



PUBLIC SKILLS
AUSTRALIA

**Jobs and
Skills
Councils**
An Australian Government Initiative



Correctional Services

Workforce Plan 2024

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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, which includes Correctional Services, Defence, Federal, State/Territory and Local Government, Fire and Emergency Services and Police.

As the JSC for Public Safety and Government, we promote the importance of a well-trained, effective and efficient Public Safety and Government workforce. We work closely with industry employers and employee organisations, to identify and mitigate workforce challenges and support future skilling.

Public Skills Australia is committed to:

- conducting consultation with our key industry-sectors and their representatives,
- undertaking data analysis, research and employing strategic foresight tools to understand current workforce challenges and develop future workforce plans,
- developing quality training products to strengthen the Public Safety and Government training packages,
- advocating for the needs of our industry-sectors.

This Workforce Plan explores the workforce challenges and requirements of the Correctional Services industry-sector. The Correctional Services industry-sector plays a pivotal role in keeping our communities safe by delivering custodial services and supervising offenders in the community. This is often challenging and provides a unique workplace for Correctional Services staff. This Workforce Plan identifies key findings to support the Correctional Services industry-sector and their workforce.



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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 Plan. 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

Public Skills Australia successfully delivered an Initial Workforce Plan for Public Safety and Government industry-sectors. JSCs are required to build upon the Initial Workforce Plan and deliver an updated and more comprehensive Workforce Plan in 2024.

Workforce Plan 2024: Correctional Services provides a high-level snapshot of the Correctional Services industry-sector, its workforce, and identified workforce challenges. The plan highlights industry insights gathered from consultation. Through research and consultation, nine megatrends were consistently identified as impacting the Public Safety and Government workforce.



Expansion of core duties



Recruitment and retention



Technological development



Public trust and perceptions



Demographic shifts



Competition for labour



Diversity and inclusion



Career pathways



Climate change

Public Skills Australia further identified two workforce challenges specific to the Correctional Services industry-sector:

Managing Demand:

Increasing demand within Correctional Services in response to changing Government policies, can influence the size of prison populations, requiring greater workforce capacity and capabilities.

Workforce Mobility:

The need to improve workforce mobility across the industry-sector through recognition of prior education to alleviate workforce shortages.

In the development of future Workforce Plans, Public Skills Australia will seek to conduct further research and analysis to develop and implement strategies that may address the identified challenges.

METHODOLOGY

This Workforce Plan is supported by a mix of Federal Government data, industry-sector data and insights from industry-sector consultation. Federal Government data are mostly derived from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA). Industry-sector data are largely obtained from publicly accessible sources, such as annual reports. Industry-sector consultation was undertaken directly with employee, employer and government representatives. 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 Plan prioritises the data source, or combination of data sources, that provide the most accurate representation of the workforce possible.

Federal Government Data

Federal Government datasets, such as those from the ABS and JSA, are helpful for understanding high-level and overarching aspects of the entire Public Safety and Government workforces. ABS data used throughout this Workforce Plan includes National Census data, occupation classification information and other labour force and general population survey insights. Importantly, JSA provides an Employment and Education & Training Data Placemat directly to JSCs to inform their workforce planning. Informative and relevant data provided by JSA have been summarised in the Public Safety and Government Industry Snapshot and are supported by the industry-sector specific data detailed in this Workforce Plan. It requires noting that all employment data presented in the Public Safety and Government Industry Snapshot do not include volunteers.

Industry Consultation

Consultation was undertaken with employee, employer and government representatives. Public Skills Australia leveraged established relationships and governance arrangements to:

- invite participation in direct consultation,
- identify additional stakeholders,
- verify and validate research and data findings, and
- seek feedback on the Workforce Plan.



A range of consultation methods were utilised to support effective engagement. This included in-person stakeholder meetings, online presentations and written review and feedback from Public Skills Australia governance group members. Consultation plans were designed around previously identified and emergent workforce challenges, as well as possible strategies to support the workforce. Insights generated from consultations were deductively mapped to the identified challenges and validated by multiple Public Skills Australia researchers and are presented in the Industry Insights breakout boxes across this Workforce Plan. Insights were further reviewed and validated by members of Public Skills Australia's subcommittees, Industry Advisory Group and Public Skills Australia Board. Further information on this engagement is contained in the Consultation Plan section of this Workforce Plan.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND GOVERNMENT INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT

Public Safety and Government is the fifth largest employing industry in Australia (Figure 1). As of November 2023, there were just under 823,000 individuals employed in the industry.¹ This number has grown steadily year-on-year since 1985 (Figure 2). New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland are the largest employing states for occupations within the industry (Figure 3), with 31.1 per cent, 26.1 per cent and 22.1 per cent of the total employment percentage, respectively. The top 10 employing occupations are presented in Table 1.

Figure 1: Total individuals employed in each industry²

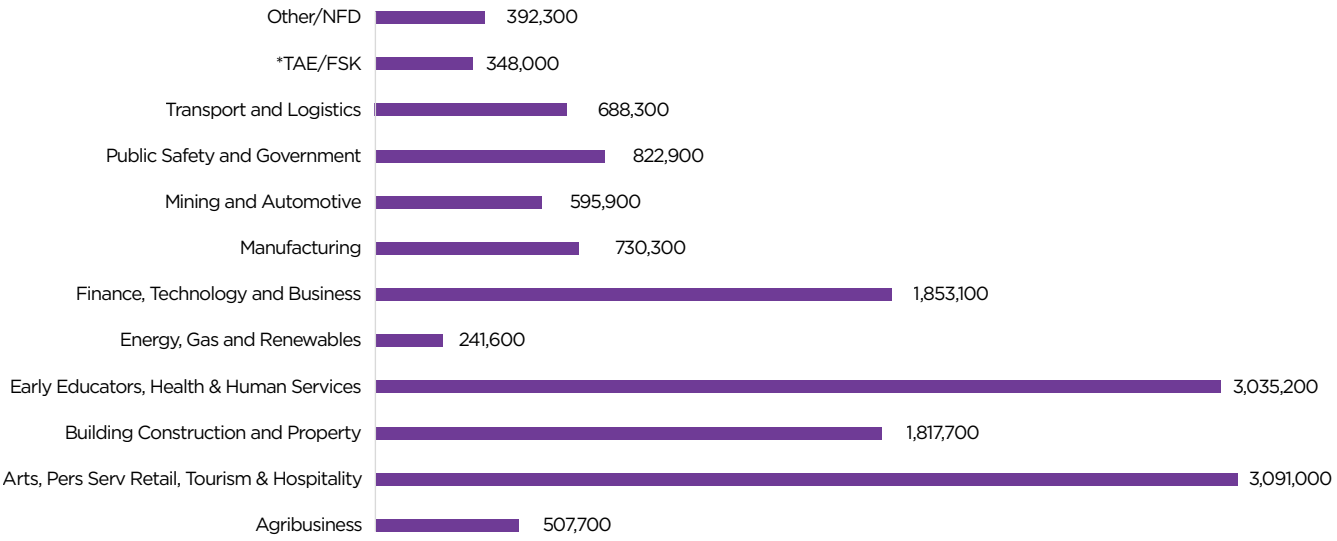
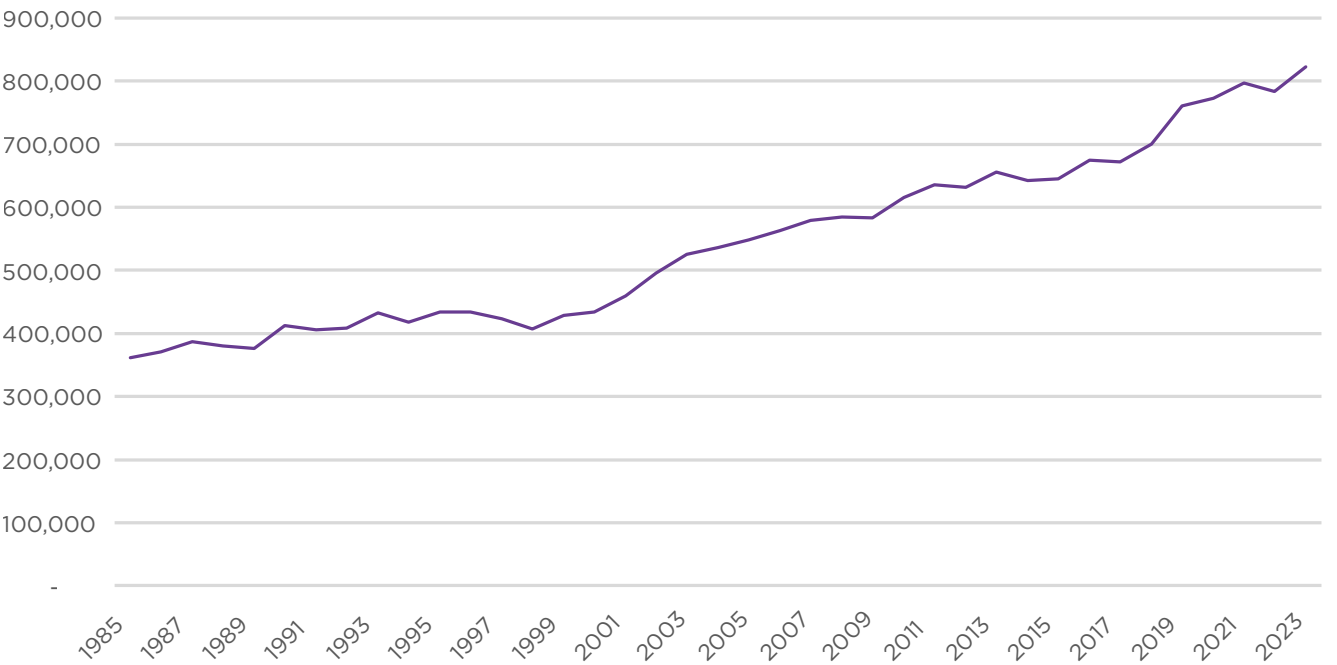


Figure 2: Total number of individuals employed in the Public Safety and Government industry from 1985 to 2023³



¹Employment data presented in this snapshot does not include volunteers.
²Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, November 2023 [data set], ABS website, 2023, accessed 1 May 2024.
³ABS, Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, November 2023 [data set], ABS website, 2023, accessed 1 May 2024.

Figure 3: Total number of individuals employed in Public Safety and Government industry by State/Territory in 2023⁴

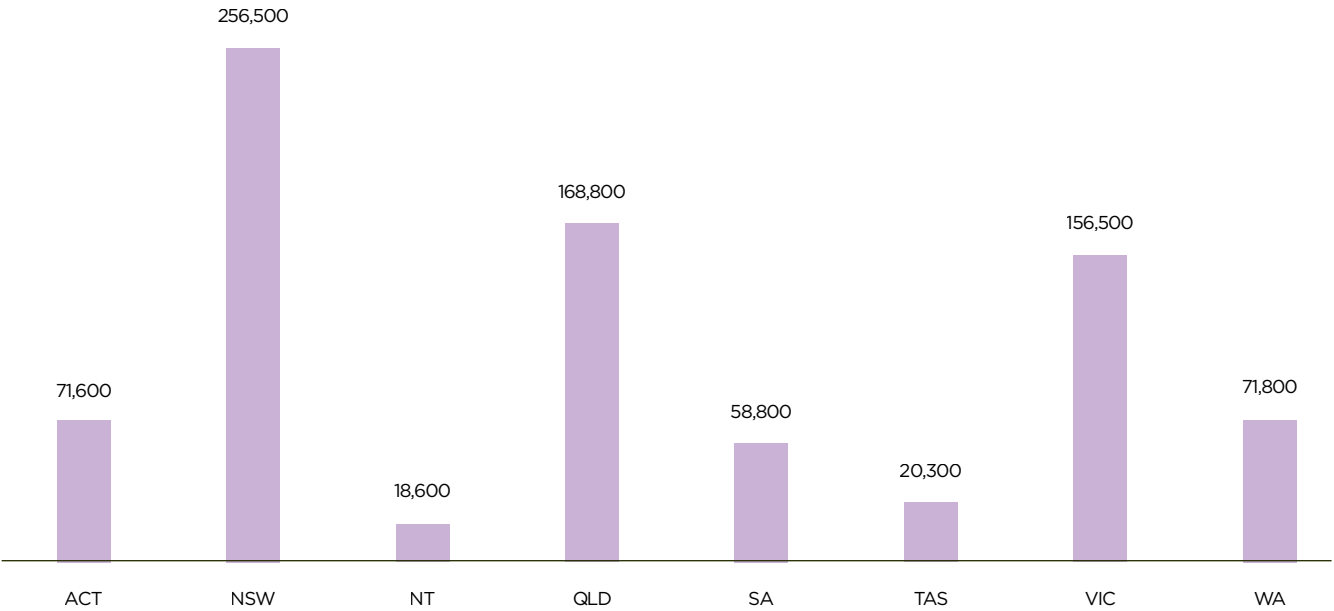


Table 1: Top 10 employing occupations in the Public Safety and Government industry⁵

ANZSCO	Occupation	%
4413	Police	8.4
5311	General Clerks	4.9
5995	Inspectors and Regulatory Officers	4.5
5111	Contract, Program and Project Administrators	4.0
1324	Policy and Planning Managers	3.2
4421	Prison Officers	2.7
4411	Defence Force Members - Other Ranks	2.3
5412	Information Officers	2.2
2249	Other Information and Organisation Professionals	2.1
8999	Other Miscellaneous Labourers	2.1



A comparison between the Public Safety and Government and national workforces on median weekly earnings, median age, proportion of workforce who are female and proportion of workforce who are First Nations people is presented in Table 2⁶.

Table 2: Demographic comparison between the Public Safety and Government industry and national workforces⁷

	National	Public Safety and Government Industry
Median weekly earnings	\$1,300	\$1,656
Median age	38	42
Proportion who are female	47.6%	52.1%
Proportion who are First Nations people	2.2%	3.4%

The Public Safety and Government industry workforce is currently projected to experience a 4.7 per cent increase in employment across the next five years and an 8.8 per cent increase in employment over the next ten years⁸. These projections provide a useful insight into overall labour market trends, however any forecasting needs to take into consideration the unique drivers in the Public Safety and Government industry. These drivers may include changes in crime rates, bushfires, natural disasters and other large-scale

emergencies. Further, there are several national political and economic influences and constraints, such as government budgets and political commitments, that could impact the industry. Lastly, international and geopolitical factors such as conflict and international deployment, along with emerging infrastructure needs (e.g., AUKUS nuclear submarine program, new correctional facilities), may also impact labour market growth projections in this industry.

⁴ABS, Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, November 2023 [data set], ABS website, 2023, accessed 1 May 2024.
⁵Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, November 2023 [data set], ABS website, 2023, accessed 1 May 2024.

⁶First Nations people will be used as preferred terminology inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. When citing a data source (i.e. annual reports, ABS data, and the Productivity Commission’s Report on Government Services) the terminology of the data source will be used to maintain accurate data representation.
⁷ABS, Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, November 2023 [data set], ABS website, 2023, accessed 1 May 2024.
⁸Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), Employment Projections, JSA website, n.d., accessed 1 May 2024.

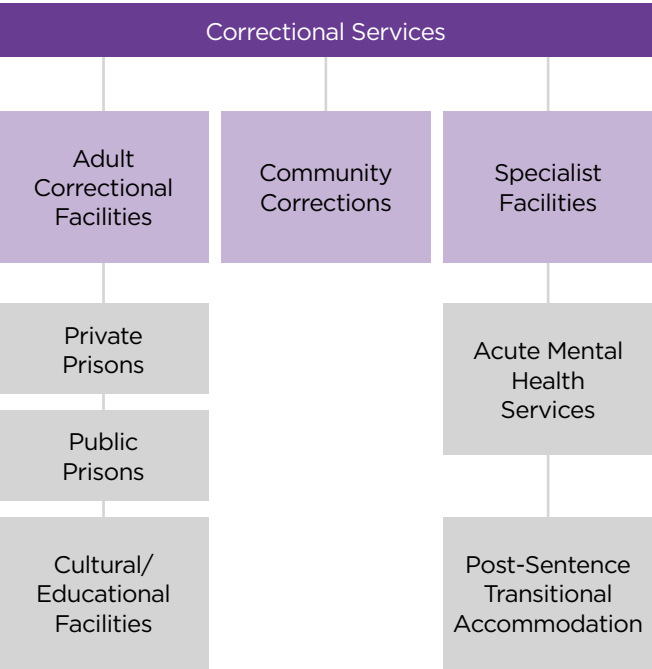
CORRECTIONAL SERVICES INDUSTRY-SECTOR OVERVIEW

The Correctional Services industry-sector is a critical part of Australia’s criminal justice system. Each State/Territory governs their own individual Correctional Services program, which spans adult custodial facilities, community corrections programs and specialist services (Figure 4). These services operate across metropolitan, regional, and remote geographic areas. Unlike other Public Safety and Government industry-sectors that are solely managed by Government departments, the Correctional Services industry-sector is also managed by private industry, which increases the need for industry-sector collaboration and partnership across the public and private sector. Importantly, Correctional Services are guided by national practices and performance standards, and adhere to distinctive regulatory frameworks, legislative obligations, and human rights principles.⁹ These practices and standards underpin and shape the workforce and training needs of the industry-sector

The Correctional Services workforce is comprised of two cohorts - correctional officers (COs) who are responsible for delivering custodial services in prisons, and community corrections officers (CCOs) who are responsible for supervising offenders in the community.¹⁰ The Correctional Services workforce is augmented by public servants who hold positions both inside and outside correctional facilities in areas such as records management, policy, education and intelligence.

The Correctional Services workforce is exposed to unique and complex working environments, with responsibility for persons in custody within correctional facilities, and the supervision of individuals who have been released into the community with rehabilitative conditions.¹¹ The Correctional Services workforce often operates in environments that may present a risk to their

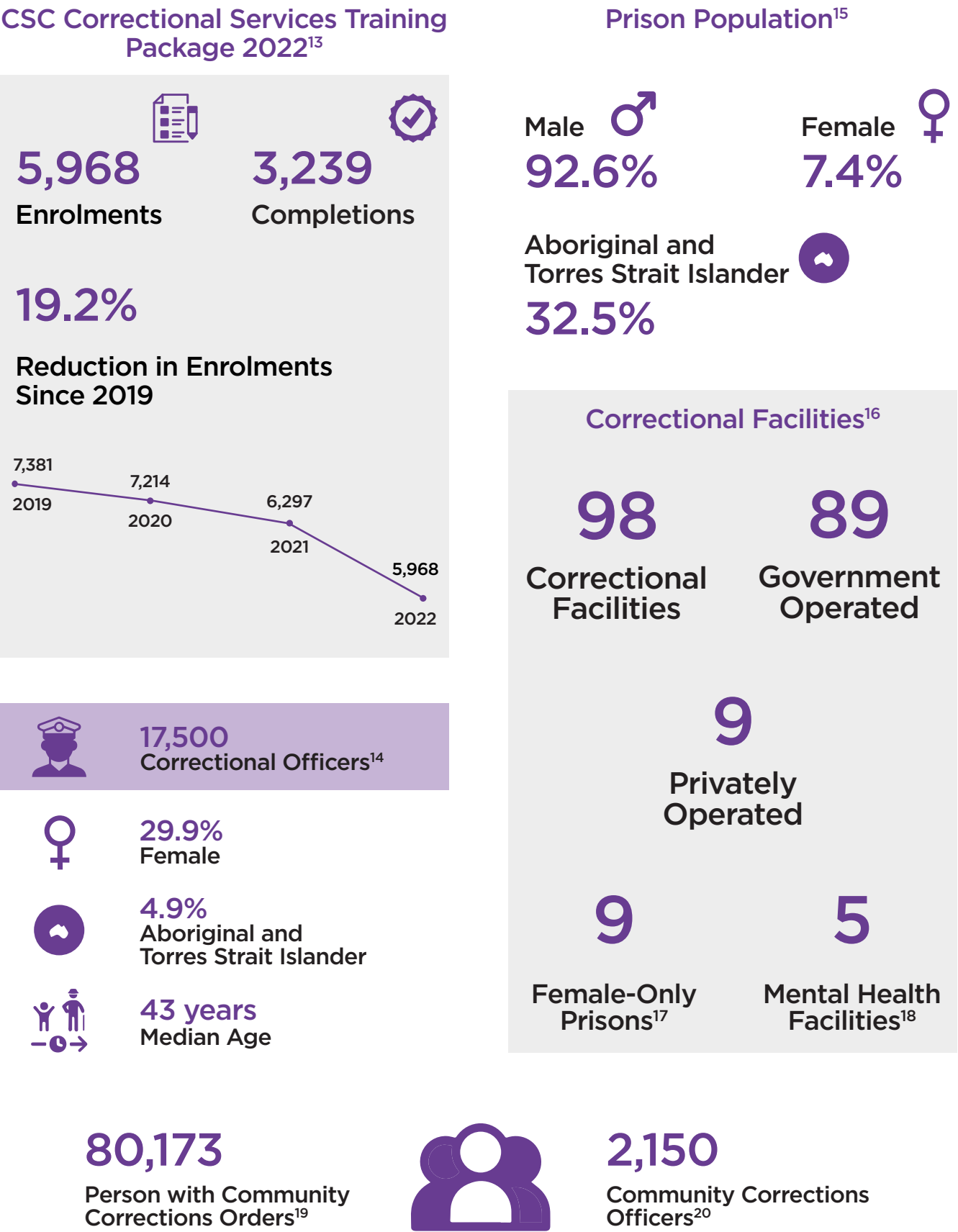
Figure 4: Categories of service provision within the Correctional Services industry-sector



physical safety. Developing strong communication skills, with an emphasis on soft skills and conflict resolution, is essential to establish trust, manage relationships, and support rehabilitation.¹²

There are opportunities for COs to complete further training to move into supervisory and managerial roles within the custodial setting. COs may also complete training in specialist roles such as prison intelligence, tactical/security response, and specialisation in overseeing prison industries and vocational programs. The Australia and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) does not currently delineate between supervisory or managerial roles for the Correctional Services workforce, and State/Territory annual reporting data rarely distinguishes between supervisory and non-supervisory staff. As such, data on this cohort is not currently available.

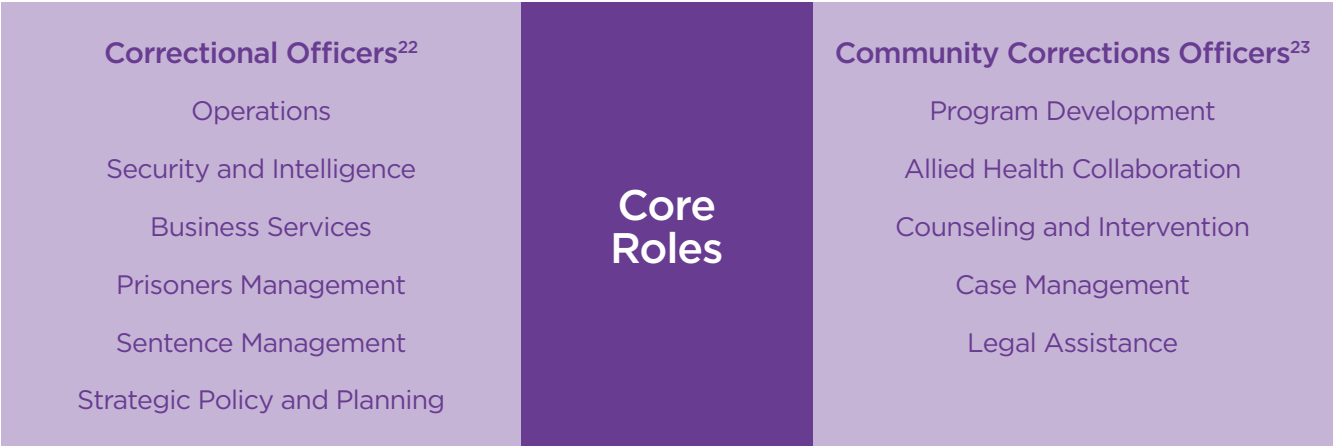
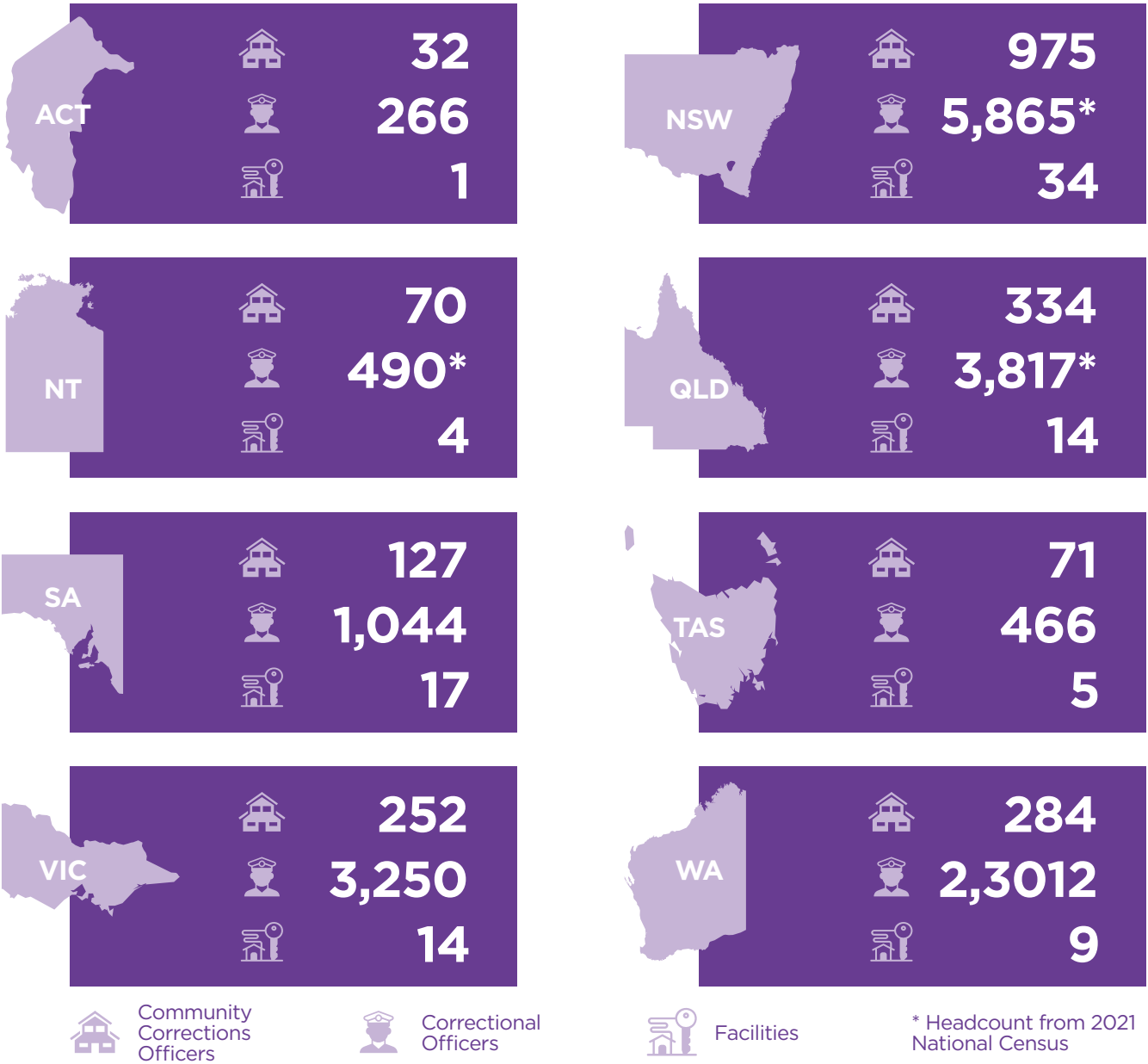
Figure 5: National overview of the Correctional Services industry-sector



⁹Corrective Services Administrator's Council (CSAC), *Guiding principles for corrections in Australia: revised 2018*, CSAC, Australian Government, 2018.
¹⁰Correctional officers are also known as prison officers and custodial officers. Correctional officer has been used throughout this document as the preferred industry term and aligns to ANZSCO 442111. Community corrections officers are also known as probation officers, probation services officers, probation and parole officers, or parole officers. Community corrections officers has been used throughout this document as the preferred industry term and aligns to ANZSCO 411714.
¹¹'Person in custody' refers to a person in the custody of a Correctional Services organisation. Other sources may refer to a 'person in custody' as a prisoner and/or an inmate. 'Person in custody' has been used throughout this document as the preferred industry term.
¹²K 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.

¹³National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), *Total VET students and courses 2022: VOCSTATS* [data set], ncver.edu.au, 2023, accessed 15 January 2024.
¹⁴See Appendix A for a list of jurisdictional reports; Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *SEXP Sex, INGP Indigenous Status and 6-digit level OCCP Occupation by STATE (POW)* [Census TableBuilder], 2021, accessed 15 January 2024; Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), *Labour Market Insights – Prison Officers* [website], n.d., accessed 15 January 2024.
¹⁵Productivity Commission, *Report on Government Services – Corrective Services (Table BA.4)* [data set], pc.gov.au, 2024, accessed 15 February 2024.
¹⁶Productivity Commission, *Report on Government Services – Corrective Services (Table BA.3)* [data set], pc.gov.au, 2024, accessed 15 February 2024.
¹⁷See Appendix B for a full list of jurisdictional websites.
¹⁸See Appendix B for a full list of jurisdictional websites.
¹⁹Productivity Commission, *Report on Government Services – Corrective Services (Table BA.6)* [data set], pc.gov.au, 2024, accessed 15 February 2024.
²⁰ABS, *State (POW) by 6-digit Level Occupation (OCCP)* [Census TableBuilder], 2021, accessed 15 January 2024.

Correctional Officer Headcount and Facilities²¹

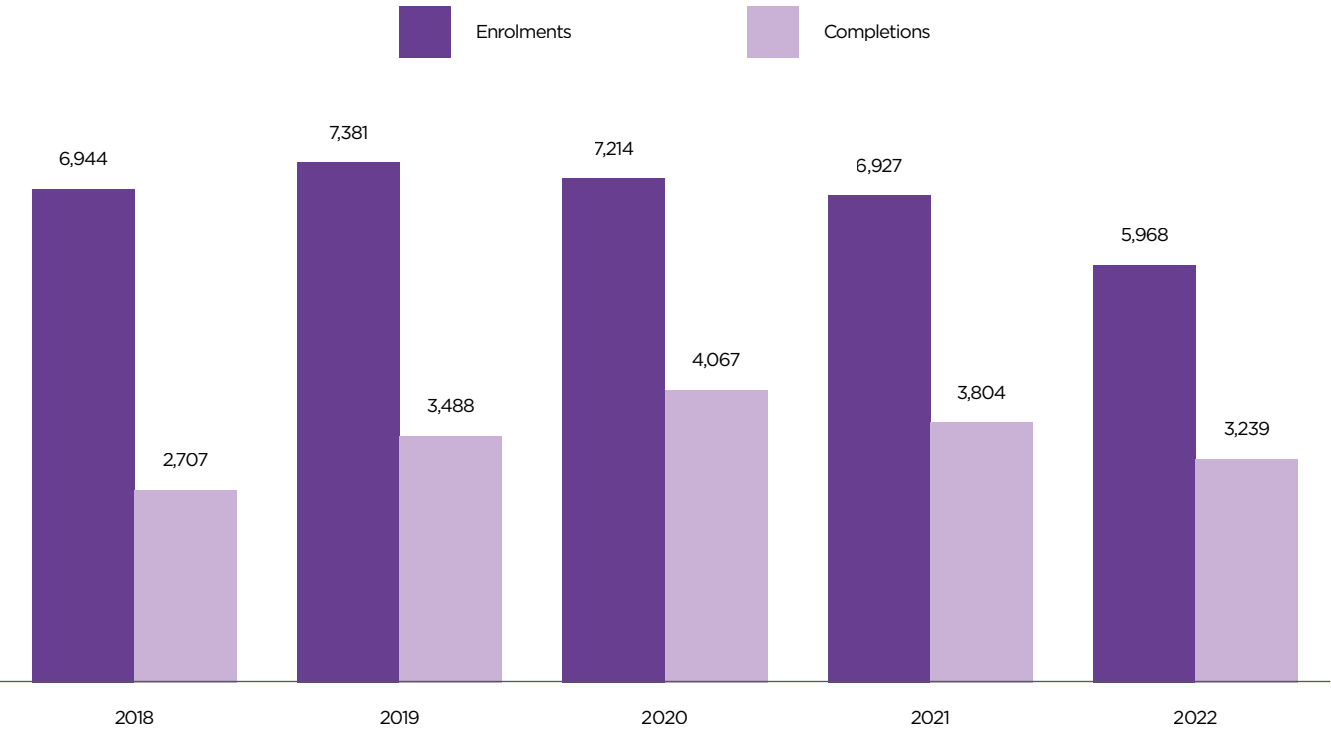


²¹See Appendix A for a list of jurisdictional reports; ABS, State (POW) by 6-digit Level Occupation (OCCP) [Census TableBuilder], 2021, accessed 15 January 2024; Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services – Corrective Services (Table 8A.3) [data set], pc.gov.au, 2024, accessed 15 February 2024.
²²Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), Australian Skills Classification – Prison Officer [website], n.d., accessed 15 January 2024, (analysis based on Australian Skill Classification data).
²³JSA, Australian Skills Classification – Parole or Probation Officer [website], n.d., accessed 15 January 2024, (analysis based on Australian Skill Classification data).

CORRECTIONAL SERVICES TRAINING PACKAGE

Formal training for correctional officers and community corrections officers is supported by the CSC Correctional Services Training Package (CSC Training Package). Although enrolment numbers in this training package remain high, with an average of 6,800 yearly enrolments since 2018, there has been a downward trend from 2019 onwards, with enrolments decreasing by 19.2 per cent since this time (Figure 6).

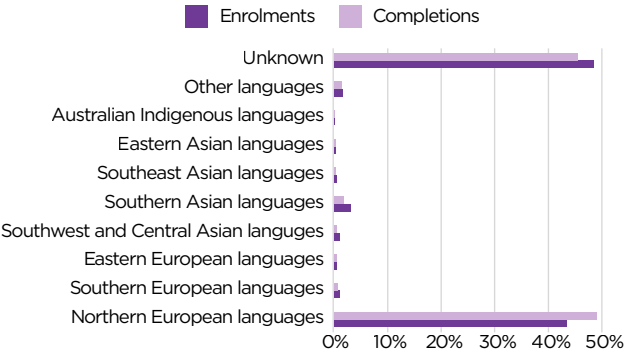
Figure 6: Yearly enrolments and completions for the CSC Training Package²⁴



Student Demographic

There were several data gaps regarding the demographics of learners enrolled in the CSC Training Package. In addition to low overall representation among those who enrol and graduate, data in relation to First Nations (Figure 8) and disability status (Figure 9) was also unknown for a high proportion of learners. As indicated in Figures 7-9, due to the large proportion of unknown data, it is difficult to draw conclusions about some of the identified cohorts of learners enrolled in this training package.

Figure 7: Enrolments and completions in 2022, by main language spoken at home, for the CSC Training Package²⁵



²⁴National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), Total VET students and courses 2022: VOCSTATS [data set], ncver.edu.au, 2023, accessed 15 January 2024.
²⁵National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), Total VET students and courses 2022: VOCSTATS [data set], ncver.edu.au, 2023, accessed 15 January 2024.

Figure 8: Enrolments and completions in 2022 by Indigenous status for the CSC Training Package²⁶

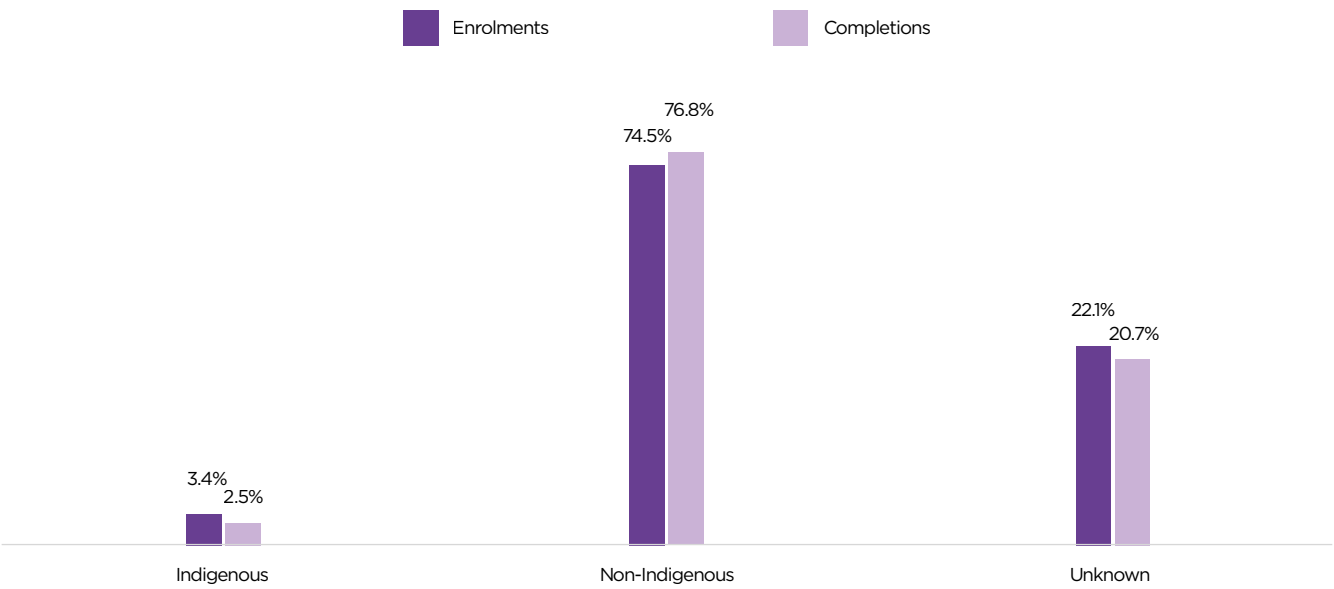
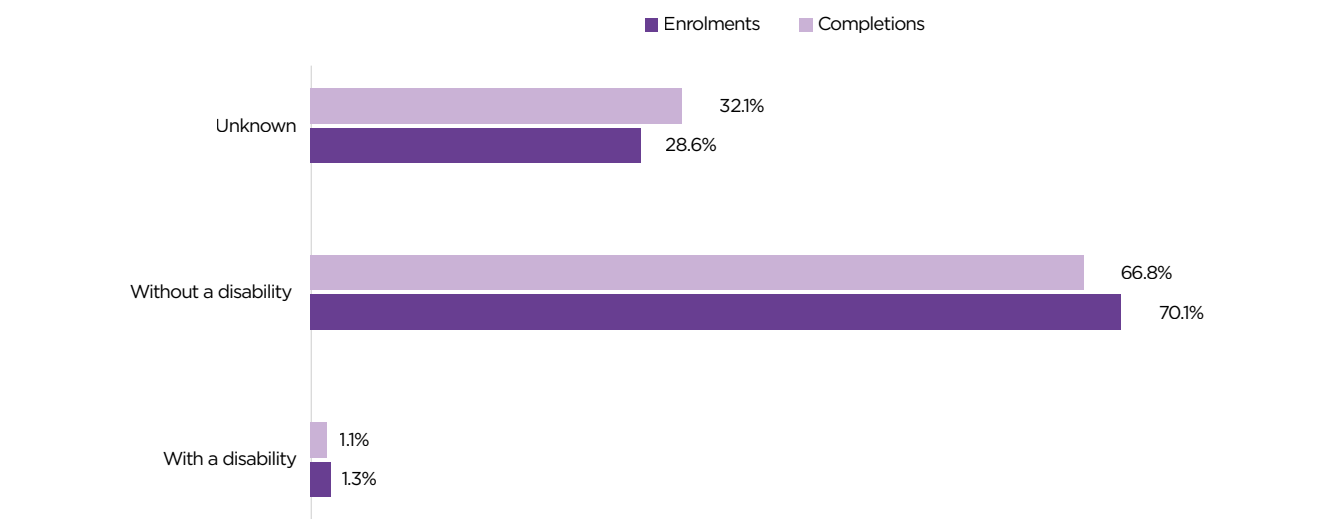


Figure 9: Enrolments and completions in 2022 by disability status for the CSC Training Package²⁷



²⁶NCVER, Total VET students and courses 2022: VOCSTATS [data set], ncver.edu.au, 2023, accessed 15 January 2024.

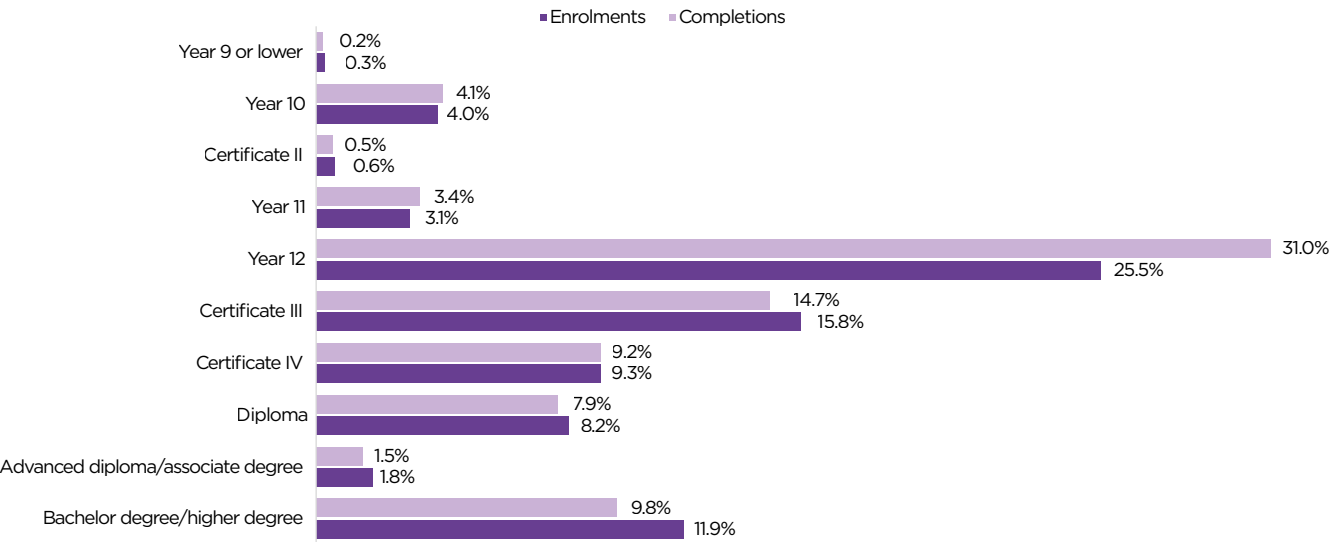
²⁷NCVER, Total VET students and courses 2022: VOCSTATS [data set], ncver.edu.au, 2023, accessed 15 January 2024.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

During consultation, Correctional Services representatives identified that **some learners faced difficulties completing their qualifications due to low literacy levels**. Representatives indicated that they believed low literacy levels may be attributed to the fact that English is commonly a second language for this learner cohort. Further work is required to support the development of foundational skills within the Correctional Services industry-sector.

The greatest proportion of completions and enrolments in 2022 were accounted for by learners with a Year 12 qualification as their highest educational level (Figure 10). Further work is required to understand any barriers to workforce participation pathways for learners from other educational backgrounds, especially those from lower levels

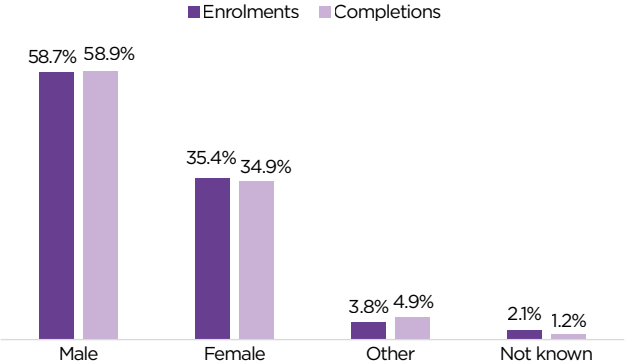
Figure 10: Enrolments and completions in 2022 by highest education level for the CSC Training Package²⁸



Male learners made up the greatest proportion of enrolments and completions in 2022 (approximately 59 per cent) (Figure 11). This is in line with the Correctional Services workforce, in which approximately 70 per cent of correctional officers are male²⁹. Female and gender-diverse individuals comprised almost 40 per cent of enrolments and completions in the training package (Figure 11), however, this composition is not sustained in the Correctional Services workforce³⁰. This suggests that there is an industry-sector challenge in retaining female and gender-diverse employees between enrolment, completion and entry to the workforce. Further examination of recruitment

processes, attrition and barriers to entry for female and gender-diverse employees is required.

Figure 11: Enrolments and completions in 2022 by gender for the CSC Training Package³¹



²⁸National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), Total VET students and courses 2022: VOCSTATS [data set], ncver.edu.au, 2023, accessed 15 January 2024.

²⁹ABS, State (POW) by 6-digit Level Occupation (OCCP) [Census TableBuilder], 2021, accessed 15 January 2024

³⁰Gender-diverse refers to individuals who do not identify as male or female, for example non-binary.

³¹National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), Total VET students and courses 2022: VOCSTATS [data set], ncver.edu.au, 2023, accessed 15 January 2024.

CROSS-INDUSTRY MEGATRENDS

Across all Public Safety and Government industry-sectors, nine cross-industry megatrends have consistently been identified as impacting the workforce (Figure 12). Cross-industry megatrends are often interrelated and may amplify or compound other trends. Future workforce planning may look to map these interdependencies.

Figure 12:

Identified cross-industry megatrends

Competition for Labour	Demographic Shifts	Recruitment and Retention
Career Pathways	Expansion of Core Duties	Diversity and Inclusivity
Climate Change	Technological Development	Public Trust and Perceptions

MEGATREND 1: COMPETITION FOR LABOUR

- ✓ Defence
- ✓ Police
- ✓ Fire and Emergency Services
- ✓ Correctional Services
- ✓ Federal, State/Territory and Local Government

Competition for labour is a complex and multifaceted challenge for Australia’s labour force. The Public Safety and Government industry often attract applicants who are committed to public service and the safety of Australian communities. This means that its industry-sectors find themselves competing for labour not only with the private sector but also with each other. The Correctional Services workforce may be impacted by competition for labour within the industry-sector itself (Government-operated facilities versus privately operated facilities), and within other Public Safety and Government industries.

The latest reporting from Jobs and Skills Australia indicates 36 per cent of monitored occupations are in shortage across Australia³². For the Correctional Services industry-sector, there has been a reported shortage of Prison Officers (ANZSCO 442111) in Tasmania and Northern Territory since 2022³³.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Many employer representatives highlighted that Correctional Services is used as a stepping stone into other Public Safety and Government industry-sectors. During consultations it was noted that individuals may become Correctional Officers to gain experience before applying to roles in the Police industry-sector.

³²Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), *Skills Priority List*, JSA website, 2023, accessed 15 January 2024.

³³JSA, *Skills Priority List*, JSA website, 2023, accessed 15 January 2024.

MEGATREND 2: DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFTS

- ✓ Defence
- ✓ Police
- ✓ Fire and Emergency Services
- ✓ Correctional Services
- ✓ Federal, State/Territory and Local Government

Demographic shifts are likely to pose a significant challenge for the Public Safety and Government industry-sectors. Population growth is also likely to place increased demands on Public Safety and Government industry-sectors as more services will be required (often in increasingly dense areas). As highlighted in the *2023 Intergenerational Report*, the population of people who are 65 years and older in Australia is expected to double across the next 40 years.³⁴

The current median age of a correctional officer is 43 years old, considerably higher than the national workforce age of 39.³⁵ If the average age of correctional officers continues to outpace the national average, it is highly likely that the Correctional Services industry-sector may experience a critical workforce shortage in the future.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Employer bodies stated that some individuals may leave related careers in Public Safety and Government industry-sectors and join the Correctional Services industry-sector later in life. This trend was noted to be of benefit to Correctional Services where employees with more life experience and stronger communication skills may be of value.

³⁴The Treasury, *Intergenerational Report*, The Treasury, Australian Government, 2023.
³⁵Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), *Australian Skills Classification – Prison Officer* [website], n.d., accessed 15 January 2024.

MEGATREND 3: RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

- ✓ Defence
- ✓ Police
- ✓ Fire and Emergency Services
- ✓ Correctional Services
- ✓ Federal, State/Territory and Local Government

Recruiting and retaining new employees is a significant challenge across all industry-sectors in Public Safety and Government and is examined in further detail in Figure 13.

Figure 13: Recruitment and retention challenges across Public Safety and Government

Recruitment		Retention	
Competitive salaries and flexible working conditions	Attractiveness of higher education	Australia's sustained strong economic growth	Changes to employers' expectations of the workforce
Competitive labour markets or low volume of workers in specific fields	Perceptions of the industry	Increasing demand and scope of public safety work	Staff wellbeing

Positioning Public Safety and Government as an employer of choice has proved to be challenging, as expectations of workplaces and working conditions have changed. Access to flexible working conditions and competition with the private sector regarding salary and workplace conditions poses an additional challenge to recruitment and retention in Correctional Services.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Private prison providers stated they are often able to offer more entitlements or benefits for employees including higher pay, increased focus on mental health support, and ongoing education and training than their public prison counterparts. It was also identified that due to the reduced size and structure of private correctional facilities, they face less barriers to change and can more readily update operational practices.

High levels of burnout and increasing separation rates are reported by industry, especially amongst newer members who have spent less than two years in the role. It was noted that this was largely due to the high-pressure environment of correctional facilities and a need for investment in workplace support for junior employees.

Correctional Services organisations noted they often received an adequate number of applications for role vacancies during recruitment drives; however large proportions of applicants were unsuitable for the roles because of:

- inadequate language, literacy and numeracy skills (based on a standardised LLND assessment)
- inadequate physical capacities (which meant they could not finish the training)
- inappropriate attitudes and lack of understanding of the role or requisite skills.

Industry stakeholders also indicated that other Public Safety and Government roles (e.g. Police) are preferred by suitable candidates due to a perceived lack of career progression pathways within the Correctional Services industry-sector.

MEGATREND 4: CAREER PATHWAYS

- ✓ Defence
- ✓ Police
- ✓ Fire and Emergency Services
- ✓ Correctional Services
- ✓ Federal, State/Territory and Local Government

Clearly defined career pathways are crucial to support employee value propositions and to retain staff. Career pathways may include:

- structured and connected personal development plans that enable candidates to enter an industry, develop core skills, and achieve training goals, and
- clearly defined educational pathways to support candidates into promotional pathways or move laterally into specialised roles.

Defining the span of roles available in the Correctional Services industry-sector, along with any relevant further training or required experience, may improve the perceived value in long-term Correctional Services careers.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Both the correctional officer and community correctional officer roles are supported by Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualifications however, **new staff members were commonly reported to perceive limited opportunities for career growth.** Further VET training pathways are not currently established for these roles.

Despite the common use of the Certificate III in Correctional Services, cross-jurisdictional lateral entry pathways remain a challenge.

Although numerous internal (e.g. movement into prison manufacturing/industry, educational or administrative roles) and promotional (e.g. promotion to supervisory and managerial roles) career pathways currently exist, **industry-sector employers noted that these opportunities are not being shared or encouraged with recruits or new staff members.**

An employee representative noted the importance of occupational experience in the Correctional Services industry-sector for corrections officers who are pursuing promotional opportunities. Scenario-based questions are utilised as part of the interview process, and favours candidates who can demonstrate extensive experience in Correctional Services environments.

MEGATREND 5: EXPANSION OF CORE DUTIES

- ✓ Defence
- ✓ Police
- ✓ Fire and Emergency Services
- ✓ Correctional Services
- ✓ Federal, State/Territory and Local Government

Expanding core duties is a challenge affecting all Public Safety and Government industry-sectors. The expansion of core duties and responsibilities (or ‘role creep’) refers to the gradual and unintended expansion of responsibilities and tasks beyond the original scope of a role or rank. In a professional context, it often occurs when additional duties and responsibilities are assigned to an individual or a team without a corresponding adjustment in resources, time, or compensation. For employees, this can result in increased workloads and responsibilities and may contribute to employee attrition and separation. Expansion of core duties and responsibilities may be driven by:

- budgetary restrictions and the challenge to ‘do more with less’,
- increasing government or community expectations,
- emerging evidence and changing understandings of effective practices, and
- technological advancements.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Some employers indicated that an increased examination and understanding of complex mental health and behaviours of persons in custody is impacting the focus of Correctional Services industry-sector workforce.

The Inquiry into Victoria’s Criminal Justice System, has emphasised the importance of Correctional Services workforces being equipped to enact trauma-informed practice and manage persons in custody with complex behaviours.³⁶

³⁶Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee, *Inquiry into Victoria’s Criminal Justice System: Volume 1*, Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee, Parliament of Victoria, 2022.

MEGATREND 6: DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY

- ✓ Defence
- ✓ Police
- ✓ Fire and Emergency Services
- ✓ Correctional Services
- ✓ Federal, State/Territory and Local Government

Public Safety and Government industry-sectors have made significant strides towards fostering inclusive and equitable practices in recruiting First Nations peoples, culturally and linguistically diverse individuals, women, gender-diverse people, and people with disabilities; however, representation remains an ongoing challenge.

First Nations People Representation

Representation within the Correctional Services industry-sector is particularly relevant given the over-representation of First Nations peoples in custody (32.5 per cent) compared to the proportion of the correctional officer workforce (4.9 per cent).³⁷ Due to gaps in the reporting of diversity data by many State/Territory Correctional Services organisations, there is very limited data on the proportions of First Nations peoples at a State/Territory level. Increasing the number of First Nations correctional officers presents an opportunity to improve workforce demand management and cultural competency.

Governmental reviews and academic research have identified several factors that impact the social and emotional wellbeing of First Nations correctional officers in Australia.³⁸ Particularly, cultural awareness was identified as a protective factor due to increased understanding of language barriers and cultural dynamics resulting in shared respect between First Nations correctional officers and persons in custody.³⁹ Conversely, First Nations correctional officers have been noted to grapple with inadequate support services, distress from family member’s incarceration, communication challenges between First Nations peoples in custody and non-First Nations officers, strained relationships with non-First Nations colleagues marked by racism and unequal treatment, and familial pressures to interact with persons in custody while on duty.⁴⁰ Therefore, the benefits of increasing First Nations participation in the Correctional Services industry-sector need to be balanced with the unique challenges that this cohort face.

³⁷Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Indigenous Status (INGP) and Sex (SEXP) by Occupation (OCCP) [Census TableBuilder], 2021, accessed 15 January 2024; Productivity Commission, *Report on Government Services – Corrective Services - Table 8A.4* [data set], 2024, January 2024.
³⁸K 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 Team, 2022; JS Trounson, RK Oppenheim, S Shepherd and JE Pfeifer, ‘Social and emotional wellbeing among Indigenous Australian correctional officers’, *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*, 2022, 29(2): 223-240.
³⁹Trounson et al., ‘Social and emotional wellbeing among Indigenous Australian correctional officers’.
⁴⁰K 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 Team, 2022; JS Trounson, RK Oppenheim, S Shepherd and JE Pfeifer, ‘Social and emotional wellbeing among Indigenous Australian correctional officers’, *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*, 2022, 29(2): 223-240.

Public Skills Australia’s First Nations Network has recognised the multifaceted challenges faced by First Nations peoples in a range of Public Safety and Government roles, including Correctional Services. The Network acknowledged that individuals in these roles may navigate complex dynamics, balancing community perceptions of their employment while striving for inclusion and cultural respect within their professional environments. These challenges may be considered further in future workforce planning.

Gender

Similar to other Public Safety and Government industry-sectors, there is a large disparity between males and females employed as correctional officers (70.1 per cent male).⁴¹ While Australian prison populations are predominantly male (92.6 per cent male), evidence suggests that female correctional officers can have a calming and normalising effect in male prisons.⁴² Female correctional officers are more likely to utilise communication tactics to de-escalate an incident than their male colleagues, resulting in lower aggression and reduced altercations amongst persons in custody.⁴³ Further stakeholder consultation is required to understand the impacts of female under-representation across the State/Territory Correctional Services workforces.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Some employer bodies indicated that employment of First Nations peoples could provide improved levels of cultural competency and psychosocial safety and enhanced interactions between staff and First Nations prisoners.

It was noted by employers that First Nations peoples may be reticent to pursue careers in the Correctional Services due to low levels of trust.

Multiple employer and employee bodies stated that workforce gender composition must also consider operational requirements and prisoner rights, including whether an appropriately gendered correctional officer is available to conduct body searches, including for transgender individuals. Conducting body searches of transgender prisoners must comply with relevant State/Territory correctional policies.

⁴¹See Appendix A for a list of jurisdictional reports; Australian Bureau Statistics (ABS), SEXP Sex, INGP Indigenous Status and 6-digit level OCCP Occupation by STATE (POW) [Census TableBuilder], 2021, accessed 15 January 2024.
⁴²O Dowd, *A man's world: female correctional officers in New Zealand men's prisons: a social history* [master's thesis], University of Canterbury, 2020, accessed 4 April 2024; Productivity Commission, *Report on Government Services – Corrective Services - Table 8A.4* [data set], 2024, January 2024.
⁴³O Dowd, *A man's world: female correctional officers in New Zealand men's prisons: a social history* [master's thesis].

MEGATREND 7:
CLIMATE CHANGE

- ✓ Defence
- ✓ Police
- ✓ Fire and Emergency Services
- ✓ Correctional Services
- ✓ Federal, State/Territory and Local Government

Climate change and weather-related disasters are having a significant influence on every industry-sector, including those overseen by other JSCs. While the effects of climate change may be widespread, the implications for individual industry-sectors vary.

The Correctional Services industry-sector also must be aware of the impact of a changing climate by ensuring their workforce is trained in emergency preparedness procedures. As correctional facilities are frequently located in regional or remote areas, they are susceptible to

weather events. In Queensland, several facilities lay near flood zones, which impacted parts of southern Queensland in 2022, as staff and persons in custody at these facilities may find themselves isolated during flood events. Shifts in climate change may mean that the severity and frequency of such incidents could increase over time.

MEGATREND 8: TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

- ✓ Defence
- ✓ Police
- ✓ Fire and Emergency Services
- ✓ Correctional Services
- ✓ Federal, State/Territory and Local Government

The rapid evolution of technology presents a challenge for Public Safety and Government industry-sectors and most commonly impacts:

- workplace capability and practices (i.e. streamlining processes and enhancing communications),
- response or operational practices, and
- standardised training practices.

Technological development poses a challenge for effective practice, and demands the continual review of workplace training, standards, and skills. Correctional facilities in Australia are increasingly using body scanners to detect contraband on persons in custody. State/Territories across Australia require staff within correctional facilities to acquire a radiation user licence to operate a body scanner. In New South Wales, the use of a body scanners requires an IA42 radiation user licence from a course provider that has been approved by the NSW Environmental Protection

Agency that encompasses:

- radiation safety
- body scanner operations
- image analysis.

Use of body scanners in New South Wales also requires a worker to complete Privacy Law Training from the New South Wales Department of Communities and Justice.

The deployment of body scanners increases the likelihood of detecting and preventing the introduction of contraband into facilities; however, it also introduces an increased burden of training, operational staffing requirements and licence renewal obligations. Facilities with a body scanner must have an adequate number of staff trained, licenced, and readily available to operate the technology. Radiation user licences also need to be periodically renewed. In some States/Territories body scanners are also used to scan correctional officers entering for their shift.

Body-worn cameras are emerging tools in correctional facilities. The technology aims to be a tool to deter misconduct, ensure the integrity of evidence, and foster a safer environment for both staff and persons in custody.⁴⁴ Recent research has highlighted the importance of comprehensive training and clear policy guidance, including well-defined protocols that assist correctional officers to discern the appropriate use of body-worn cameras while maintaining accountability.⁴⁵ Training should detail the legal implications of footage use, as well as privacy and ethical considerations (such as appropriate capture of footage) and respect for those involved. It is likely that successfully implementing and adopting body-worn cameras will rely on staff and the perceptions of persons in custody, and the wider institutional culture.⁴⁶ To date, it is not clear what, if any, training is required for correctional officers before they can use body-worn cameras in their role.

An Australian study exploring the perspectives of correctional officers on the use of body-worn cameras in Queensland found widespread support for body-worn cameras due to their potential to corroborate officers' accounts of incidents and provide a first-person perspective of interactions.⁴⁷ At present, more than 720 body-worn cameras have been deployed in Queensland, with each correctional facility strategically

allocating body-worn cameras to identified officer locations to enhance safety outcomes.⁴⁸ However, concerns were raised about the potential for human error in camera operation, the possible breakdown of trust between staff and persons in custody, and the impact of cameras on the behaviour of persons in custody.⁴⁹ The impact of technology on the correctional services workforce and training environment may be considered in future workforce planning.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

An industry-sector member noted that body scanning of staff can be perceived as a form of invasive surveillance in ways that framed them as untrustworthy and suspicious. Such concerns around the screening of staff and the protection of their privacy may affect the desirability of occupations within Correctional Services.

⁴⁴S Dodd, E Antrobus and M Sydes, 'Body-worn camera activation in prisons: understanding correctional officers' decision-making and use of discretion', *Security Journal*, 2023, 1-21.
⁴⁵Dodd et al., 'Body-worn camera activation in prisons: understanding correctional officers' decision-making and use of discretion'.
⁴⁶Dodd et al., 'Body-worn camera activation in prisons: understanding correctional officers' decision-making and use of discretion'.
⁴⁷S Dodd, E Antrobus and M Sydes, 'Cameras in corrections: exploring the views of correctional officers on the introduction of body-worn cameras in prisons', *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 2020, 47(9): 1190-1208.
⁴⁸Queensland Corrective Services, *Annual Report 2022-23*, Queensland Corrective Services, The State of Queensland, 2023.
⁴⁹Dodd et al., 'Cameras in corrections: exploring the views of correctional officers on the introduction of body-worn cameras in prisons'.

MEGATREND 9: PUBLIC TRUST AND PERCEPTIONS

- ✓ Defence
- ✓ Police
- ✓ Fire and Emergency Services
- ✓ Correctional Services
- ✓ Federal, State/Territory and Local Government

Public Safety and Government industry-sectors are commonly impacted by public trust and community perceptions, which can influence the ability of agencies to effectively undertake their work.

There have been increasing cases of First Nation peoples' deaths in custody. In 2022-23, there were 21 First Nations people who died in custody, the highest since 1979-80.⁵⁰ Several high-profile cases have also increased the visibility of First Nations peoples' deaths in custody. While First Nations peoples constitute 3.8 per cent of the overall Australian population, they comprise approximately 32 per cent of the prisoner population in Australia.⁵¹ Together, these high rates of incarceration and deaths in custody have a direct effect on the public's perceptions of working in the Correctional Services industry-sector.

As highlighted in Megatrend 6: Diversity and Inclusivity, Public Skills Australia's First Nations Network recognised the multifaceted challenges impacting on the participation of First Nations people in the Correctional Services workforce. The Network acknowledged that individuals in these roles may need to balance community perceptions of their employment while striving for inclusion and cultural respect within their professional environments. First Nations peoples' desire to participate in the Correctional Services industry-sector workforce may be additionally

impacted by factors such as:

- Reported increase of First Nations peoples' deaths in custody
- Overrepresentation of First Nations people in correctional facilities.

The 2018 Australian Law Reform Commission report, *Pathways to Justice-Inquiry into the Incarceration Rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*, contained 35 recommendations to address the disproportionate rate of First Nations peoples' incarceration, however, the number of First Nations peoples in custody has continued to grow.⁵²

Other factors that influence public perceptions and trust in the Correctional Services industry-sector include allegations of corruption or staff misconduct, a perceived lack of transparency and accountability in the industry-sector, and ethical concerns relating to the treatment of persons in custody. A review of the Victorian Adult Custodial Corrections System was conducted in 2022 and found that although progress had been made in preparing for cultural reform, there were still institutional challenges with providing an appropriate response to allegations of misconduct.⁵³ Recommendations and outcomes of this review may be further considered in future workforce planning and strategy development.

⁵⁰M McAlister, H Miles and S Bricknell, *AIC Reports Statistical Report 44: Deaths in Custody 2022-23*, Australian Institute of Criminology, Australian Government, 2023.
⁵¹Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), *Profile of First Nations People: Population size and location*, AIHW website, 2023, accessed 2 May 2024; Productivity Commission, *Report on Government Services – Corrective Services - Table 8A.4* [data set], 2024, January 2024.
⁵²Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *Prisoners in Australia*, ABS website, 2023, accessed 2 May 2024; Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC), *Pathways to Justice-Inquiry into the Incarceration Rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples - (ALRC Report 133)*, 2018, Australian Government.
⁵³K 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, 2022.

INDUSTRY-SECTOR CHALLENGES

Challenge 1: Demand Management

As Governments implement 'tough on crime' policies, including stricter bail laws, the number of persons in custody will continue to increase, in turn requiring greater workforce capacity and new infrastructure. This requirement will need to be balanced in an environment of budget constraint and in the face of declining correctional officer numbers (see Megatrend 3: Recruitment and Retention). Since 2013-2014, the aggregate count of prisoners in correctional facilities has increased by 27 per cent, with an average year-on-year increase of 2.8 per cent.⁵⁴ The most recent prisoner population was reported as 41,492.⁵⁵ Recent projections have shown that prison populations are growing at a rate of more than double that of the Australian population.⁵⁶ In contrast, the prison officer workforce is projected to grow by only 3.4 per cent in the five years to May 2028.⁵⁷

With recruitment and retention being at the core of the Correctional Services industry-sector demand management problem, continual work will need to be done with State/Territory Correctional Services organisations to identify effective solutions to mitigate workforce attrition. The existing evidence in this area is centred predominantly on attrition and has typically been sourced exclusively in the context of an inquest or review (such as the 2023 Victorian Cultural Review of the Adult Custodial Corrections System). Throughout consultation for workforce planning, industry-sector representatives highlighted key themes driving high attrition rates, including a perceived lack of support for new prison officers, increased workload, a lack of career pathways, poor leadership and psychological harm. However,

many Correctional Services organisations do not collect exit survey data on staff separating from the workforce, meaning there is very limited data on the drivers of separation at a national level. The variability of factors impacting recruitment and retention between States/Territories is also not well understood.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Many employer bodies noted declining staffing levels as a critical priority, with the consequences of minimum staffing levels having complex and widespread effects on the Correctional Services industry-sector, particularly with the resulting increase in workload.

One employer body indicated that full units had to be locked down because they could not be staffed. Low staffing and increased lockdowns may impact operational safety as it may increase frustration of persons in custody.

Some employer bodies reported that both increases in workload and poor behaviour of persons in custody are consistently identified as impacting attrition rates.

⁵⁴Productivity Commission, *Report on Government Services – Corrective Services - Table 8A.4* [data set], January 2024, accessed 1 May 2024.
⁵⁵Productivity Commission, *Report on Government Services – Corrective Services - Table 8A.4* [data set], January 2024, accessed 1 May 2024.
⁵⁶Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), *Adults in Prison*, AIHW website, 2023, accessed 2 May 2024.
⁵⁷Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), *Employment Projections* [data set], 2023, accessed 3 May 2024.
⁵⁸K 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.

Challenge 2: Workforce Mobility

The Certificate III in Correctional Practice is the key entry level qualification for the Correctional Services industry-sector. However, workforce mobility has been identified as a workforce challenge, due to the lack of recognition and transferability of this qualification to other jurisdictions. This relates primarily to the structure of the qualification; specifically, the large number of elective units that are not trained consistently across Australia.

Ongoing efforts to improve workforce mobility through recognition of the Certificate III may help to alleviate workforce shortages in the Correctional Services industry-sector, particularly in regional and remote areas, who would benefit from a pipeline of trained and experienced correctional officers from other States/Territories. Currently, it is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of interjurisdictional recognition of the Certificate III in Correctional Practice, as the Northern Territory and South Australia are the only State/Territories with a dedicated process for lateral entry. Due to multifaceted recruitment challenges in the Correctional Services industry-sector in the Northern Territory, there is limited data to support whether this strategy has led to higher levels of success in recruitment.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

There are five core units and 57 elective units in the Certificate III in Correctional Practice, with learners required to choose four to six general elective units to complete the qualification (depending on specialisation packaging rules). The extensive number of potential unit combinations makes it unlikely that a learner will have completed the exact combination required to work at an alternative location (i.e., interstate or private prison).

Not all employers require the completion of the Certificate III as a condition of ongoing employment. For example, fewer than half of Victorian correctional officer trainees successfully complete the course as there are no consequences for non-completion.⁵⁹ This creates further workforce mobility challenges as the role requirements vary between State/Territories.

Most States/Territories, except for the Northern Territory and South Australia, require correctional officers to re-train in the Certificate III after transferring to their organisation. These policies act as a deterrent for correctional officers looking to move into other organisations.

⁵⁹K 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.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT & TIMEFRAMES

The *Workforce Plan 2024: Correctional Services* identified the following actions to support industry to address the industry-sector specific challenges outlined above.

Table 3: Proposed actions to address identified industry-sector challenges

Labour Market Dynamics	Proposed Actions	Key Stakeholders
Challenge 1: Demand Management Symptom: Occupational Shortage	JSC Function: Workforce Planning Strategy: Determining the drivers for recruitment, attrition and retention of staff in Correctional Services. Actions: - Undertake literature review and international benchmarking of how this challenge manifests in other jurisdictions. - Survey current serving Correctional Services officers, focusing on what attracted them to the role and/or perceived value of their work. - Analyse available exit interview data to better understand the drivers of attrition. Impact: Providing an evidence base to Correctional Services employers, for this industry-sector to improve their recruitment practices, address attrition challenges and strengthen retention strategies. Anticipated Timing: July 2024 – June 2025	- State/Territory Correctional Services Departments - Private Prison Providers - Employee representatives
Challenge 2: Workforce Mobility Megatrend 4: Career Pathways Symptom: Quality Mismatch	JSC Function: Implementation, Promotion and Monitoring Activity: Support Correctional Services capability by developing relevant training. Actions: Development of a Findings Report that collates data collected on the implementation of the <i>CSC30122 Certificate III in Correctional Practice</i> (anticipated) Anticipated Timing: Upon approval of project plan, July 2024 – June 2025	- State and Territory Correctional Services Agencies - STTA/SROs - RTOs

EXISTING WORKFORCE STRATEGIES

This chapter maps the connections between existing workforce strategies in the Public Safety and Government industry-sectors and Public Skills Australia’s *Workforce Plan 2024: Correctional Services*. This mapping identifies strategies that are currently used by Government and industry-sectors to inform Public Skills Australia’s workforce planning efforts.

Table 4: Existing national and industry-sector strategies

National Strategies						
Strategy	Link to Industry-Sector Challenge	Link to Cross-Industry Megatrend	Owner	Timing	Purpose and Components	How this will inform Public Skills Australia’s work
Towards a National Jobs and Skills Roadmap: Annual Jobs and Skills Report 2023 ⁶⁰	1, 2	1, 3, 4	JSA	2023 (complete)	This report maps trends in the labour market including digital transformation, and the transformation to a clean energy and net-zero economy. Reforms undertaken within the VET and higher education system to meet the identified workforce challenges, including the formation of the JSC program, proposed National Skills Passport, and the <i>Australian University Accord Interim Report</i> are also considered.	Public Skills Australia will support JSA by undertaking and facilitating consultation with the Public Safety and Government industry-sectors on components of the Report. This will include engaging key stakeholders and JSA throughout the development of the Skills Priority List (SPL) to ensure access to critical industry intelligence.
The Clean Energy Generation: Workforce needs for a Net Zero Economy ⁶¹	2	1, 3, 7	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.	Public Skills Australia will work with Powering Skills Organisation and the Department for Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water to facilitate access to key stakeholders within its remit. Public Skills Australia will continue to focus on first responders and the safety aspects of future clean energy such as lithium batteries by assessing whether any new training might be required.
Skills Priority List (SPL) ⁶²	1	1, 3, 4	JSA	Ongoing	The SPL is an online tool that assesses whether an occupation is in shortage and its anticipated future demand. The SPL is released annually, and classifies occupations into one of three categories: shortage, no shortage and regional shortage. The SPL outcomes may be used to inform, along with other inputs and evidence, the direction of national and State/Territory workforce policies.	Public Skills Australia will continue to broker the capturing of intelligence from the Public Safety and Government industry-sectors to inform the development and review of the SPL.
The Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) Review ⁶³	1, 2	4	ABS	2023 - 2024	A review of the ANZSCO occupation classification structure is underway. The ABS review provides an opportunity to update the classification structure to better reflect contemporary occupations in the Australian economy. This will ensure that more accurate data is collected regarding the Australian labour market to inform, along with other inputs and evidence, the direction of national and State/Territory workforce policies.	Public Skills Australia has and will continue to work closely with its industry-sectors to collate industry intelligence and provide advice regarding required changes to the ANZSCO occupational classification structure. Outcomes of this review may ensure that occupational shortages in the Public Safety and Government industry are better represented in datasets that are aligned to ANZSCO.

⁶⁰Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), *Towards a National Jobs and Skills Roadmap*. Towards a National Jobs and Skills Roadmap, JSA, Australian Government, 2023.

⁶¹Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), *The Clean Energy Generation: Workforce needs for a Net Zero Economy*, JSA, Australian Government, 2023.

⁶²JSA, *Skills Priority List*, JSA website, 2023, accessed: 13 February 2024.

⁶³Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *ANZCO Comprehensive Review – Consultation Round 3*, ABS, Australian Government, 2023, accessed 30 April 2024.

Table 4: Existing national and industry-sector strategies

National Strategies						
Strategy	Link to Industry-Sector Challenge	Link to Cross-Industry Megatrend	Owner	Timing	Purpose and Components	How this will inform Public Skills Australia's work
Closing the Gap ⁶⁴	1, 2	6, 9	Council of Australian Governments	2019 - 2029	The <i>Closing the Gap Report</i> informs the development of specific recruitment, health and social programs for First Nations peoples. These programs are deployed across the Public Safety and Government industry.	Public Skills Australia acknowledges that representation of First Nations peoples within the five Public Safety and Government industry-sectors varies greatly. Improving the quality of workforce data pertaining to First Nations peoples' representation is an ongoing priority in workforce planning.
Australian Cyber Security Strategy ⁶⁵		8	Department of Home Affairs	2023 - 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. Most relevant to Public Safety and Government, the Strategy aims to ensure: - Australia has a diverse and professional cyber workforce that can protect citizens and businesses from cyber-attacks. - Critical infrastructure and government systems can withstand and bounce back from cyber-attacks.	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 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.

⁶⁴Council of Australian Governments, *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*, Council of Australian Governments, Australian Government, 2020.

⁶⁵Digital Transformation Agency, *2023–2030 Australian Cyber Security Strategy*, Digital Transformation Agency, Australian Government, 2023.

Table 4: Existing national and industry-sector strategies

Industry-Sector Strategies						
Strategy	Link to Industry-Sector Challenge	Link to Cross-Industry Megatrend	Owner	Timing	Purpose and Components	Intersection of identified workforce challenges, evidence gaps and current strategies
ACT Corrective Services Strategic Plan 2019-2024: One Team, One Person: Supporting a Safer Community ⁶⁶	1, 2	3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9	ACT Corrective Services	2019 - 2024	State/Territory strategic plans identify multiple shared priorities including: - embracing diversity, and promoting cultural safety in practices and training - prioritising officer safety by reviewing operational practices - improving training for the delivery of Correctional Services to women - implementing policies that support staff wellbeing and resilience.	State/Territory strategic plans intersect closely with identified workforce challenges. 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.
Change Management Plan for Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) Custody based Service Delivery Model change ⁶⁷			Corrective Services NSW	2023 - 2030		
Strategic Plan 2023 - 2026 ⁶⁸			Northern Territory Correctional Services	2023 - 2026		
QCS Strategic Plan 2023 - 2027 ⁶⁹			Queensland Corrective Services	2023 - 2027		
Department for Correctional Services Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026 ⁷⁰			Department for Correctional Services (South Australia)	2022 - 2026		
Changing Lives, Creating Futures: A Strategic Plan for Corrections in Tasmania ⁷¹			Corrective Services Tasmania	2023 (ongoing)		
Safety Corporate Plan 2023 - 2027 ⁷²			Victoria Corrections Prisons & Parole	2023 - 2027		

⁶⁶Australian Capital Territory Corrective Services, *Corrections Management*, Australian Capital Territory Corrective Services, Government of Australian Capital Territory, 2018.

⁶⁷Corrective Services NSW, *Change Management Plan for Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) Custody based Service Delivery Model Change*, Corrective Services NSW, Government of New South Wales, 2023.

⁶⁸Northern Territory Correctional Services, *Strategic Plan 2023-2026*, Northern Territory Correctional Services, Northern Territory Government.

⁶⁹Queensland Corrective Services (QCS), *QCS Strategic Plan 2023-2027*, QCS, Queensland Government, 2023.

⁷⁰Department for Correctional Services South Australia, *Department for Correctional Services Strategic Plan 2022-2026*, Department for Correctional Services South Australia, Government of South Australia, 2022.

⁷¹Corrective Services Tasmania, *Changing Lives, Creating Futures: A Strategic Plan for Corrections in Tasmania 2023*, Corrective Services Tasmania, Tasmanian Government, 2023.

⁷²Victoria Corrections Prisons and Parole, *Safety Corporate Plan 2023-2027*, Victoria Corrections Prisons and Parole, Victoria State Government, 2023.

CONSULTATION PLAN

2024 Workforce Plan Engagement

In the development of the 2024 Workforce Plans, Public Skills Australia undertook extensive industry-sector consultation. The approach adopted by Public Skills Australia towards the engagement of consultees, gathering and analysing their insights, and generating high-level themes and challenges across the industry-sector, is summarised in the Methodology section above. Table 5 illustrates the industry-sector representatives engaged in the development of the *Workforce Plan 2024: Correctional Services*.

Table 5: Summary of stakeholders engaged for Workforce Plan 2024

ACT CORRECTIVE SERVICES	CORRECTIONS VICTORIA	GEO GROUP
NORTHERN TERRITORY CORRECTIONAL SERVICES	NSW CORRECTIVE SERVICES	SOUTH AUSTRALIA DEPARTMENT FOR CORRECTIONS
COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC SECTOR UNION	TASMANIA PRISON SERVICE	WESTERN AUSTRALIA CORRECTIVE SERVICES ACADEMY

2025 Workforce Planning Engagement

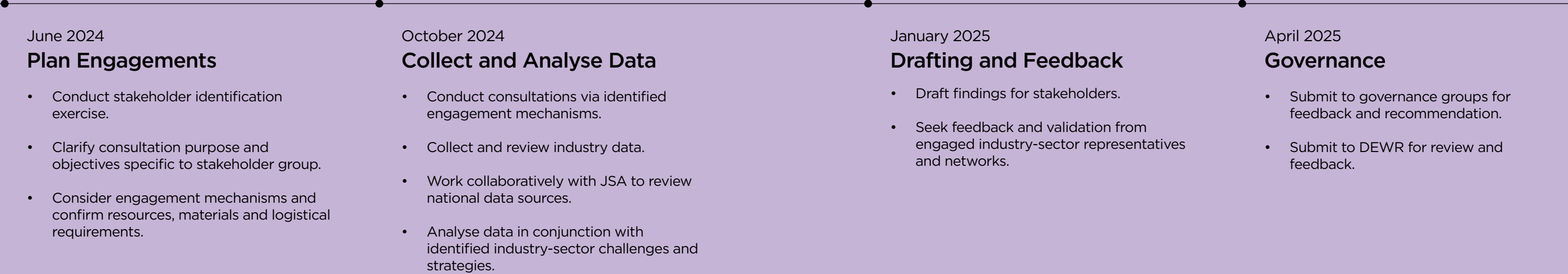
In the development of the 2025 Workforce Plans, Public Skills Australia will target identified stakeholders for consultation using different engagement mechanisms, as outlined in Table 6.

Table 6: Consultation methods for the 2025 iteration of the Workforce Plans

ONLINE PRESENTATIONS AND FORUMS This may include online forums, webinars or consultation that explores specific industry-sectors and their challenges, evidence gaps and strategies.	GOVERNANCE, ADVICE AND FEEDBACK MECHANISMS This may include consulting with and implementing the feedback provided by Networks, Subcommittees, the Industry Advisory Group (IAG), the Public Skills Australia Board, and DEWR.
TECHNICAL GROUPS This may include identifying and engaging with subject-matter specialist technical committees focusing on identified workforce challenges, data gaps, futures analysis, or industry-sector specific projects.	WORKSHOPS, ROUNDTABLES AND THINK TANKS This may include workshops involving industry-sector representatives and other stakeholders to engage in collaborative problem-solving, brainstorming, and strategy development.
SITE VISITS AND ROADSHOWS This may involve conducting visits to stakeholders' offices, to foster a better understanding of their operations and challenges. This extends to the proactive promotion of our work as JSC, and better engaging each industry-sector on research findings, project outcomes, and implementing strategies.	IN-PERSON STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS This may include targeted in-person meetings with industry-sector representatives, subject-matter experts, employee bodies and other key stakeholders to explore industry-sector specific challenges, gaps in evidence and potential strategies.

STAGING AND TIMING

Public Skills Australia will consult with identified stakeholders from June 2024 to April 2025. The specific phasings of the consultation efforts are illustrated below:



ENGAGING WITH INDUSTRY-SECTOR REPRESENTATIVES

In the development of the 2025 Workforce Plans, Public Skills Australia will adopt the consultative approach detailed above to continue valuable conversations with identified stakeholders relevant to the Correctional Services industry-sector. Table 7 presents an overview of the planned engagements in the development of the 2025 Workforce Plan. This is an indicative list of the organisations that have been identified as relevant to Public Skills Australia's ongoing workforce planning. Public Skills Australia will identify and engage with any additional stakeholders as necessary as part of consultation efforts.

Table 7: Engagement plan with industry-sector representatives

Industry-Sector Representative	Representation Type	Industry-sector specific challenges	Megatrends	Purpose of Ongoing Consultation
State/Territory Correctional Services Departments	Employer	All	All	Public Skills Australia will continue to consult with State and Territory Correctional Services agencies to engage holistic employer perspectives on all identified industry sector specific challenges and mega trends. Public Skills Australia recognises the need to broaden consultation efforts to Community Corrections departments within each State/Territory to fully understand workforce challenges.
Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) Victoria	Employee	2	3, 4, 5, 7 and 8	CPSU Victoria represents the Victorian Public Service, including Corrections Victoria. Public Skills Australia will continue to consult with CPSU Victoria to understand employee representative perspectives on workforce challenges relevant to Victorian correctional officers.
Together QLD	Employee	2	3, 4, 5, 7 and 8	Together QLD is the primary union for Queensland correctional officers and represents 30,000 employees from the Queensland public service. Public Skills Australia will look to build a relationship with Together QLD to understand employee representative perspectives on workforce challenges relevant to Queensland correctional officers.
Public Sector Association of NSW (PSA NSW)	Employee	2	3, 4, 5, 7 and 8	PSA NSW represents the correctional officers of NSW. Public Skills Australia will continue to consult with PSA NSW to understand employee representative perspectives on workforce challenges relevant to NSW correctional officers.
Western Australia Prison Officers' Union (WAPOU)	Employee	2	3, 4, 5, 7 and 8	WAPOU is the primary union for Western Australian correctional officers and represents 95 per cent of the public and 75 per cent of the private workforce. Public Skills Australia will look to build a relationship with WAPOU to understand employee representative perspectives on workforce challenges relevant to Western Australian correctional officers.
Corrective Services Administrators' Council (CSAC)	Association	All	All	Each Commissioner from the eight Correctional Services jurisdictions come together four times per year to discuss key issues. Public Skills Australia will look to consult with the group on at least one occasion to ensure high-level input is provided to the work we do.
Private Correctional Services Organisations	Employer	All	All	Public Skills Australia will consult with privately managed Correctional Services organisations to engage holistic employer perspectives on all identified industry sector specific challenges and mega trends.

ENGAGING WITH OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

In the development of the 2025 Workforce Plans, Public Skills Australia will explore industry-specific challenges and cross-industry megatrends identified within the Workforce Plans. Stakeholders and their proposed contributions to workforce planning are summarised below. It is likely this approach will continue to evolve as the mapping of industry, gaps and challenges matures

NCVER

NCVER is the primary body responsible for collecting, analysing and publishing data and conducting research on the Vocational Education and Training sector in Australia.

Public Skills Australia will continue to work with NCVER to source relevant datasets that provide key insights into the training of the Public Safety and Government workforce.

ABS

The ABS provides the foundational data that enables an analysis of the Australian labour market, including the ANZSCO classification system that classifies occupations in the Australian labour market.

Public Skills Australia will continue to engage with the ABS to ensure that their data collection efforts accurately reflect the Public Safety and Government workforce, and the occupations that sit within each industry-sector.

JOBS AND SKILLS AUSTRALIA

JSA conducts significant research and analysis of the Australian workforce and labour market, drawing on Federal Government datasets.

Public Skills Australia will continue to work with JSA to efficiently communicate industry-sector intelligence and support JSA's data collection. This relationship will also conversely ensure that Public Safety and Government workforce planning and product development is informed by JSA research.

STATE/TERRITORY TRAINING AUTHORITIES

State/Territory Training Authorities (STTA) oversee the implementation of VET in States/Territories and gather industry intelligence to identify future skills needs.

Public Skills Australia will continue to engage with STTAs to share industry intelligence, identify emerging skill requirements, and ensure the effective implementation of training products nationally.

CROSS-JSC COLLABORATION

Public Skills Australia will prioritise industry-sector intelligence sharing and cross-collaboration through building strong relationships with the other nine JSCs. In continuing to engage in this way, Public Skills Australia will identify workforce trends that impact on multiple industries or sectors and will collaborate with other JSCs on effective processes and methodologies for both workforce planning and training product development. Public Skills Australia will also undertake close consultation and collaboration with individual JSCs on cross-council projects, shared challenges and support their ongoing work.

PUBLIC SKILLS AUSTRALIA'S GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

Public Skills Australia has established a governance framework to support industry-sector engagement and integrate subject-matter expertise into its workforce planning and training products.

• NETWORKS

Provides comments and feedback using their subject-matter expertise on key priorities. Networks provide feedback to Subcommittees.

Volunteer Network: Provides specialist advice on volunteer participation in the Public Safety and Government industry.	Diversity and inclusion Network: Provides specialist advice on diversity, inclusivity and cultural respect.	First Nations Network: Provides specialist advice on First Nations peoples participation in and interaction with Public Safety and Government.	RTO Network: Provides specialist advice related to the implementation and delivery of VET training products.	Careers and Pathways Network: Provides specialist advice on pathways between VET and higher education.
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• SUBCOMMITTEES

Provides information and advice on our products and supports nominations to the Working Groups. Subcommittees recommend products to the Board through the IAG.

Government Subcommittee: Recommends endorsement of workforce planning and training products for the Federal, State/Territory and Local Government to the IAG.	Correctional Services Subcommittee: Recommends endorsement of workforce planning and training products for the Correctional Services industry-sector to the IAG	Workforce Planning Subcommittee: Recommends endorsement of workforce planning and training products for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Defence industry-sectors to the IAG.	Training Product Development Subcommittee: Recommends endorsement of training products for Public Safety and Government industry-sectors to the IAG.
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• Industry Advisory Group (IAG)

Provides industry intelligence, as well as strategic input and advice. The IAG endorses products.

IAG: Endorses workforce planning and training products to the Public Skills Australia Board for approval to be presented to DEWR.

ONGOING WORKFORCE PLANNING

Challenges with Traditional Workforce Planning

To date, workforce planning exercises have largely been driven by quantitative analysis of national datasets (such as ABS or other datasets) and economic modelling. This approach presents some unique challenges for the Public Safety and Government industry.

Employment Projections, Modelling and Quantitative Analysis

When used in isolation, quantitative and economic modelling approaches to workforce planning present challenges for the Public Safety and Government industry. Although data sources that are generally used for workforce planning - including ABS Census, ABS Labour Force Survey and JSA data holdings - are helpful to identify rates of workforce participation and vacancy trends, they are not able to clearly represent the complexities and unique characteristics of Public Safety and Government workforces. As a not-for-profit industry, employment projections and modelling provide a limited view of the current and future workforce as:

Budgets for each of the Public Safety and Government industry-sectors are determined by the Federal Government and may vary depending on political cycles. These budgets may also be impacted by community sentiment, political objectives, public reviews and the perceived value of public services and/or criminal justice.

Recruitment targets and the size of the Public Safety and Government industry are not solely driven by economic conditions - they are also impacted by community expectations, regulatory and policy contexts, government budgets and political priorities. These may shift and change as geopolitical events, emergencies and climate-related disasters emerge.

The ANZSCO and Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) frameworks, which are used to classify ABS and JSA data, present four main challenges for Public Safety and Government industry-sectors:

1. The Public Safety and Government industry employs a diverse range of skills across the breadth of the Australian labour market and is not restricted to a specific range of ANZSIC or ANZSCO classifications.
2. ANZSIC and ANZSCO classifications do not represent the range of roles within the Public Safety and Government industry.
3. Volume-based measurements do not identify

skills shortages in specialised roles. Such measurements only identify roles that are currently classified within the ANZSCO and ANZSIC structures, and do not drill into specialised roles. For example, specialised roles could only require a handful of additional people to be trained, but the training could take years, or the size of capability required is not dependant on volume but rather on the criticality of the role.

4. Employment data only captures people's area of paid employment, which may be in industries other than the one that they volunteer for.

Understanding the size and nature of vacancies within the Public Safety and Government workforce is vital to recognising the challenges this workforce faces. These evidence gaps could be addressed by:

- collaborating with industry-sectors (where possible) to make their data available for workforce planning purposes,
- leveraging Public Skills Australia's position to develop partnerships with its industry-sectors to access workforce data,
- working with ABS and JSA to review their classifications and better represent the roles in Public Safety and Government, and
- engaging with JSA to capture identified data gaps with input from industry.

Industry Data

Data sourced on the Correctional Services industry-sector are largely limited to serving correctional officers and community corrections officers. Therefore, this Workforce Plan is not inclusive of the public service workforce who administrate the industry-sector at a State/Territory level and represents a current data gap.

Data on the Public Service Workforce

Largely, workforce data for this industry-sector are sourced from departmental annual reports, due to each jurisdictions' Correctional Services typically sitting within a larger Department of Justice (except for Queensland and South Australia). Importantly, each jurisdictions' annual report provides workforce demographic information for correctional officers, community corrections officers and in some instances, Youth Justice Workers. However, data on the public service workforce within the Correctional Services industry-sector are often aggregated at the Department level, making it difficult to clearly understand the occupations employed, the size

of this workforce, the demographics and skills required for these employees. Public Skills Australia will explore whether further breakdowns of the Correctional Service public service workforce are available to generate further insights, which may also support workforce planning within the State Government industry-sector.

Data on Diversity

The gap in diversity data is notable and extends to intersectional demographic data relating to First Nations peoples, the LGBTQ+ community, people with disabilities, multilingual and multinational Australians, and those from low socio-economic backgrounds. In many instances, diversity data were aggregated with other public sector workers (e.g. New South Wales), not collected or accessible, or not easily compared between States/Territories.

Capturing diversity-related workforce data in Correctional Services is essential to:

- implementing targeted and equitable recruitment and retention strategies,
- ensuring that the workforce is representative of the broader community,
- enhancing the interactions between staff and persons in custody from diverse backgrounds,
- building cultural competency in the workforce,
- improving workplace safety and reducing incidents of discrimination and harassment,
- understanding how the learner demographic completing the CSC Training Package transitions into the Correctional Services workforce.

Public Skills Australia's workforce planning would benefit from greater diversity-related demographic data within this industry-sector, which in turn will inform future activity submissions.

Alternative Approaches to Workforce Planning

Considering the gaps presented by quantitative analysis, exploring other research methodologies will be required to accurately represent the Public Safety and Government workforce, and to fully understand skills shortages, personnel challenges, and potential strategies. As such, Public Skills Australia will explore how to support quantitative analysis by using the following:

Futures and Strategic Foresight

Strategic foresight is a structured and systematic method for examining plausible, potential and preferred futures. It utilises analytic tools to forecast future outcomes across a range of alternate scenarios that have been identified by thought leaders. Through strategic foresight, targeted activities can be implemented that address challenges and identify opportunities using different scenarios.

Life Cycle Analysis and Case Studies

Life cycle analysis involves examining the progress of workforce staff through their entire career journey – from their early career until they exit from the workforce. This will allow for a greater understanding of entry and exit points in a career lifecycle and how individuals’ requirements from their employment changes over time and as a result of personal changes in circumstances.

Skills and Capabilities Profiles

Skills and capabilities profiles further examine the range of skills and associated capabilities across industry-sectors and identifies where those skills are found within a particular organisation or occupation. In doing so, it highlights critical skills shortages in specialist roles that are generally not captured by volume-based quantitative datasets.

APPENDIX A

List of Jurisdictional Reports

ACT Government (2023). Annual Report 2022-23. Justice and Community Safety Directorate, ACT Government.

Government of South Australia (2023). 2022-23 Annual Report. Department for Correctional Services, Government of South Australia.

Government of South Australia (2023). Workforce Information Report 2022-23. Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment, Government of South Australia.

Government of Western Australia (2023). Annual Report 2022-23. Department of Justice, Government of Western Australia.

Government of Western Australia (2023). State of the Western Australia Government Sector Workforce 2022-23 statistical bulletin. Government of Western Australia.

NSW Government (2023). 2022-23 Annual Report. The Department of Communities and Justice, NSW Government.

NSW Government (2023). Workforce Profile Report 2023.Public Service Commission, NSW Government.

Northern Territory Government (2023). Annual Report 2022-23. Department of the Attorney-General and Justice, Northern Territory Government.

Queensland Corrective Services (2023). Annual Report 2022-23. Queensland Corrective Services, The State of Queensland.

Queensland Government (2023). Queensland public sector workforce profile: March 2023. Queensland Government.

Tasmanian Government (2023). Annual Report 2022-23. Department of Justice, Tasmanian Government.

Tasmanian Government (2023). Tasmanian State Service Annual Report 2022-23. Tasmanian Government.

Victorian Government (2023). Annual Report 2022-23. The Department of Justice and Community Safety, State of Victoria.

APPENDIX B

List of Jurisdictional Websites

ACT Government (n. d.) *Corrective Services* [website], accessed 18 April 2024.

Government of South Australia (n.d.) *Department of Correctional Services* [website], accessed 18 April 2024.

Government of Western Australia (n. d.) *Corrective Services* [website], accessed 18 April 2024.

NSW Government (n.d.) *Corrective Services NSW* [website], accessed 18 April 2024.

Northern Territory Government (n. d.) *Department of the Attorney-General and Justice* [website], accessed 18 April 2024.

Queensland Corrective Services (n. d.) *Sentencing, Probation and Parole* [website], accessed 18 April 2024.

Tasmanian Government (n. d.) *Corrective Services* [website], accessed 18 April 2024.

Victorian Government (n. d.) *Corrections, Prisons & Parole* [website], accessed 18 April 2024.

