



PUBLIC SKILLS
AUSTRALIA

Jobs and
Skills
Councils
An Australian Government Initiative



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Defence

Workforce Plan 2024

strategy

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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 challenges and needs of the Defence workforce. Defence plays a vital role in protecting Australia's sovereignty and security through its suite of capabilities across land, sea and air. The Defence workforce is made up of a dedicated cohort of military, public service and reservists, and this Workforce Plan presents key findings to support these members.



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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: Defence provides a high-level snapshot of the Defence industry-sector, its workforce, and identified workforce challenges.¹ 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 Defence sector:

Political and Geopolitical Events:

Workforce planning within Defence is often significantly impacted by Australia's obligations to its partners, current political tensions, and other global events.

AUKUS and Workforce Planning:

Successful delivery of the AUKUS submarine program is contingent on multiple interrelated factors in the Australian labour market. Delivery of the AUKUS program will necessitate significant investment in workforce planning to ensure the availability of skills within the national workforce.

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

¹For the purposes of this Workforce Plan the Defence workforce and its organisational structures will be referred to as the 'Defence sector' to mitigate any confusion with 'Defence industry' that refers to Defence manufacturing and technological development.

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 the 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.² 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 industry³

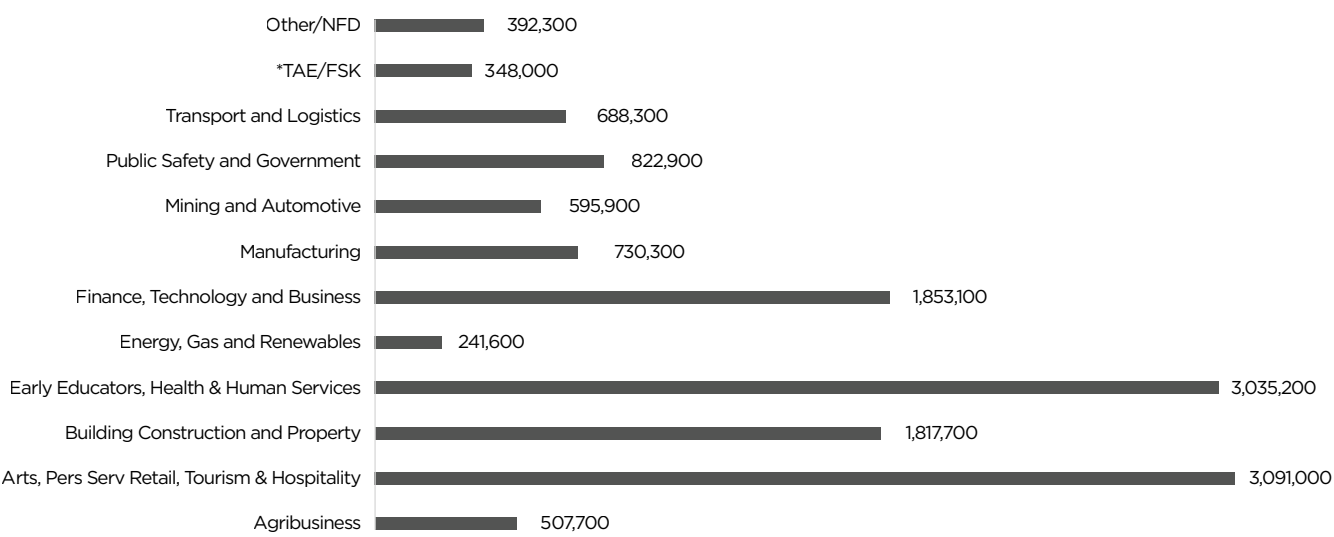
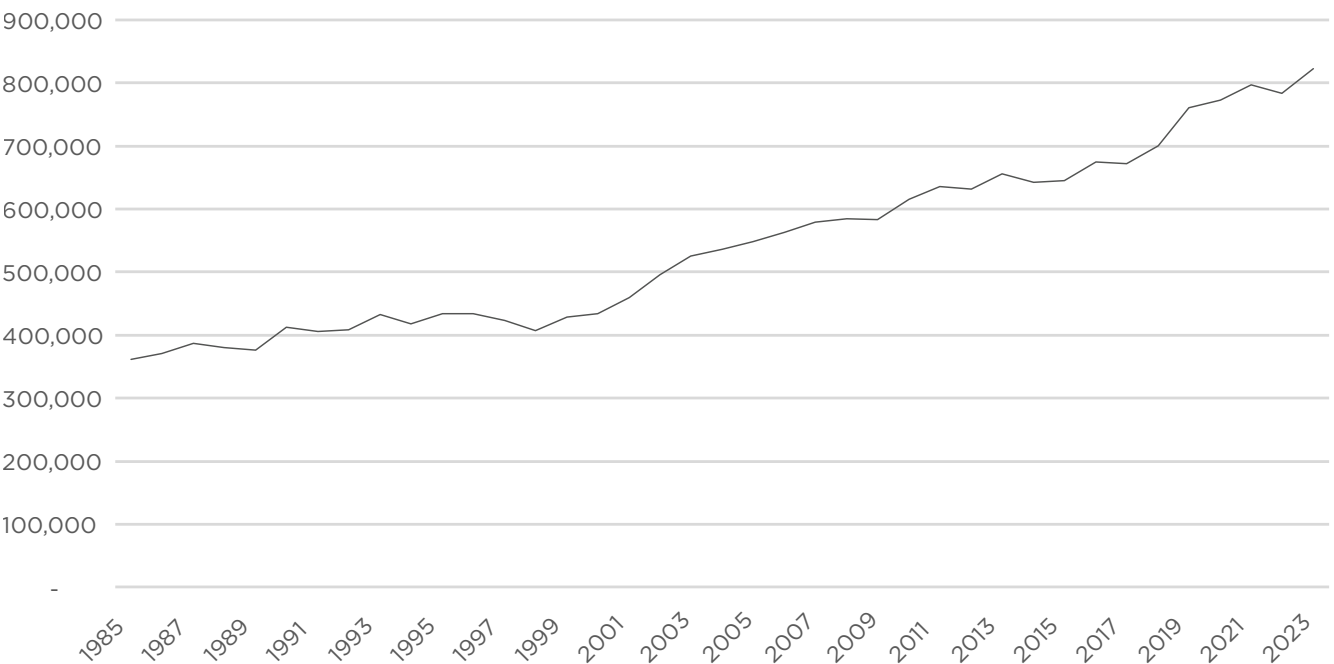


Figure 2: Total number of individuals employed in the Public Safety and Government industry from 1985 to 2023⁴



²Employment data presented in this snapshot does not include volunteers.
³Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, November 2023 [data set], ABS website, 2023, accessed 1 May 2024.
⁴ABS, 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 2023⁵



Table 1: Top 10 employing occupations in the Public Safety and Government industry⁶

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

⁵ABS, Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, November 2023 [data set], ABS website, 2023, accessed 1 May 2024.
⁶Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, November 2023 [data set], ABS website, 2023, accessed 1 May 2024.



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 2.⁷

Table 2: Demographic comparison between the Public Safety and Government industry and national workforces⁸

	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 years.⁹ 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), may also impact labour market growth projections in this industry.

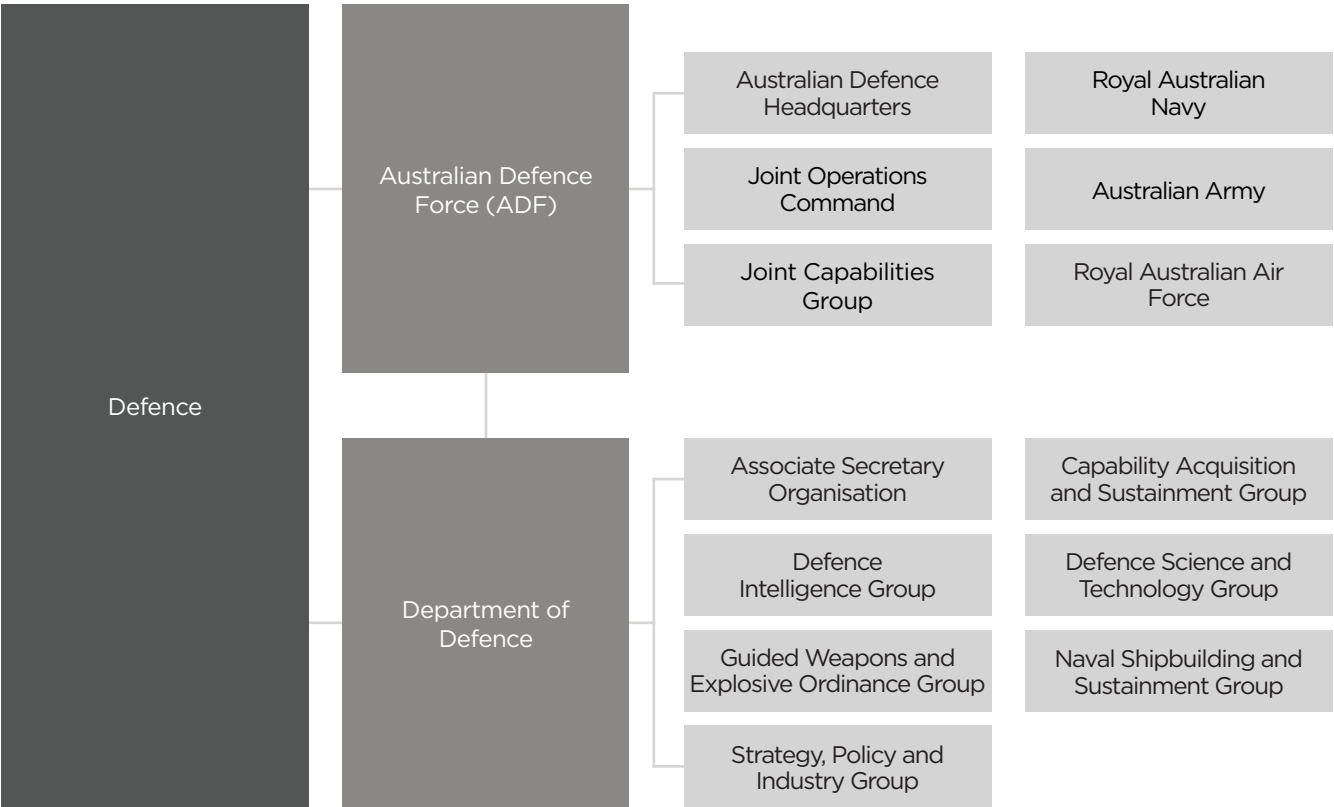
⁷First Nations people will be used as preferred terminology inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. When citing a data source (i.e., annual reports, ABS data, and the Productivity Commission's Report on Government Services) the terminology of the data source will be used to maintain accurate data representation.
⁸ABS, Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, November 2023 [data set], ABS website, 2023, accessed 1 May 2024.
⁹Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), Employment Projections, JSA website, n.d., accessed 1 May 2024.

DEFENCE INDUSTRY-SECTOR OVERVIEW

Defence is comprised of two integrated workforces. Uniformed military-based members, in both a full-time and reserve capacity, work within the Australian Defence Force (ADF). Australian Public Service (APS) employees work within the Department of Defence, in concert with ADF members. Both the ADF and Department of Defence are comprised of several units and/or groups within their organisational structures (Figure 4).

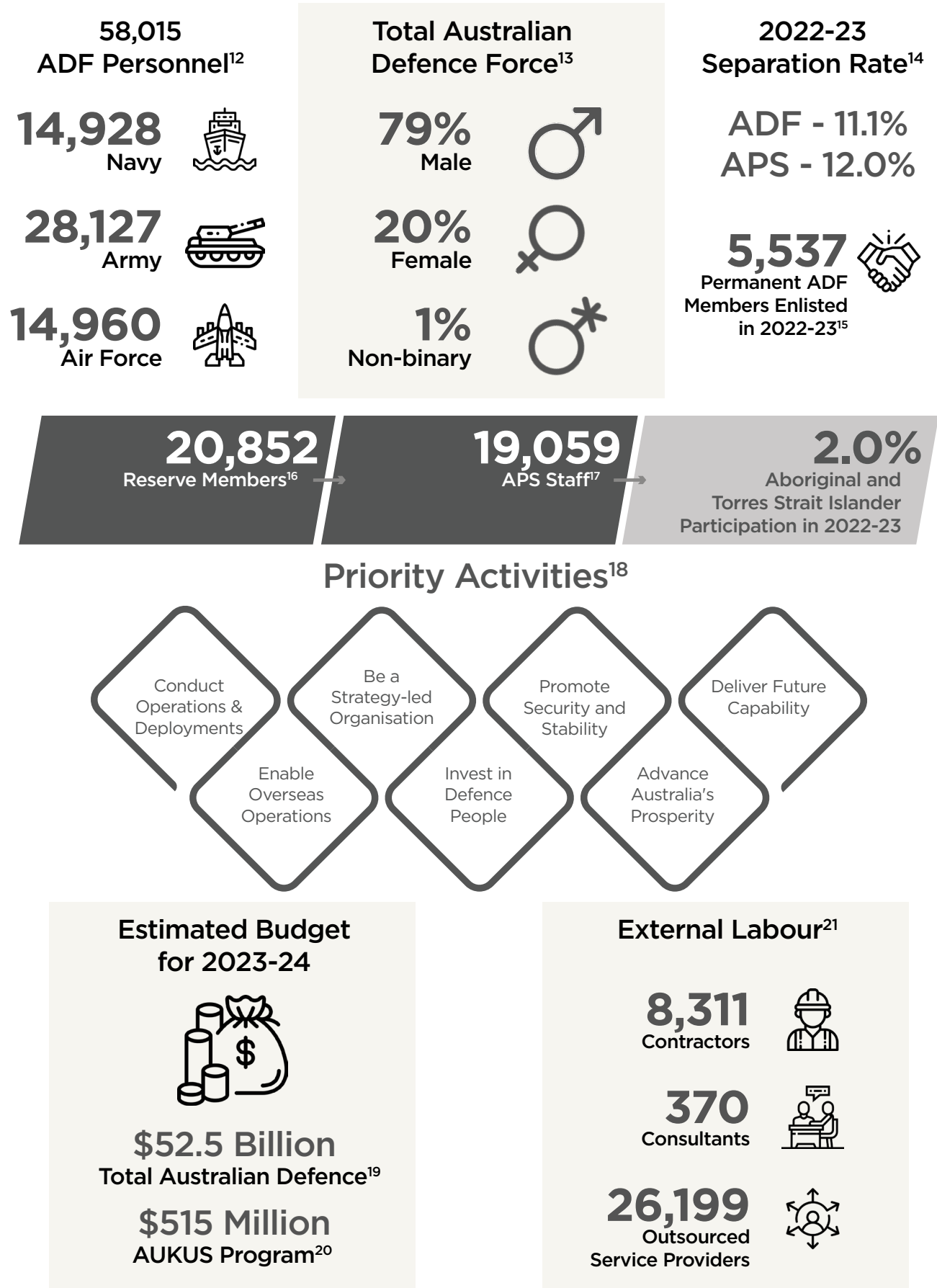
Defence maintains a suite of capabilities across land, sea, and air. It protects the sovereignty and security of Australia by defending the nation against threats and contributing to global and regional stability.¹⁰ The Defence mission is supported by a range of other defence industry roles from other sectors, such as the manufacturing sector. These roles include consultants, outsourced service providers and contractors. The scope of this Workforce Plan extends specifically to the ADF and Department of Defence components of the Defence workforce, as outlined below.

Figure 4: Australian Defence organisational structure¹¹



¹⁰Department of Defence, *National Defence: Defence Strategic Review*. Department of Defence, Australian Government, 2023.

¹¹Department of Defence, *Organisation Structure*, Department of Defence website, n.d., accessed 7 May 2024.



¹²Data provided by Department of Defence.

¹³Data provided by Department of Defence.

¹⁴Department of Defence, *Annual Report 2022-2023*. Department of Defence, Australian Government, 2023. ADF separation rate is for permanent members (SERCAT 6 and 7) and does not include Reserves.

¹⁵Department of Defence, *Annual Report 2022-2023*. Department of Defence, Australian Government, 2023.

¹⁶Data provided by Department of Defence. Reserve Members includes members from service categories (SERCAT) 3, 4 and 5.

¹⁷Australian Public Service Commission, *APS employees by agency – 31 December 2023*, APSC website, 28 March 2024, accessed 15 May 2024.

¹⁸Department of Defence, *2023-2027 Defence Corporate Plan*, Department of Defence, Australian Government, 2023.

¹⁹Department of Defence, *Defence Portfolio: Portfolio Budget Statements 2023-24 Budget related payment No 1.4A*, Department of Defence, Australian Government, 2023; Total Australian Defence Estimated Budget refers to 'Consolidated Defence and ASD funding'.

²⁰Department of Defence, *Defence Portfolio: Portfolio Budget Statements 2023-24 Budget related payment No 1.4A*, Department of Defence, Australian Government, 2023.

²¹Department of Finance, *The Australian Government's Audit of Employment*, Department of Finance, Australian Government, 2022.

CROSS-INDUSTRY MEGATRENDS

Across all Public Safety and Government industry-sectors, nine cross-industry megatrends have consistently been identified as impacting the workforce (Figure 6). Cross-industry megatrends are often interrelated and may amplify or compound other trends. Future workforce planning may look to map these interdependencies.

Figure 6:

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 attracts 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.

Sectors such as Defence face an additional challenge due to their wide scope of duties, which requires talent from diverse industries. For example, Defence relies on a variety of trades and professionals (such as truck drivers, mechanics, welders, IT specialists, land management and forestry experts, ballistics professionals, engineers, policy officers, medical practitioners, and trainers) that places them in competition with almost all other Australian employers.

Defence seeks to build internal capability; however, some roles are outsourced. Defence designates its external workforce into three categories: consultants, outsourced service providers (OSPs) and contractors.²² OSPs provide specialist services outside the scope of the Defence workforce, and includes roles generally related to sustainment of Defence infrastructure, including caterers, cleaners, and maintenance staff. Contractors on the other hand may perform roles normally undertaken by Department of Defence or ADF staff.²³ In its 2022 report, the Department of Finance noted that there are 26,199 OSPs and 8,311 contractors hired by Defence making this workforce larger than any of its service branches.²⁴ The cost of using

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

A sector representative noted that Federal Government departments have been directed to reduce reliance on external contractors and consultants where roles can be done by APS staff. This is likely to change the nature of the competition for labour in the Defence workforce, as the shift away from the use of contractors forms part of an overall strategy to improve organisational efficiency. This means that as certain roles currently filled by contracted staff are reviewed, they may not be replaced on a one-to-one basis by an APS employee. Changes in the scope and responsibilities of these roles may require the recruitment of new staff with in-demand skills that will further drive the competition for labour.

contractors is significant, totalling more than \$15 billion for Defence alone in 2021-2022.²⁵ This highlights the extent of the competition for labour challenge in the Defence sector, as Defence is reliant upon external workforces to deliver critical functions.

²²Department of Finance, *The Australian Government's Audit of Employment*, Department of Finance, Australian Government, 2022.
²³M Hellyer, *The Cost of Defence: ASPI Defence Budget Brief 2021-2022*, Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), ASPI website, 2022, accessed 7 May 2024.
²⁴Department of Finance, *The Australian Government's Audit of Employment*, Department of Finance, Australian Government, 2022.
²⁵Department of Finance, *The Australian Government's Audit of Employment*, Department of Finance, Australian Government, 2022.

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.²⁶

Based on the most recent national Census, the median age of individuals currently serving in the ADF was 31 years, which is considerably lower than the national median working age of 40 years.²⁷ Annual report data also indicates an increase in mandatory retirement by age since 2020-21.²⁸ Mature age workers play a key role in the Defence workforce. They have experience, abilities and transferrable skills forged over many years.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

A sector representative noted that the Defence Strategic Review, in response to a growing focus on the Indo-Pacific, will re-prioritise Defence spending to develop northern bases and ports. This significant shift in the location of the Defence workforce will have downstream impacts on workforce demographics that are yet to surface.

Insights from consultations highlight decreases in the average length of service in the ADF.

Specifically, more members of the ADF workforce are leaving Defence earlier and particularly around the expiration of their initial period of service. The ADF will continue its current efforts to address the ongoing effects from this on its future workforce.

²⁶Commonwealth of Australia, 2023 Intergenerational Report: Australia's future to 2063, The Treasury, Australian Government, 2023.
²⁷Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021) Age (AGEP) by Labour Force Status (LFSP) [Census TableBuilder], accessed 15 January 2024.
²⁸See Appendix A.

MEGATREND 3: RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

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

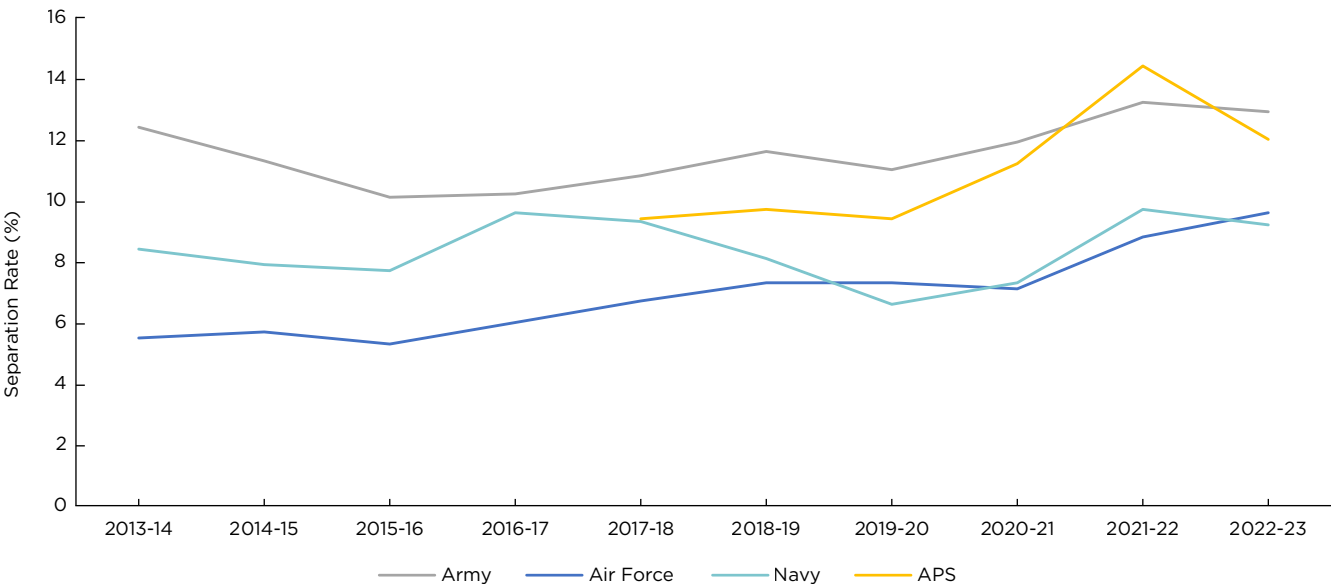
Figure 7: Recruitment and retention challenges common to all industry-sectors within the Public Safety and Government industry

Recruitment		Retention	
Competitive salaries and flexible working conditions	Attractiveness of higher education	Australia's sustained strong economic growth	Changes to employer's 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

At Senate Estimates held 14 February 2024, it was noted the ADF is 6.9 per cent, or 4,308 recruits, below its authorised strength. Rates of recruitment remain below the level required to maintain current force size.²⁹ Unmet recruitment targets pose an ongoing and significant challenge to Defence's ability to replenish its workforce and counteract increased separations. The ADF is also currently dealing with a notable separation rate, averaging 11.1 per cent across the three Services (Army, Navy and Air Force).³⁰ In 2022-23, separation rates differed across the three Services and the Department of Defence, with the Army experiencing a higher 12-month rolling separation rate of 12.9 per cent, surpassing the rates of the Navy (9.2 per cent) and the Air Force (9.6 per cent) (Figure 8).³¹

²⁹Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee, *Proof Committee Hansard, Senate Estimates: Wednesday 14 February 2024*, Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee, Commonwealth of Australia, 2024.
³⁰Department of Defence, *Annual Report 2022-2023*, Department of Defence, Australian Government, 2023.
³¹Department of Defence, *Annual Report 2022-2023*, Department of Defence, Australian Government, 2023.

Figure 8: Yearly separation rates for each of the three Australian Defence Force Services and the Department of Defence public service cohort (APS)³²



Although the separation rates for the ADF Service branches and the Department of Defence fluctuate year-on-year, since 2013-14, there appears to be an overall trend for separation rates to be increasing. This is being addressed, in part, through application of the Total Workforce System, which seeks to better utilise ADF Reserves across Defence roles to grow the total Defence workforce and its capability. The Total Workforce System enables Reservists to serve in a range of Service Categories and roles.³³

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

A sector representative indicated that separations have declined markedly across the three Services since the publication of the 2022-23 Annual Report.

Defence is undertaking significant reform through the Defence Force Recruiting and the Joint Transition Authority to address recruitment and retention issues to build the required future ADF workforce.

Rejoining options are being implemented across different Service Categories that allow individuals to leave the ADF and gain skills and experience externally before coming back into the ADF workforce.

Defence representatives also made it clear that individuals can be recruited and trained across multiple employment categories. For example, ADF members can be both trained firefighters and trained military personnel.

²⁹Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee, *Proof Committee Hansard, Senate Estimates: Wednesday 14 February 2024*, Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee, Commonwealth of Australia, 2024.
³⁰Department of Defence, *Annual Report 2022-2023*, Department of Defence, Australian Government, 2023.
³¹Department of Defence, *Annual Report 2022-2023*, Department of Defence, Australian Government, 2023.
³²See Department of Defence Annual Reports Appendix A.
³³Department of Defence, *ADF Workforce System*, Department of Defence website, n.d., accessed 7 May 2024; The term 'Service Category' (SERCAT) refers to a delineation of personnel based on their duties and service obligations into 7 categories. For example, SERCAT 7 represents the maximum service obligation and typically refers to a permanent full-time member of the ADF. SERCAT 2-5 generally represents reserve ADF members with varying degrees of time commitment, with SERCAT 2 representing the least time commitment.

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.

Within the ADF workforce, career pathways are well defined, with clearly articulated guidelines for advancement and educational pathways strongly connected to specific roles. To strengthen these existing career pathways, exploration of new lateral entry programs may be considered, particularly for mid or late-career workers.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

A sector representative highlighted that, within the APS component of the Defence workforce, the Australian Public Sector Commission (APSC) has developed a Jobs Family Framework to define and group roles that require the performance of similar or identical sets of tasks. This framework improves staff mobility across the agencies within the APS, which may in turn increase specialist APS capability within Defence.

Developing lateral pathways for skilled workers to enter and exit the Defence workforce may be of increasing importance to deliver on AUKUS and other national priorities. A surge of skilled workers may be required to deliver on commitments; with Defence anticipating that these workers are unlikely to be retained within the workforce long-term.

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,
- reduced capacity of APS workforce due to imposition of recruitment caps, and
- technological advancements.

For Defence, the expansion of core duties occurred during the recent flooding crisis across

Australia’s east coast. The Emergency Defence Assistance to the Civil Community (DACC) policy notes that engaging in civil assistance activities is important but also detracts from the Global Defence Mission (home and abroad) of maintaining national security and reduces training, equipment, and staff capacity.³⁴ Defence capability and capacity will likely be impacted by concurrent and prolonged fire seasons, as well as the increased frequency and intensity of natural disasters. This has created expectations that Defence will support and respond to these events to an unprecedented extent.³⁵ The National Defence: Defence Strategic Review identified disaster relief as a form of role expansion that may have an impact on the ADF’s warfighting capacity, resource requirements, staff allocations and training priorities. The Defence Strategic Review recommended that the ADF should only be used as the last resort for domestic aid to the civil community. To ease the increasing burden that disaster relief places on Defence, The Alternative Commonwealth Capabilities for Crisis Response Discussion Paper sets out to determine viable crisis response alternatives to the ADF as Australia faces increasingly frequent and severe crises.³⁶

³⁴Department of Defence, *Defence Assistance to the Civil Community Initiative*, Department of Defence website, n.d., accessed 15 May 2024
³⁵Commonwealth of Australia, *Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements Report*, Commonwealth of Australia, 2020.
³⁶Department of Home Affairs, *Alternative Commonwealth Capabilities for Crisis Response: Discussion Paper – August 2023*, National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Australian Government, 2023.

MEGATREND 6: DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY

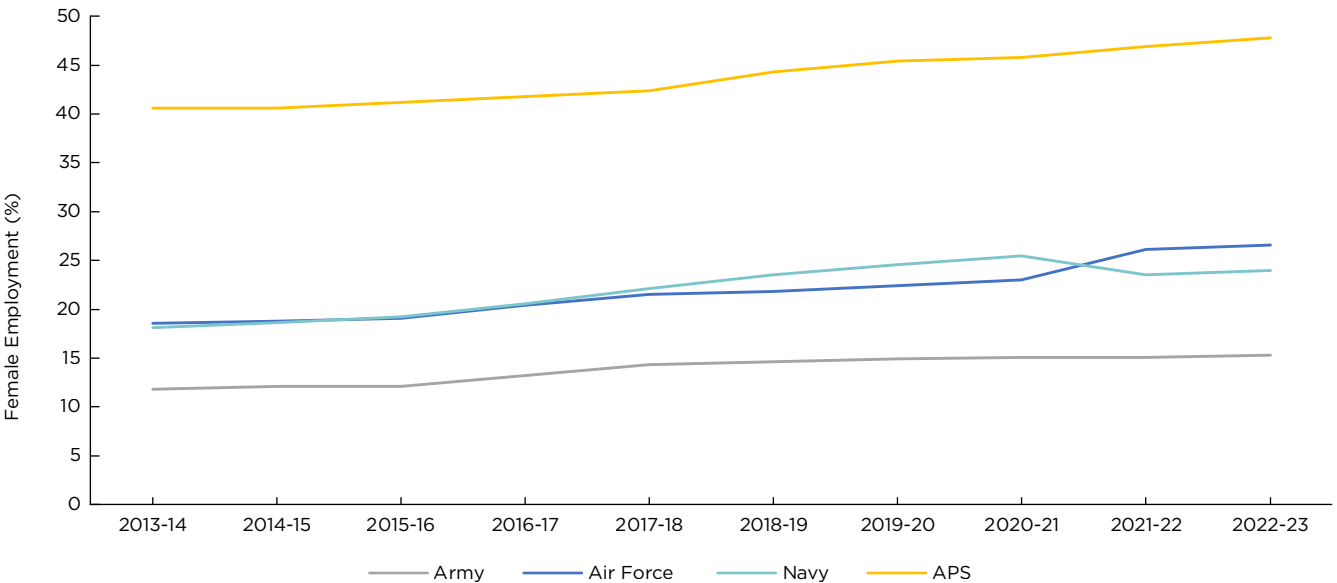
- ✓ Defence
- ✓ Police
- ✓ Fire and Emergency Services
- ✓ Correctional Services
- ✓ Federal, State/Territory and Local Government

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.³⁷

Gender

The recruitment of women into the ADF has increased since Defence prioritised this effort in 2011, and gained further momentum when all frontline combat positions became accessible to women in 2016.³⁸ In the short time between the release of the Defence Annual Report 2015–2016 and 2016–2017, female recruitment increased from 980 staff to 1,535, and has since continued to grow in all areas of Defence (Figure 9). Despite these positive steps, the ADF workforce is still largely represented by men across its three Service branches.

Figure 9: Yearly proportion of female employment for each of the three Australian Defence Force Service branches and the Department of Defence public service cohort (APS)³⁹



³⁷Gender-diverse refers to individuals who do not identify as male or female, for example non-binary.
³⁸Department of Defence, *2016 Defence White Paper*, Department of Defence, Australian Government, 2016.
³⁹See Department of Defence Annual Reports (Appendix A).

First Nations Peoples

Despite continued focus by successive Governments through the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, the representation of First Nations peoples fluctuates across States/Territories as well as in different industry-sectors. Closing the Gap provides a roadmap for how the public sector should engage with reconciliation however, the actual strategies that are implemented deviate across State/Territories and specific industry-sectors (i.e. training, education and specific targets).⁴⁰ The Defence Reconciliation Action Plan 2019–2022 (the Plan) committed to developing and implementing strategies to improve the workforce participation rate of First Nations peoples.⁴¹ The Plan aims to assist Defence in achieving a 5 per cent participation rate by 2025, in recognition of the importance in bridging historical gaps and fostering reconciliation efforts between First Nations peoples and non-First Nations peoples. The establishment of Indigenous Liaison Officers and the tri-service Indigenous Pre-Recruit Program in rural locations has resulted in a successful increase in First Nations staff working in the ADF. First Nations participation rates increased from 3.5 percent in 2022 to 3.7 percent in 2023.⁴²

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

A sector representative made note of the Indigenous Pre-Recruit Program, which is a six-week residential course designed for young First Nations Peoples who aspire to join the Australian Defence Force. This program

is delivered ‘in country’ and prepares First Nations peoples for the ADF recruitment process. It includes a language, literacy, numeracy and digital (LLND) appraisal and if required a referral to build more in-depth LLND skills for success at recruitment and beyond.

A sector representative noted that women occupy approximately 13 per cent of ADF technical trade apprenticeships, exceeding the average of national apprentices. The national average of female participation in apprenticeships is 12 per cent.⁴³

⁴⁰Council of Australian Governments (COAG), National Agreement on *Closing the Gap*, COAG, Australian Government, 2020.
⁴¹Department of Defence, Reconciliation Action Plan 2019–2022: *Our people, Our future, Our Journey*, Department of Defence, Australian Government, 2018.
⁴²Department of Defence, *Annual Report 2021–2022*, Department of Defence, Australian Government, 2022.
⁴³Department of Defence, *Annual Report 2022–2023*, Department of Defence, Australian Government, 2023.
⁴⁴National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), Total VET students and courses 2022: DataBuilder [data set], ncver.edu.au, 2023, accessed 15 January 2024.

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. Defence capability and capacity will likely be impacted by concurrent and prolonged fire seasons, as well as the increased frequency and intensity of natural disasters. This has created expectations that Defence will support and respond to these events to an unprecedented extent.⁴⁴

Climate change is driving the increasing length of bushfire seasons, the overlapping fire seasons across both the Northern and Southern Hemispheres, and the growing number and scale of flood events. One of Defence’s core duties is to support and provide aid to neighbouring countries. This may include during crises related

to fires, cyclones, tsunamis and floods (for example, mobilising staff from all three major service branches to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to Vanuatu in April 2023).⁴⁵ Domestically, climate change will continue to have a profound impact on the intensity and frequency of natural disasters, which may increase the deployment of Defence specialist capabilities (i.e. air wings) to support those affected. As highlighted in Megatrend 5: Expansion of Core Duties, the Defence Strategic Review recommended that the ADF should only be used as the last resort for domestic aid to the civil community.⁴⁶ These requests for ADF support are becoming more frequent as climate-related weather incidents intensify. The *Alternative Commonwealth Capabilities for Crisis Response Discussion Paper* sets out to determine viable crisis response alternatives to the ADF as Australia faces increasingly frequent and severe crises.⁴⁷

⁴⁴Commonwealth of Australia, *Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements Report*, Commonwealth of Australia, 2020.
⁴⁵Department of Defence, ADF finishes cyclone aid to Vanuatu, Department of Defence website, 2023, accessed 3 April 2024.
⁴⁶Department of Defence, *National Defence: Defence Strategic Review*, Department of Defence, Australian Government, 2023.
⁴⁷Department of Home Affairs, *Alternative Commonwealth Capabilities for Crisis Response: Discussion Paper – August 2023*, National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Australian Government, 2023.

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.

The Defence workforce is also impacted by rapid technological development across its roles. Practically, this could require the workforce to be retrained to use emerging technologies, such as advanced thermal sensors; a larger and more lethal surface combatant Navy fleet; technologies encompassing command, control and communications; or more strategic domains such as IT, cybersecurity, signals intelligence and encryption.⁴⁸

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Sector representatives noted that as the technological context within Defence continues to evolve, there will be a requirement for a parallel transformation in the training and capabilities of Defence staff. These areas include, but are not limited to, nuclear capabilities, ship building, space capabilities, integrated intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, augmented human performance, advanced sensor systems, hypersonic and directed energy capacities, quantum technologies and autonomous systems.

⁴⁸Department of Defence, *National Defence: Defence Strategic Review*, Department of Defence, Australian Government, 2023.

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. Two major events impacting trust and perceptions of the Defence sector are:

- Allegations and media coverage of involvement in war crimes and scrutiny of whistleblowers,
- Media coverage of global conflicts in Ukraine and Israel presenting the realities of war in unprecedented ways.

These events may impact the following:

- attraction of new staff,
- perceptions of Defence culture,
- capacity to retain staff.

Current perceptions of Defence might affect its status as an employer of choice, while attraction and recruitment may continue to be impacted by narratives regarding negative cultures within Defence.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

A sector representative made note that recent domestic support provided by the ADF to events such as climate-induced natural disasters may counteract negative perceptions and increase the desire of community members to participate in the Defence sector workforce.

⁴⁹Department of Defence, *Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force Afghanistan Inquiry Report*, Department of Defence, Australian Government, 2020.

INDUSTRY-SECTOR CHALLENGES

Challenge 1: Political and Geopolitical Events

Australia is an active participant in several security communities, including the AUKUS partnership, ANZUS, QUAD II, as well as non-security related intergovernmental organisations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum, Asia-Pacific Economic Community (APEC), and the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF).⁵⁰ Australia has forged strategic partnerships with regional counterparts, including India, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, South Korea and Japan.⁵¹ These strategic partnerships will continue to influence the expectations placed on Defence, Defence industry, contractors and Australian private industry. Increases in Australia's commitments to its security partners may have flow-on effects to the responsibilities, remit and workload of Defence. Workforce planning within Defence already considers changing and evolving capability priorities along with the geostrategic environment and this will need to continue to evolve and adapt. These factors also shape how Defence trains, further develops, and retains its workforce in line with required workforce capability over time.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

In addition to the AUKUS partnership, Defence is currently enhancing its capabilities in a range of other areas including explosive ordnance.

Defence skilling requirements are fluid and flexible to ensure they remain in-line with emergent needs or emergency events. Monitoring of skilling pipelines, emergent capabilities, and suitability of training with Defence sector partners is important to ensure operational capacity meets emergent demand.

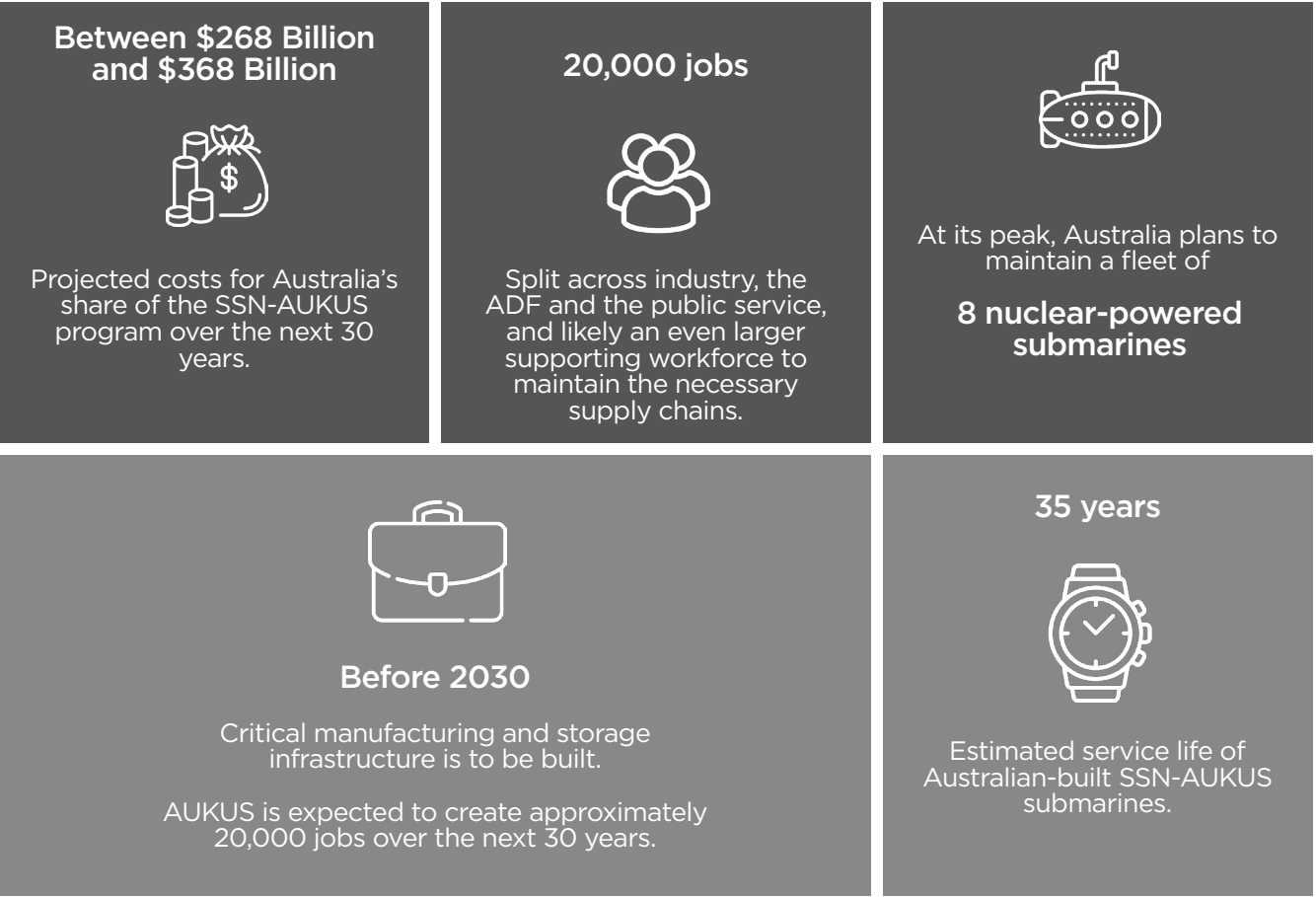
⁵⁰Department of Defence, *National Defence: Defence Strategic Review*, Department of Defence, Australian Government, 2023.

⁵¹S Fallon, *Australia's security relationships*, Parliament of Australia, Parliament of Australia website, n.d., accessed 7 May 2024.

Challenge 2: AUKUS and Workforce Planning

AUKUS is a trilateral security agreement between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, formally announced on 15 September 2021. The stated aims of AUKUS are to uphold peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific and defend against rapidly evolving threats to the international order.⁵²

Figure 10: Key statistics of the AUKUS program⁵³



Under the banner of the AUKUS partnership, Australia entered into an agreement with the US and UK to purchase three nuclear-powered SSN-AUKUS submarines, and to manufacture an additional five domestically using imported nuclear power reactors. Delivery of this project poses several significant challenges for Defence, but also the wider Australian labour market, and will require strengthening partnerships between the Federal and State/Territory Governments, Defence and industry.

⁵²Office of the Prime Minister of Australia, *Joint Leaders Statement on AUKUS*, Office of the Prime Minister of Australia website, 2023, accessed 21 August 2024.

⁵³P Dean, A Nason, S Mayo and S Garrett, *AUKUS inflection point: Building the ecosystem for workforce development*, United States Studies Centre (USSC), USSC website, 2023, accessed 7 May 2024; Anthony Albanese, Answer to a Question on Notice: AUKUS, [Questioner: Dai Le], House of Representatives, Debates, 27 March 2023, 75; Parliamentary Budget Office, 'The Cost of Nuclear Submarines', Budget analysis, 14 April 2023; Prime Minister of Australia, *AUKUS Submarine Workforce and Industry Strategy*, Prime Minister of Australia website, 14 March 2024, accessed 29 May 2024.

To meet current timelines, the construction of critical infrastructure in South Australia and Western Australia to enable the manufacturing and storage of nuclear-powered submarines will need to be completed well before 2030. The requirement to stand up a workforce of this magnitude considering a historically low national unemployment rate and major skills shortages in trades and technical skills, poses a major challenge.

Successful delivery of the submarine program is contingent on multiple interrelated factors in the Australian labour market. Major investments into the development of a skilled national workforce aligned with the requirements of the AUKUS project will need to be developed in consultation with industry and training providers. These efforts may include dedicated Vocational Education and Training (VET) and higher education programs, academia, and work-integrated learning programs aimed at developing the required skills and expertise for the ADF workforce.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

It is broadly understood that training of shipbuilders, welders, nuclear safety specialists and other occupations will be required. So far, two cohorts of Australian submariners enrolled in US programs have graduated, but it is also not yet clear how many ADF personnel will be required for the long-term operation and maintenance of the nuclear-powered submarines.

Analysis of where the requisite 20,000 jobs should be established in the Australia labour market (i.e. within Defence, Defence industry or private business), and definition of time horizons for skill development and infrastructure development to support this workforce are required to ensure effective workforce planning and workforce management.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT & TIMEFRAMES

The *Workforce Plan 2024*: Defence identified the following strategies to support industry to address the sector specific challenges outlined above.

Table 3: Proposed strategies to address identified sector challenges

Labour Market Dynamics	Proposed Strategies	Key Stakeholders
Challenge 2: AUKUS and Workforce Planning Symptom: Occupational Shortage	JSC Function: Workforce Planning Strategy: Undertake an analysis of current and future job roles and related skills required for the AUKUS workforce. Actions: Phase 1: Undertake engagement with senior Defence officials to build sector support and identify all Defence partners with an interest in ADF specific AUKUS skilling requirements. Phase 2: In partnership with identified Defence stakeholders (ADF and Department of Defence), Public Skills Australia will undertake an analysis of: - Current job roles and skill requirements for the ADF workforce in the delivery of the AUKUS program - Future growth of the job roles and skills requirements for the ADF over the identified time horizons of the AUKUS program. Impact: Delivery of analysis and related insights will promote coherence and collaboration between stakeholders responsible for the AUKUS program. Anticipated Timing: July 2024 – July 2026	- Australian Defence College - Military Workforce Design - DEWR Defence Skills Taskforce - Relevant Government Departments - STTA/SRO - State/Territory Skills Commissions/Councils - Manufacturing Industry Skills Alliance (MISA) - Defence Industry
Megatrend 4: Career Pathways Symptom: Quality Mismatch	JSC Function: Training Product Development Activity: Review and update training products identified as a priority by the sector through the ADF. Actions: - Review of the Defence Public Affairs Qualifications (Approved Activity Identifier: GEP_ANN_2324_02). - In partnership with Defence develop training products to support skilling to work with explosive ordnance (anticipated). Anticipated Timing: 1 June 2024 – 31 May 2025 - Upon approval of project plan	- Australian Defence College - STTA/SRO

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: Defence*. This mapping identifies strategies that are currently used by Government and industry-sectors to inform Public Skills Australia’s workforce planning efforts.

Table 5: Existing national and industry-sector strategies

National Strategies						
Strategy	Link to Industry-Sector Challenge	Link to Cross-Sector Megatrend	Owner	Timing	Purpose and Components	How it will inform our work
Towards a National Jobs and Skills Roadmap: Annual Jobs and Skills Report 2023 ⁵⁴	1, 3	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 ⁵⁵	2	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) ⁵⁶	1, 2		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.
Australia and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) Review ⁵⁷	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.

⁵⁴Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), *Towards a National Jobs and Skills Roadmap*. Towards a National Jobs and Skills Roadmap, JSA, Australian Government, 2023.

⁵⁵Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), *The Clean Energy Generation: Workforce needs for a Net Zero Economy*, JSA, Australian Government, 2023.

⁵⁶JSA, *Skills Priority List*, JSA website, 2023, accessed: 13 February 2024.

⁵⁷Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *ANZCO Comprehensive Review – Consultation Round 3*, ABS, Australian Government, 2023, accessed 30 April 2024.

Table 5: Existing national and industry-sector strategies

National Strategies						
Strategy	Link to Industry-Sector Challenge	Link to Cross-Sector Megatrend	Owner	Timing	Purpose and Components	How it will inform our work
The Australian Government's Strategic Priorities ⁵⁸			Department of 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.	Public Skills Australia will support the implementation of the Federal Government's strategic priorities, particularly those which seek to strengthen the APS cohort within the Defence workforce.
Closing the Gap ⁵⁹		6	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.	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 ⁶⁰		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 workforwce 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.

⁵⁸Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C), *2022-2026 Corporate Plan: Part two – The Australian Government's Strategic Priorities*, PM&C, Australian Government, 2022.

⁵⁹Council of Australian Governments (COAG), *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*, COAG, Australian Government, 2020.

⁶⁰Digital Transformation Agency, *2023–2030 Australian Cyber Security Strategy*, Digital Transformation Agency, Australian Government, 2023.

Table 5: Existing national and industry-sector strategies

Sector Strategies						
Strategy	Link to Industry-Sector Challenge	Link to Cross-Sector Megatrend	Owner	Timing	Purpose and Components	How it will inform our work
National Defence Strategy ⁶¹	All	All	Defence	2024	The National Defence Strategy outlines the Government's approach to Australia's National Defence risks. Six priorities are highlighted in the strategy including: - Acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines through AUKUS. - Developing long-range capabilities - Improvements to bases - Improving the growth and retention of the workforce - Lifting Australia's capacity to rapidly translate disruptive new technologies into ADF capability - Prioritising international partnerships A Defence Workforce Plan that supports the six priorities is currently being finalised.	Workforce planning and strategy development conducted by Defence provides innovative solutions to its recruitment challenges. Public Skills Australia aims to support the development of workforce strategies utilised by Defence by engaging with challenges and collaborating with other JSCs, Government agencies and external employers who support the Defence workforce or workforce capability.
Integrated Investment Program ⁶²	All	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8	Defence	2024	The Integrated Investment Program outlines the Defence capability investment priorities including but not limited to: - Undersea Warfare - Maritime capabilities - Space and Cyber - Targeting and Long-Range Strike - Missile Defence This includes developing a skilled workforce in identified investment areas.	Public Skills Australia supports training product development in relation to AUKUS and other identified investment areas.
National Defence: Defence Strategic Review ⁶³	All	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8	Defence	2023	The <i>National Defence: Defence Strategic Review 2023</i> outlines the Defence strategy to maintain national sovereignty, security and prosperity. One of the obstacles to achieving this overarching goal is recruitment. This is currently being addressed with the Total Workforce Model which, in part, seeks to better utilise ADF Reserves within operational roles. The review further recommends reintroduction of the Ready Reserve Scheme, which seeks to increase recruitment of young people into operational roles without full commitment to ADF membership.	Workforce planning and strategy development conducted by Defence provides innovative solutions to its recruitment challenges, especially by utilising Reserves as a recruitment pool. Public Skills Australia aims to support the development of workforce strategies utilised by Defence by engaging with challenges and collaborating with other JSCs, Government agencies and external employers who support the Defence workforce or workforce capability.
<i>Inquiry into the Department of Defence Annual Report 2021-2022</i> ⁶⁴	All	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8	Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade	2021-2022	In response to AUKUS, this inquiry notes a need to expand the submarine workforce from the current 856 to an approximate 2,900 by mid-2050. In addition, the development of expertise in space-related ICT and space traffic management is also noted as necessary. Recruitment for these roles is highly affected by the competitive labour market.	The report recommends Defence report every six months to provide further context around recruitment and retention challenges, and to support targeted strategic responses to address these challenges. This report aligns to many of the challenges identified at consultation and will be routinely monitored for further intelligence.
Alternative Commonwealth Capabilities for Crisis Response Discussion Paper ⁶⁵	All	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8	Department of Home Affairs National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)	Ongoing	The fundamental objective of the Alternative Commonwealth Capabilities for Crisis Response Discussion Paper is to build national capacity to ensure Australia is prepared to face the increasing number of frequent and severe natural disasters due to climate change. The strategy also touches on recommendations that the ADF should only be used as the last resort for domestic aid to the community during and following disasters except in extreme circumstances.	The Department of Home Affairs and National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) will use information gathered from the Discussion Paper to inform the policy development process and advice to Government on potential options. This Discussion Paper aligns to many of the challenges identified at consultation and the outcomes will be routinely monitored for further intelligence.

⁶¹Department of Defence. *National Defence Strategy*. Department of Defence, Australian Government, 2024.
⁶²Department of Defence. *Integrated Investment Program*. Department of Defence, Australian Government, 2024.
⁶³Department of Defence. *National Defence: Defence Strategic Review*. Department of Defence, Australian Government, 2023.
⁶⁴Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade. *Inquiry into the Department of Defence Annual Report 2021–22*. Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, Commonwealth of Australia, 2023.
⁶⁵Department of Home Affairs. *Alternative Commonwealth Capabilities for Crisis Response: Discussion Paper – August 2023*. National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Australian Government, 2023.

CONSULTATION PLAN

2024 Workforce Plan Engagement

In the development of the 2024 Workforce Plans, Public Skills Australia undertook extensive 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 sector, is summarised in the Methodology section above. Table 5 illustrates the sector representatives engaged in the development of the *Workforce Plan 2024: Defence*.

Table 5: Summary of stakeholders engaged for Workforce Plan 2024

AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE COLLEGE	MILITARY WORKFORCE DESIGN DIVISION
STATE AND TERRITORY TRAINING AUTHORITY (STTA) CONTACTS	SENIOR RESPONSIBLE OFFICER (SRO) CONTACTS

2025 Workforce Planning Engagement

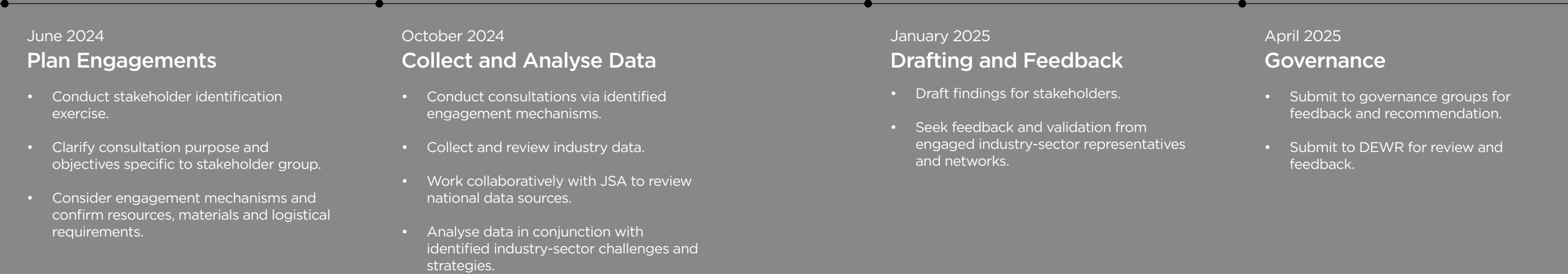
In the development of the 2025 Workforce Plans, Public Skills Australia will target identified stakeholders for consultation using different engagement mechanisms, as outlined in Table 6.

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 groups 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 a 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 Defence 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 sector representatives

Sector Representative	Representation Type	Sector specific challenges	Megatrends	Purpose of Ongoing Consultation
Australian Defence College	Employer and RTO	All	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8	The Australian Defence College was established to provide education and training to the Australian Defence Force. The College manages the Defence Registered Training Organisation, which is responsible for providing nationally accredited training for current and transitioned ADF members. Public Skills Australia will continue to consult with the Defence College to examine the current state of workforce skills in Defence and required future state across time horizons.
Military Workforce Design and Force Exploration	Employer	All	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8	Military Workforce Design and Force Exploration play a crucial role in shaping the Australian Defence Force workforce. Public Skills Australia will continue to consult with stakeholders from this group to develop and progress the proposed workforce strategies.
Department of Employment and Workforce Relations & South Australian Defence Industry -Workforce and Skills Joint Taskforce	Government	All	All	The South Australian Defence Industry Workforce and Skills Taskforce is a joint Commonwealth and South Australian taskforce, which will work together with defence industry, unions, and the education and training sectors to develop initiatives to support South Australia’s future defence industry workforce needs. Public Skills Australia is yet to formally consult with the Taskforce but will prioritise engagement in the development of the 2025 Workforce Plan to develop and progress proposed workforce strategies.
Defence Force Welfare Association	Employee	All	All	The Defence Force Welfare Association is the national union body for serving and ex-serving Australian Defence Force members, their families, and those interested in Defence veteran welfare issues. Public Skills Australia is yet to formally consult with this employee representative but will prioritise engagement in the development of the 2025 Workforce Plan to garner holistic insights on identified sector challenges and the development of proposed strategies.
Community and Public Sector Union Australia	Employee	All	All	The Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) is the national union body for Australian Public Sector (APS) employees. Public Skills Australia is yet to formally consult with this employee representative in the context of the Defence sector, but it is understood that Defence is a hybrid workforce and thus this consultation is important. Public Skills Australia will prioritise engagement with the CPSU in the development of the 2025 Workforce Plan to garner holistic insights on identified sector challenges and the development of proposed strategies.
Specific Government stakeholder departments within Defence	Government	All	All	In the development of the 2025 Workforce Plan Public Skills Australia will seek to broaden its consultation efforts within Defence. This may include inviting the participation of the Workforce and People Strategy Division (APS), Military Workforce Design and Force Exploration, and the Military Personnel Organisation, in ongoing consultations.

ENGAGING WITH OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

In the development of the 2025 Workforce Plans, Public Skills Australia will explore industry-sector 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.

	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.
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.	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.
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.	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 consultation and collaboration with individual JSCs on cross-council projects.

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

The Department of Defence is required, under their legislative and regulatory commitments, to publicly report on key metrics. This information is commonly presented in annual reports or budget statements and may include information such as headcount, FTE, demographics, summary of work completed, and others. In the formation of this Workforce Plan the following challenges were identified in relying on the Defence publicly released information:

- exact occupations in shortage are unclear,
- specificity of workforce demographic data is limited.

As such, utilisation of sector data to support ABS and JSA data is complex. Further consultation will be undertaken with industry to identify more effective data collection and reporting methods.

Defence holds an Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS) exemption on the grounds of national security and operations, to protect the security and identities of Defence personnel and their training data. The exemption was initially awarded by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) but is now an enduring exemption for Defence-specific training cohorts that is supported by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA). Consequently, data reported through NCVER for the Defence Training Package (DEF) would not accurately represent the considerable scale of training undertaken by Defence.

To progress the proposed strategies, Public Skills Australia recognises the need to build strong data-sharing relationships with the Defence sector. Public Skills Australia will also focus future consultation efforts to develop better understanding of the scale and characteristics of the workforce challenges in the totality of the Defence sector, endeavour to remedy the identified industry data gaps and foster a better understanding of workforce planning opportunities to address workforce and skills shortfalls across time.

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

Defence Annual Reports

Department of Defence (2014). Annual Report 2013-2014. Department of Defence, Australian Government.

Department of Defence (2015). Annual Report 2014-2015. Department of Defence, Australian Government.

Department of Defence (2016). Annual Report 2015-2016. Department of Defence, Australian Government.

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Department of Defence (2018). Annual Report 2017-2018. Department of Defence, Australian Government.

Department of Defence (2019). Annual Report 2018-2019. Department of Defence, Australian Government.

Department of Defence (2020). Annual Report 2019-2020. Department of Defence, Australian Government.

Department of Defence (2021). Annual Report 2020-2021. Department of Defence, Australian Government.

Department of Defence (2022). Annual Report 2021-2022. Department of Defence, Australian Government.

