recap

The 2024 Federal, State/Territory and Local Government Workforce Plan identified nine megatrends impacting across the Public Safety and Government industries. Through consultation with Local Government 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

Career pathway opportunities for young professionals require further promotion, as potential employees are often unaware of Local Government career opportunities and pathways.



EXPANSION OF CORE DUTIES

Local Government employees are increasingly taking on multiple roles to meet community needs in the Local Government industry-sector.



CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change impacts many functions of Local Government, such as emergency management and environmental planning.



PUBLIC TRUST AND PERCEPTION

Local Governments are required to balance resourcing constraints with meeting community needs, which can impact public trust and perception.



COMPETITION FOR LABOUR

Local Government is competing for labour with the private sector and other parts of the public sector. There is also competition for labour between Local Government organisations.



RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

There are several barriers to the attraction and retention of Local Government workforces in remote, regional and rural locations.



DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFTS

Ageing workforces can impact the transfer of institutional knowledge and further create skills gaps in Local Government workforces.



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Equitable gender composition and meaningful participation of a diverse workforce is an ongoing goal for Local Government workforces, particularly in leadership roles.



TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

The implementation of new technology in the Local Government workforce can be impacted by resource constraints and the availability of training.

2025 Workforce Insights

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

The following insights highlight the current and most significant challenges within the Local Government workforce in 2025.

- Access to Training
- Skills Gaps
- Resourcing and Recruitment

Access to Training

As identified in the 2024 Workforce Plan, accessing training is a key challenge for Local Governments in regional, remote and rural communities. In these settings, private Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) make decisions on the training facilities and courses they will offer, with consideration given to budgetary matters that impact on course sizes and scheduling.

Subsequently, this can impact on the Local Government workforce in two ways:

Resource constraints:

Sending employees long distances to attend courses outside of the Local Government area is financially costly for councils. Attendance at training may also generate travel requirements such as overnight stays, especially where training is held over multiple days.

Time constraints:

Local Government employees may need to be away from their substantive role to undertake training which can impact on Local Government business continuity.

Local Governments, especially those in regional areas, are required to balance the delivery of essential services to the community with the need to train employees.

CASE STUDIES: REGIONAL, RURAL AND REMOTE ACCESS TO TRAINING

Industry-sector consultation noted two programs currently being delivered that are attempting to mitigate the identified challenges. These programs are not limited to servicing only Local Government workforces or the LGA Local Government Training Package. Stakeholder consultation indicated support of implementing these, programs which would be specific to Local Government training requirements.

**INDUSTRY INSIGHT
→ CASE STUDY 1**

Local Government stakeholders indicated that the RUSH¹¹ initiative may reduce the financial and resourcing constraints associated with access to training in regional locations.

**INDUSTRY INSIGHT
→ CASE STUDY 2**

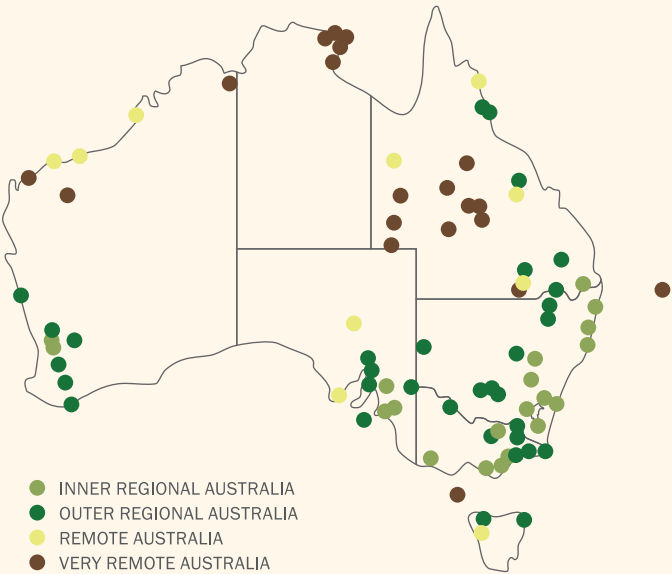
Stakeholders highlighted that the Country Universities Centre (CUC)¹² initiative can offer access to more tailored accredited training, and that coordination between the RUSH initiative and the CUC initiative may lead to better training outcomes for regional and remote Local Government workforces.

Case Studies: Regional, rural and remote access to training

**Case Study 1:
Regional University Study Hubs¹¹**

Regional University Study Hubs (RUSH) is a Federal Department of Education initiative that provides physical, campus-like spaces and support for students who are studying university or VET courses online at any Australian educational institution. The program provides physical and digital infrastructure to support students in completing their studies, removing geographic barriers. By enabling access to facilities and infrastructure, particularly in regional, rural and remote Local Government areas, this provides an opportunity for localised upskilling of the Local Government workforce and access to training and study supports in their local community (Figure 5).

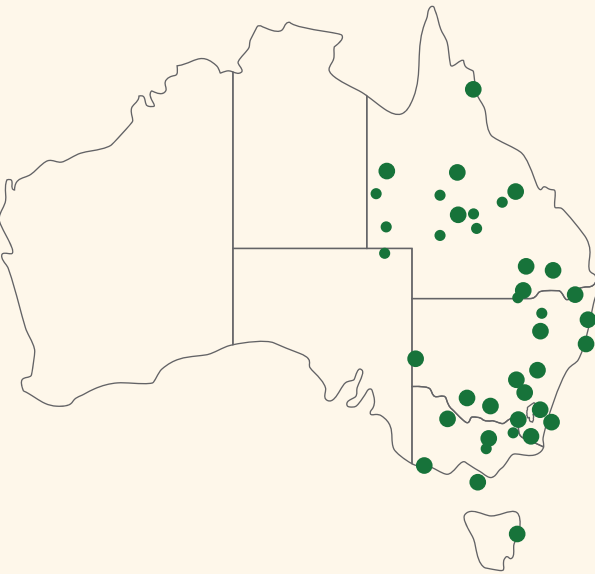
Figure 5: RUSH locations across Australia



**Case Study 2:
Country Universities Centre¹²**

The CUC is a place-based initiative that enables students to take ownership of their educational needs and provides them with the resources to create their own place-based approach to education within the regions of their communities. With a priority focus on regional communities (Figure 6), developing educational models that reflect regional needs is a unique approach that could streamline the upskilling of individual Local Government workforces. By bringing these centres into regional parts of Australia, learners can access higher education, VET opportunities and physical resource needs.

Figure 6: CUC locations across Australia



14 ¹¹ Regional University Study Hubs Network, [Regional University Study Hubs Network](#), 2025, accessed 7 March 2025.

15 ¹² Country Universities Centre, [Our Centres](#), Country Universities Centre, 2025, accessed 20 February 2025.

Skills Gaps

As part of training package updates in 2021, the LGA Local Government Training Package was reduced from 23 qualifications to five.¹³ This reduction was primarily driven by the training package being underutilised and as depicted in Figure 2, enrolment numbers have continued to decline.

Known as a ‘long training gap’,¹⁴ the Local Government industry-sector is currently experiencing significant occupational shortages in job roles that have long training pathways, such as Urban and Regional Planners.¹⁵ There is growing interest from the industry-sector in the use of smaller training products to rapidly upskill employees in priority areas to supplement job roles that possess much longer training requirements.¹⁶ This does not replace the importance of a fully qualified professional in the role or solve national shortage issues, however, it can fill a gap with nationally accredited training in a shorter timeframe and minimise cost and resource challenges. It may also enable career pathway opportunities to encourage existing para-professional roles to engage in longer and fully accredited pathways. Public Skills Australia is undertaking further work to understand the utility of the training package among Local Government workforces.¹⁷

The unpredictable nature of Federal Government grant funding to Local Government poses several challenges for workforce planning in Local Government settings, including the ability to forward plan workforce training opportunities.¹⁸ Federal Government grants can vary in their year-to-year availability, and grant applications can take a long time to be assessed and determined. These two factors make it difficult for Local Governments to plan financially for the workforce upskilling necessitated by grant-funded initiatives.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Stakeholders indicated that the simplification of the training package in the 2021 training package review was necessary due to the proliferation of LGA Local Government Training Package qualifications and underutilisation. However, stakeholders agreed that the development of shorter form training products would be helpful in quickly upskilling employees in priority areas.

EXPANDED ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The role of Local Governments has expanded exponentially beyond rates, roads, and rubbish to include a wide range of services. These include healthcare services, particularly in aged and childcare, mental health and regulatory roles in development and infrastructure/asset management and planning, housing, environmental biodiversity/conservation requirements, and climate adaptation management.

The requirement of councils to undertake these expanded roles requires a diverse skillset that is difficult to recruit and retain due to:

- Competition from the public sector, particularly in relation to remuneration
- Broader skills shortages within the economy
- Lack of people with suitable skills in regional, rural and remote areas.

SKILLS GAPS: EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Emergency Management poses an emerging workforce challenge for Local Governments, highlighting the ongoing need for skill development within this industry-sector. Emergency management refers to how emergency events are prepared for, how they are responded to and how communities recover from these events.¹⁹

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Stakeholders noted that there are emerging skills gaps in the field of emergency management that need to be addressed through training of the Local Government workforces, if they are to assist in the field of emergency management as an emerging responsibility.

Working in Local Government therefore requires a multitude of occupations, skills and trained professionals due to its collaborative nature. This has become a key challenge in the emergency management field for Local Governments. Stakeholders have confirmed that emergency management responsibilities, while differing for each State/Territory, are placing increasing skills and training needs upon the Local Government workforce.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: ROLES AND CAPABILITIES

Stakeholders confirmed that emergency management roles differ between the States/Territories of Australia due to a variety of reasons, such as:

- Different judicial emergency management frameworks,
- Geographic landscape and ecology of each State/Territory,
- Weather patterns determining frequency and types of environmental emergency events around Australia, and
- Differing expectations of Local Government roles, determined by community needs and emergency management resources available.

Defining the roles of Local Governments in emergency management is crucial for understanding this challenge, particularly in training and upskilling employees in regions where emergency management has become a core role for Local Governments, alongside emergency response organisations in roles such as fire prevention, land use planning and recovery coordination.²⁰ These responsibilities are defined by the overarching Emergency Management Plan of each State/Territory,²¹ and their subsequent judicial frameworks.

expanded roles

of Local Governments require a diverse skillset that is difficult to recruit and retain

in 2021 the LGA Local Government Training Package was reduced from

23 to 5 Qualifications

The Local Government industry-sector is experiencing significant occupational shortages due to a

long training gap

shorter training products

can rapidly upskill employees in priority areas

¹³ Please see the companion volume available at <https://training.gov.au/training/details/LGA/summary>.

¹⁴ Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), *2024 Occupation Shortage Drivers Report*, JSA 2024, accessed 20 February 2025.

¹⁵ JSA, *Occupation Shortage List*, JSA, 2024, accessed 20 February 2025.

¹⁶ Employees who undertake this type of training are often called paraprofessionals. A paraprofessional enables the supportive function of portions of a role that would otherwise require significant education and/or accreditation.

¹⁷ Please refer to 2024 Strategy Update section for further details.

¹⁸ Parliament NSW, *Ability of local governments to fund infrastructure and services Report*, Parliament: NSW, 2024, accessed 9 April 2025.

¹⁹ National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), *Our work*, NEMA, 2025, accessed 4 April 2025.

²⁰ Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), Position Paper - *Role of Local Government in Emergency Management in Victoria - June 2022 Final Draft for Board Endorsement*, MAV, 2022, accessed 5 March 2025.

²¹ NEMA, *Our work*, NEMA, 2025, accessed 21 February 2025.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: SKILLS GAPS AND TRAINING NEEDS

Extensive stakeholder consultation has indicated that there is a growth opportunity in training for emergency management occupations, leading to skills gaps within Local Government workforces. This has flow on effects on how these workforces can aid their communities and offer support during emergency events.

Stakeholders highlighted emerging Local Government capability requirements in emergency management, including but not limited to:

- Environmental Health (General)
- Environmental Health (Officer)
- Emergency Management (Officer)
- Climate Governance

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Stakeholders have indicated that if Local Government workforces are to assist their communities in preparing for, attending to, and recovering from emergency events, that these emergency management skills sets are required to address current skills gaps.

- Change Management.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT CASE STUDIES: CURRENT TRAINING MODELS

Examples from both Queensland and Western Australia provide case studies for emergency management training and frameworks and are presented in Figure 7. These two examples present non-accredited training

Resourcing and Recruitment

As identified in the 2024 Government Workforce Plan, recruitment is one of the continuous challenges that Local Governments experience among their workforces.²⁶ Through consultation, stakeholders consistently noted that the availability of social infrastructure (such as access to healthcare) in regional, remote and rural areas are often some of the major considerations for prospective Local Government employees in these areas.

HOUSING AND SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Recent liveability surveys indicate that 50 to 57 per cent of Australians value access to high-quality social services.²⁷ Stakeholders expressed that social infrastructure, or the lack thereof, could impact the size of Local Government recruitment pools.

As noted through stakeholder consultation, housing continues to be one of the most challenging aspects of attracting and recruiting potential Local Government employees to regional, remote and rural Local Government areas. Stakeholders noted that employment affiliated with guaranteed affordable housing was considered more attractive by prospective employees. Employment opportunities and labour force participation can be impacted by a lack of available or affordable housing limits.²⁸ The nationwide housing and cost of living crises are major drivers of this challenge.

FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS

The expanded role of Local Government is exacerbated by financial constraints imposed by Federal and State/Territory governments. This is particularly heightened in regional, rural and remote areas where more densely populated areas are favoured by Local Government financial modelling.

Financial constraints are primarily the result of restrictions on Local Government revenue raising, which is occurring through several means. The most limiting of these is rate capping, which controls the size of annual rate increases. Rate capping is compounded by rate exemption schemes, which require councils to exempt particular organisations and property owners from paying rates and constraints on the fees and charges councils are allowed to levy under other legislation. These constraints significantly burden councils in their ability to service their communities' needs.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Industry-sector representatives have noted that the housing crisis is directly impacting attraction and recruitment campaigns for roles in the Local Government workforce.

Emergency Management: Current Training Models

Figure 7: Non-accredited training frameworks for emergency management in Western Australia and Queensland



Western Australia

Western Australia Local Government Association is a Registered Training Organisation, and offers non-accredited emergency management training, alongside the LGA Local Government Training Package.²²

The Local Emergency Management Arrangements (LEMA) clearly reflect that each Local Government possesses specialised and localised knowledge about their communities throughout the framework.²³



Queensland

Stakeholders reported that Queensland's Local Governments support Police and Emergency Services in responding to emergency and environmental events, as supported through Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements,²⁴ allowing their internal training to focus on building community resilience.

Training is available to Local Government workforces through the Disaster Management Training Handbook,²⁵ which includes focusing on the roles and actions of Local Governments in emergency management around Queensland.

50-57%

of Australians value access to high-quality social services

housing

continues to be one of the most challenging aspects of attracting and recruiting employees

availability of social infrastructure

is a major consideration for prospective Local Government employees

²² Western Australia Local Government Association (WALGA), [Training Courses](#), WALGA, 2025, accessed 20 February 2025.

²³ Government of Western Australia, [Local Emergency Management Arrangements Guideline](#), Government of Western Australia, 2025, accessed 20 February 2025.

²⁴ National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), [Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements](#), NEMA, 2025, accessed 20 February 2025.

²⁵ Queensland Government, [Queensland Disaster Management Training Framework](#), Queensland Government, 2024, accessed 20 February 2025.

²⁶ This report notes that the success of recruitment in Local Government can be impacted by several factors and is not limited to social infrastructure and housing availability.

²⁷ Ipsos, [Life in Australia 2022: Understanding liveability across regional Australia](#), Ipsos, 2022, accessed 7 March 2025; Ipsos, [Life in Australia 2022: Life in Australia 2022: Understanding liveability across metropolitan Australia](#), Ipsos, 2022, accessed 7 March 2025.

²⁸ City Futures Research Centre, [Strengthening economic cases for housing: the productivity gains from better housing outcomes](#) | City Futures Research Centre, Ipsos, 2019, accessed 19 February 2025.

2024 Strategy Update

Public Skills Australia identified two workforce strategies for the Local Government industry-sector in the *2024 Federal, State/ Territory and Local Government Workforce Plan*. An update on the progress of the 2024 strategies is provided below.

Review of Uptake and Utility of the LGA Local Government Training Package

- ONGOING

Project Overview:
Conduct a review of the uptake and utility of the LGA Local Government Training Package, to understand and mitigate current low enrolment and completions rates of this training package.

Project Update
To understand and mitigate the low enrolments and completions of the LGA Local Government Training Package, Public Skills Australia is examining contemporary enrolments and completions data and reviewing the number of RTOs and TAFEs that deliver qualifications within this training package. Further to this, the project will undertake interviews and surveys with stakeholders to investigate and diagnose barriers to the uptake of the training, as well as looking to align training package updates to identified skilling and occupational needs that emerge from the Skills Audit.

Anticipated Timing: 12 months approximately.

- Key Stakeholders**
- Australian Local Government Association (ALGA)
 - State/Territory Local Government Associations
 - Local Councils

Local Government Skills Audit

- ONGOING

Project Overview:
Conduct a comprehensive national skills audit of the Local Government workforce, to identify existing occupations and skills within the workforce, as well as understand the emerging skills and occupations needed within this workforce, particularly in remote and regional Local Government areas.

Project Update
Public Skills Australia is working with Federal and State/Territory Local Government Associations to co-design data collection plans to inform the Skills Audit methodology. This is likely to include surveying of metropolitan and remote/regional/rural Local Governments to better understand unique skills gaps and occupational needs. Public Skills Australia will deepen this research through the delivery of focus groups and workshops with Local Government stakeholders.

Anticipated Timing: 12 months approximately.

- Key Stakeholders**
- ALGA
 - State/Territory Local Government Associations
 - Local Councils
 - Other industry Jobs and Skills Councils

2025 Proposed Strategy

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

→ **Skill Set Development for Priority Skilling Areas**

1

Skill Set Development for Priority Skilling Areas

Anticipated Timing:
12-18 months approximately.

Challenge: Local Government skills gaps

Strategy: Based on outcomes of the Local Government Skills Audit²⁹ and challenges identified (such as skills needs in Emergency Management) in this Workforce Insights Report, Public Skills Australia proposes to identify whether any existing training products can be used for priority skilling needs in Local Government. Should no training products exist, training products may be developed to support the priority skilling needs in Local Government.

Proposed Project Outline	Key Stakeholders
JSC Function: • Implementation, Promotion and Monitoring • Training Product Development • Workforce Planning Actions: PHASE 1 Based on the findings of the Local Government Skills Audit project (scheduled for completion in December 2025), a list of priority skilling needs will be developed. PHASE 2 Review existing training products, identify gaps and where required draft training products to address priority skilling needs. This project will support Qualification Reform by ensuring that duplication of existing training products does not occur.	• Local Government Workforce Development Group • ALGA • Local Government Associations from each State/Territory • STTA/SROs • RTOs • State/Territory Local Government Departments

Impact: Delivery of more readily consumed training aligned to priority skilling areas will lead to a more capable and flexible Local Government workforce.

²⁹ This project has been approved by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations as PSA_ANN_2425_006 Local Government Workforce Skills Audit.

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.

Australian Local Government Association	Local Government Professionals (Victoria)
Local Government Association of the Northern Territory	Local Government Workforce Development Group
Local Government Association Queensland	Office of Local Government New South Wales
Local Government Association South Australia	United Services Union
Local Government Association Tasmania	Western Australian Local Government Association
Local Government New South Wales	State/Territory Training Authorities and Senior Responsible Officers. ³⁰

Existing Strategies

- Existing Strategies in the Local Government Industry-sector
- Government Initiatives

Existing Strategies

2023 Local Government Workforce Shortages Survey in Western Australia

Local Government Professionals Western Australia Completed 2023

The 2023 Local Government Workforce Shortage Survey in Western Australia, conducted by Local Government Professionals WA and the McCusker Centre UWA, reveals significant recruitment and retention challenges. Key issues include skills shortages, geographic barriers, and competition from other industry-sectors. Effective strategies include using social media for recruitment and employee reskilling. The survey recommends building a resilient workforce through flexible and targeted training to support Local Governments in addressing workforce shortages and enhancing community service delivery.

HOW IT WILL INFORM PUBLIC SKILLS AUSTRALIA'S WORK

Findings from this survey will enhance how Public Skills Australia is able to interact with key workforce data, with specialised information from States/Territories being critical for assisting workforce planning efforts.

2022 Local Government Workforce Skills and Capability Survey: Final Report

Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) Completed 2022

The 2022 Local Government and Workforce Skills and Capability Survey: Final Report provides insights into Local Government workforce demographics and qualification profiles. The survey also highlights workforce challenges, particularly skills and occupational shortages, and outlines strategies to address them.

HOW IT WILL INFORM PUBLIC SKILLS AUSTRALIA'S WORK

The Workforce Skills and Capability Survey provides a valuable data asset to Public Skills Australia to better understand unique Local Government workforce and skills needs.

National Housing Accord

The Australian Government - Treasury 2024 - 2029

The Commonwealth, as well as all State/Territory governments agreed to build 1.2 million homes, over a five-year period, commencing in mid-2024. It is a component of the government's housing agenda to support social housing and additional support for renters and homebuyers. The National Cabinet has endorsed the Commonwealth by providing \$3.5 billion in payments to state, territory and local governments to support the delivery of this accord.

HOW IT WILL INFORM PUBLIC SKILLS AUSTRALIA'S WORK

Public Skills Australia will work in support of this project; to monitor and evaluate the impact it has on Local Government workforces.

The Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability

Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport 2024 - ongoing

This inquiry is currently being undertaken federally by a House of Representatives Committee. The Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability gathered feedback from Local Government stakeholders on issues such as:

- Financial sustainability and funding
- Evolving infrastructure and service delivery obligations
- Structural barriers affecting Local Government workers and services
- Trends in attracting and retaining skilled workers, including labour hire impacts.

HOW IT WILL INFORM PUBLIC SKILLS AUSTRALIA'S WORK

Public Skills Australia will monitor the outcomes of the Inquiry to identify areas that it could support the Local Government industry-sector.

Government Initiatives

2024 Core Skills Occupation List – Key Findings Report		HOW IT WILL INFORM PUBLIC SKILLS AUSTRALIA'S WORK
Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA)	2024 - ongoing	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.
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.		
Australian Cyber Security Strategy		HOW IT WILL INFORM PUBLIC SKILLS AUSTRALIA'S WORK
Department of Home Affairs	2023 - 2030	Public Skills Australia will support the Cyber Security Strategy in its work with Public Safety and Government industries. Ensuring that Public Safety and Government industry-sectors 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.
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.		
Better Together - The Jobs and Skills Report 2024		HOW IT WILL INFORM PUBLIC SKILLS AUSTRALIA'S WORK
Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA)	2024 - ongoing	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.
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.		

Closing the Gap		HOW IT WILL INFORM PUBLIC SKILLS AUSTRALIA'S WORK
Council of Australian Governments	2019 - 2029	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.
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.		
Occupation Standard Classification for Australia (OSCA)		HOW IT WILL INFORM PUBLIC SKILLS AUSTRALIA'S WORK
Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)	2024 - ongoing	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.
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.		
Occupational Shortage List (OSL)		HOW IT WILL INFORM PUBLIC SKILLS AUSTRALIA'S WORK
Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA)	Ongoing	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 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/Territory in regional or metropolitan areas.		

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

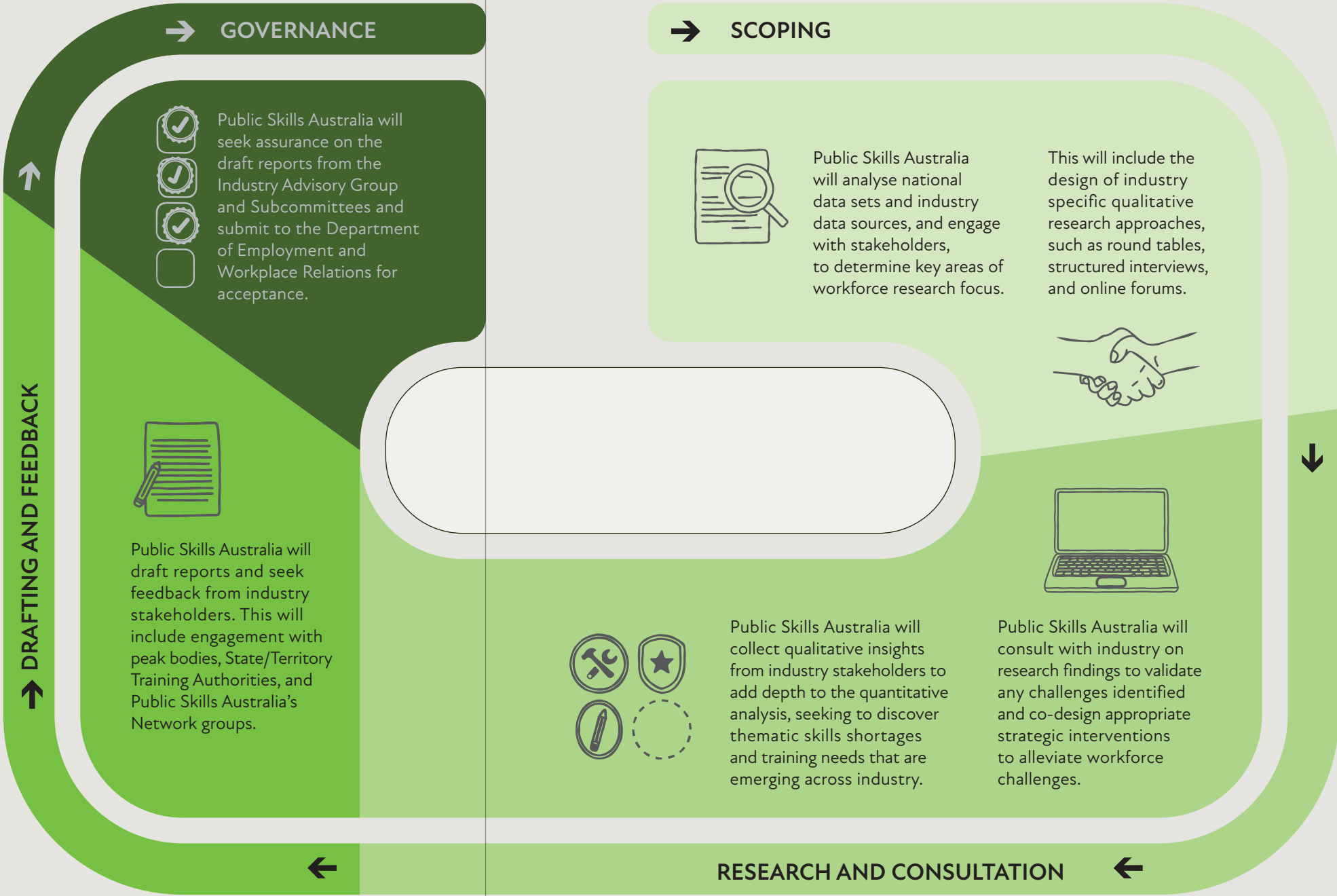
Public Skills Australia has built on its 2024 Workforce Plans in delivering this 2025 Workforce Insights Report.

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

Growth of Local Government employees from 2022-23 to 2023-24

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), [‘Public sector employment and earnings’](#), ABS, 2024, accessed 5 March 2025.

Local Government employees by year

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), [‘Public sector employment and earnings’](#), ABS, 2024, accessed 5 March 2025.

Roles and responsibilities of Local Government

Public Skills Australia, ‘Federal, State/Territory & Local Government Workforce Plan 2024’, Public Skills Australia, 2024.

Figure 2

Yearly uptake of the LGA Local Government Training Package

National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), Total VET students and courses 2023: DataBuilder [data set], NCVER, 2023, accessed 20 February 2025.

Occupational shortages in the Local Government industry-sector

Australian Local Government Association (ALGA), [‘Facts and Figures’](#), ALGA, 2023, accessed 21 January 2025.

Spread of Local Governments across each State and Territory

Australian Local Government Association (ALGA), [‘Facts and Figures’](#), ALGA, 2023, 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.

2025 LOCAL GOVERNMENT
WORKFORCE INSIGHTS REPORT



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