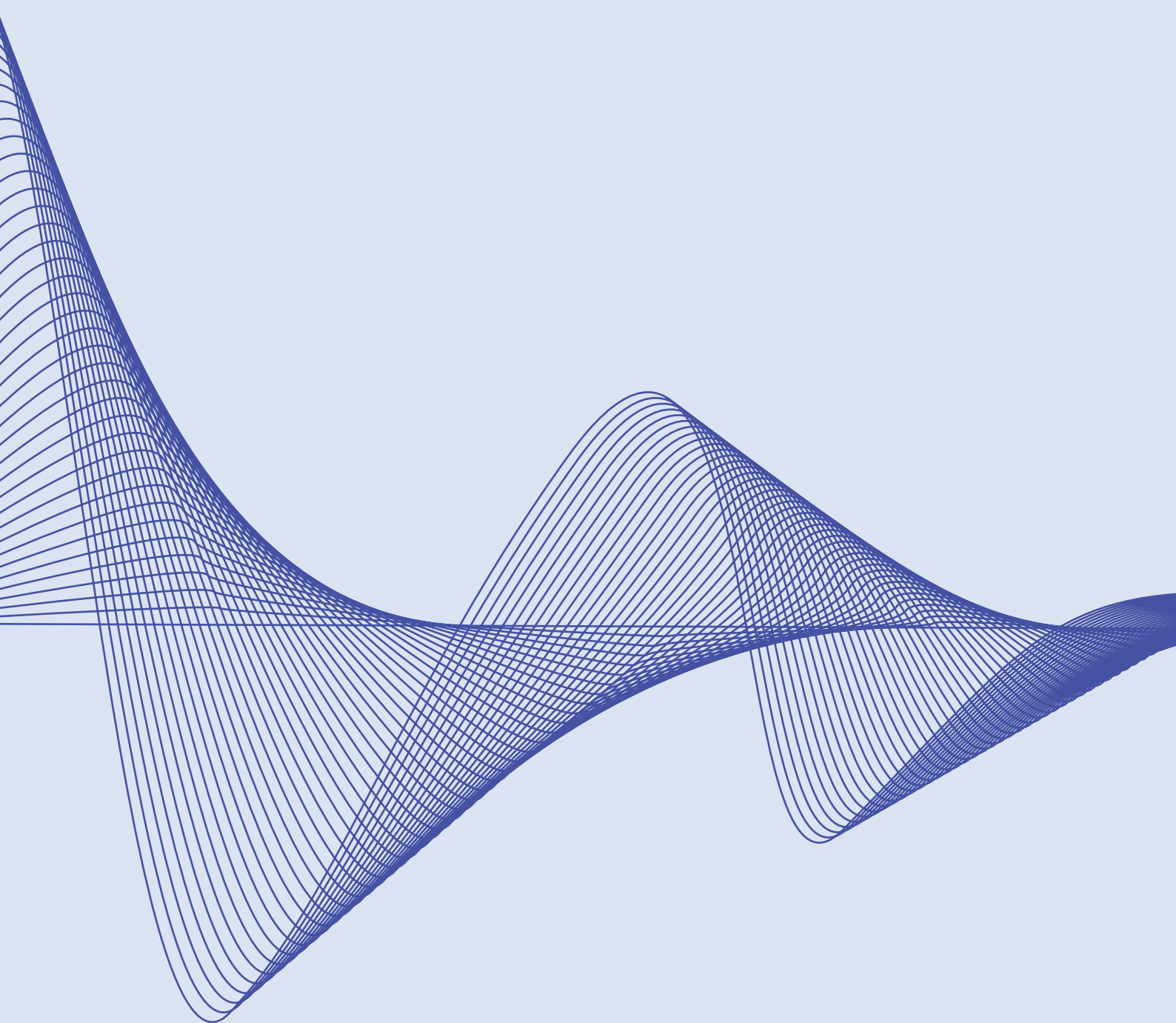


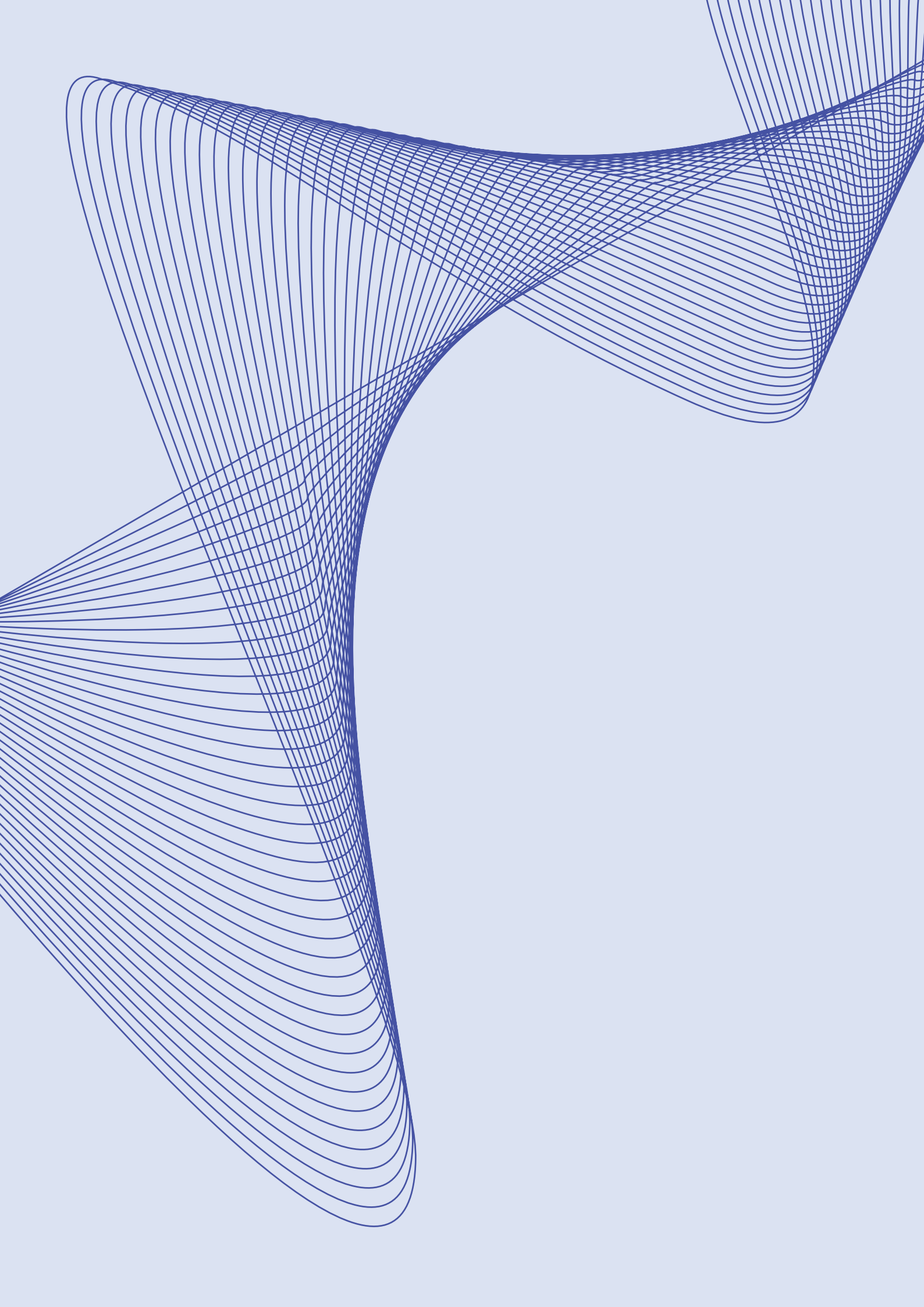
2026 Correctional Services Workforce Insights Report



**PUBLIC SKILLS
AUSTRALIA**
PUBLIC SAFETY SKILLS AUSTRALIA LTD

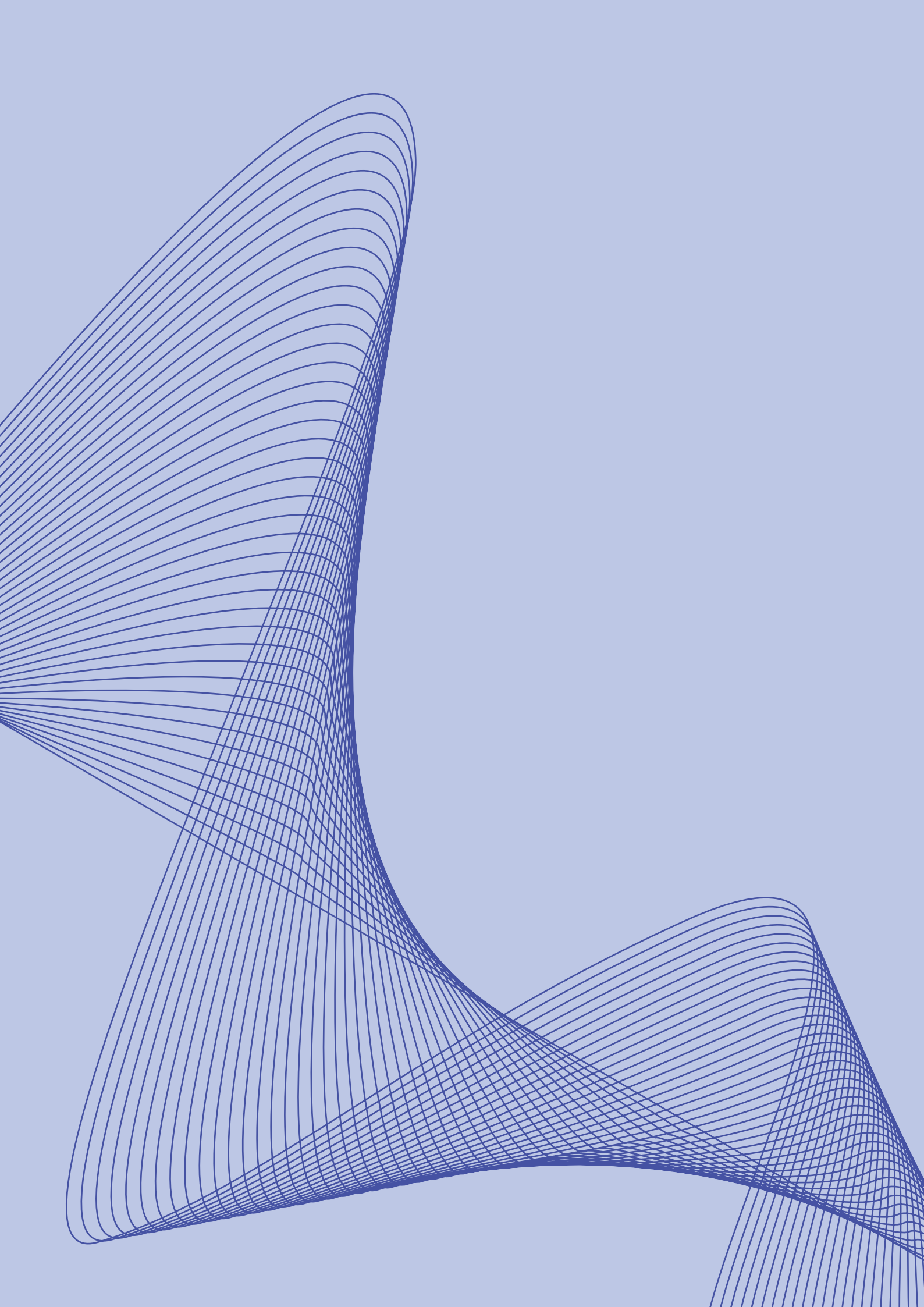
JSC

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



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About Public Skills Australia

Public Skills Australia is the Jobs and Skills Council (JSC) for the Public Safety and Government industry, comprising Correctional Services, Defence, Federal, State/Territory and Local Government, Fire and Emergency Services and Police industry-sectors.

Through its work, Public Skills Australia actively supports employer and employee bodies in these industries and associated volunteer associations. Public Skills Australia works in partnership with the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) and other JSCs to give effect to broader Ministerial and government priorities.

Public Skills Australia:

- › undertakes data analysis, research and consultation to deepen understandings of contemporary workforce challenges and what can be done to mitigate these challenges
- › develops quality training products to strengthen the skills and capabilities of Public Safety and Government workforces
- › monitors and promotes the implementation of training products to support career pathways for the Public Safety and Government industry-sectors
- › consults with, advocates for and promotes the needs of the Public Safety and Government industry-sectors.

Public Skills Australia remains committed to encouraging the participation of First Nations people,¹ those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those living with or experiencing disabilities, women and other gender diverse people and mature people in the Public Safety and Government industry workforces.

¹ Please note, First Nations people will be used as preferred terminology inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. When citing a data source (such as government strategies or state of the sector reports) the terminology of the data source will be used to maintain accurate data representation.

Executive Summary

Public Skills Australia's *2026 Correctional Services Workforce Insights Report* (the Report) considers the wider operational contexts impacting Public Safety and Government industries. It identifies four drivers of change that will impact workforce planning in the short to medium term aligned with the nine megatrends detailed in previous Workforce Insights Reports that remain relevant to long term workforce trends.

This Report also outlines two key challenges impacting the Correctional Services workforce that were identified in the *2025 Correctional Services Workforce Insights Report* and the *2024 Correctional Services Workforce Plan* – namely, the Correctional Services recruitment pipeline and the implementation of vocational education and training (VET) – as well as the strategies devised to support efforts to address them. These challenges and their related projects focused on Correctional Officer (CO) occupations in custodial settings rather than Community Corrections Officer (CCO) occupations in community settings. Accordingly, the community corrections workforce became the primary focus for this Report.

The Report identifies three industry insights relating to the community corrections workforce. These include:

- › Community corrections roles require dynamic skills and are focused on rehabilitation and reintegration back into a community. This means that CCOs require the capability to support the reduction of recidivism and enable rehabilitation.
- › The CCO role is comparatively complex, often requiring an understanding of advanced concepts such as behavioural change, acceptance and commitment theory, trauma-informed response, alcohol and other drug treatments and training for dealing with sex offenders. As such, it is seen as more specialised than what the current *Certificate III in Correctional Practice* offers. Several jurisdictions reported that they only offered *Certificate IV* level training for CCO roles.
- › Consultations with the Correctional Services industry-sector indicated anecdotal examples of employees transitioning from CO roles to CCO roles, often after injury and as part of support for employee return-to-work plans. However, this pipeline into CCO roles is often limited by the recruitment requirement for higher education qualifications, which may impact the eligibility of COs to apply.

The following strategy has been identified to support efforts to address the challenges identified through the above industry insights:

- › **Collaborate with HumanAbility² to analyse recent updates to the CHC Community Services Training Package to identify contemporary practice that could inform future updates to the Community Corrections specialisations in the officers *Certificate III* and *Certificate IV in Correctional Practice*:**
To provide the Correctional Services Subcommittee with an analysis of the suitability of contemporary practices outlined in the CHC Community Services Training Package for potential application to Community Corrections Officer training.

This Report concludes by looking towards the *2027 Workforce Insights Reports* and beyond. Future work will focus on broader priorities, including the participation of First Nations people, women and other genders in the Public Safety and Government workforces, in addition to examining the implications of artificial intelligence (AI) and digital transformation.

² HumanAbility is the Jobs and Skills council for the care and support sectors. They are responsible for maintaining and updating the CHC Community Services, HLT Health, and SIS Sports, Fitness and Recreation Training Packages.

Introduction

The *2026 Correctional Services Workforce Insights Report* is the fourth report generated by Public Skills Australia for the Correctional Services industry-sector since 2023. It builds on previous iterations to identify workforce challenges and strategies to mitigate them. This Report represents the insights, commitment and efforts of the Correctional Services industry-sector that were shared with Public Skills Australia.

Public Skills Australia's *Workforce Insights Reports* are developed using a combination of qualitative and quantitative data obtained from primary and secondary sources and supported by stakeholder consultations.

Structure

This Report is structured as follows:

Drivers of Change	› Identifies four key drivers of change that will impact Public Safety and Government industry-sectors in the short to medium term › Provides a recap of the nine megatrends identified in previous Workforce Insights Reports that remain relevant to long term workforce trends
Industry-Sector Analysis	› Examines the Correctional Services industry-sector, providing data analysis, identifying workforce insights and detailing strategies aimed at addressing workforce challenges
Proposed Strategies Summary	› Outlines the 2026 Workforce Strategies proposed through this Report
Existing Industry-Sector Strategies	› Details current strategic work being undertaken within the industry-sector and how this informs Public Skills Australia's work
Federal Government Initiatives	› Details Federal Government initiatives containing critical recommendations, strategic directions and national objectives that inform the planning and delivery of Public Skills Australia's projects
Looking Forward to 2027	› Concludes the Report by looking towards the <i>2027 Workforce Insights Reports</i>

Methodology

Public Skills Australia's *Workforce Insights Reports* are developed using a combination of qualitative and quantitative data obtained from primary and secondary sources. This *2026 Correctional Services Report* is supported by data obtained through stakeholder consultations and engagements.

These consultations were used to gain insight into challenges the Correctional Services industry-sector is facing in developing and maintaining a skilled workforce.

The challenges identified through these consultations were thematically analysed to identify shared challenges and trends. Specific to the Correctional Services industry-sector, and in alignment with the tripartite approach for JSCs, consultations were held with employers, employee bodies and Government organisations, both in-person and through online meetings, workshops and presentations.

Following these consultations, Public Skills Australia conducted secondary qualitative and quantitative research to verify the challenges raised. Additional targeted consultations with senior stakeholders were held to further validate workforce challenges and identify related industry insights.

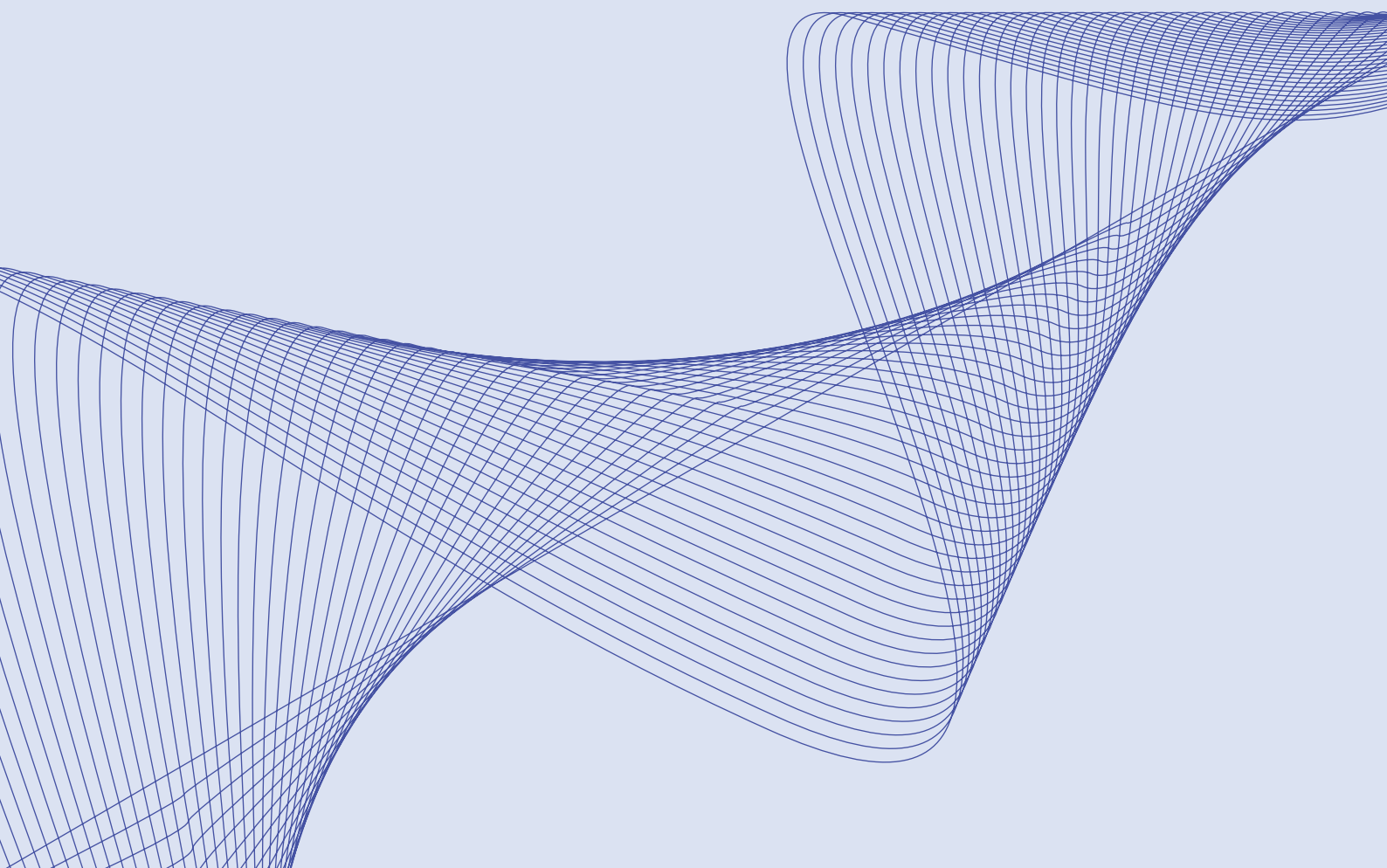
Drafts were subsequently progressed through Public Skills Australia's governance process that includes:

Correctional Services Subcommittee	Industry Advisory Group	Public Skills Australia Board
The Subcommittee is responsible for recommending this report to the Industry Advisory Group (IAG) for endorsement.	The IAG is responsible for endorsing this report to the Public Skills Australia Board for approval to be submitted to DEWR.	The Public Skills Australia Board (the Board) is responsible to approve the submission of the report to DEWR.
This recommendation is made on the basis that the Subcommittee is satisfied that sufficient consultation and engagement has been undertaken, and that consultation feedback was appropriately actioned.	This endorsement is made on the basis that the IAG is satisfied with the Correctional Services Subcommittees' recommendation for endorsement. The IAG further provides its strategic guidance and endorsement if comfortable that the strategic priorities of Public Safety industry-sectors are also captured.	This approval is made on the basis that the Board is satisfied that an appropriate development and consultation process was followed and that the report has been progressed in line with the internal governance requirements of Public Skills Australia.

The Report uses publicly available datasets accessible from Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) and other supporting online sources. Due to the complexity of large-scale workforce data, no single source provides an accurate or complete picture. Therefore, multiple data sources are used to provide the most accurate representation of the workforce as possible, supported by qualitative research (including interviews with stakeholders). This research was bolstered by literature reviews of government reports and documents, online sources, annual reports, departmental documentation, legislation, research articles and relevant Royal Commission Reports.

Qualitative research further included industry engagement undertaken for the *Corrections Implementation Report* and the *Drivers for Recruitment, Attrition and Retention (Corrections) Report 2025*. Consistent with the tripartite approach to industry engagement, Public Skills Australia engaged broadly through both consultation and surveys of Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), private and public employers, union representatives and a small number of current learners.

Public Skills Australia thanks the contributors, including industry representatives, its Board and governance group representatives, DEWR and Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) for sharing their views and data generously, and supporting the development of this Report.



Drivers of Change

In 2024, Public Skills Australia identified nine megatrends impacting the Public Safety and Government industry. These megatrends were further considered in the development of the *2025 Workforce Insights Reports*.

These megatrends included:



Limitations in
career pathways



Competition
for labour



Climate
change



Demographic
shifts



Diversity and
inclusion



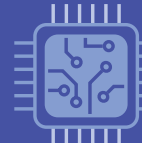
Expansion of
core duties



Public trust and
perceptions



Recruitment and
retention



Technological
development

While these megatrends will continue to have longer-term implications for workforce planning and development across the Public Safety and Government industry-sectors, the *2026 Workforce Insights Reports* have built on these and analysed four key drivers of change that cut across most megatrends. This is important as these drivers of change will likely impact the Public Safety and Government industry-sectors in the short to medium term.

The four key drivers of change include:

- › **Resilience of organisations to respond to strategic shocks:** Organisational resilience is emerging as a critical driver of change across Australia's Public Safety and Government industry-sectors, particularly as agencies confront increasingly frequent and complex strategic shocks. Recent experience with compounding crises (such as increasingly intense bushfires, major cyber attacks and intensifying geopolitical tensions) have exposed structural vulnerabilities and highlighted the need for more adaptive, anticipatory and integrated capabilities. Investment will be required to deepen organisational capabilities that supports system-wide preparedness, robust governance and the ability to maintain critical functions under stress.³
- › **Challenges to workforce productivity:** In its *Five Pillars of Productivity* inquiry reports, the Productivity Commission observed that productivity growth has been slowing globally since the mid-2000s, with Australia experiencing the slowest productivity growth in 60 years. The Productivity Commission identified long-standing pressures that have contributed to the productivity slowdown, including market stagnation, a persistently tight labour market and slower uptake of technological innovations.⁴ These factors are further exacerbated by emerging challenges linked to the megatrends including an ageing population, technological development, climate change and competition for labour.⁵
- › **Emergence of AI, greater automation and broader digital transformation:** AI, automation and accelerated digital transformation are powerful drivers of organisational and system-level change in the short term. This is reinforced by a push from the Federal Government for greater adoption of AI and digital initiatives across federal agencies.⁶ These initiatives signal a shift toward embedding AI into core service delivery, regulatory functions and operational decision making. AI, automation and digital transformation represent an opportunity for significant capability uplift through AI-enabled analytics, automation of high-volume processes and advanced digital platforms that enhance situational awareness, threat detection and emergency response coordination. Conversely, they represent a growing security risk as they are also being leveraged by threat actors to disrupt government services, facilitate foreign interference, enable disinformation, promote false narratives through deepfakes and erode trust in government institutions.⁷
- › **Workforce inclusivity:** Workforce inclusivity has been a key focus across the labour market. In the Public Safety and Government industry-sectors this is likely to translate into a continued focus on recruiting, retaining and developing employees from diverse cultural, linguistic, gender, disability and neurodivergent backgrounds. As organisations seek to increase workforce participation from these cohorts, they will be required to adapt and change legacy systems and processes to respond to the needs of the modern workforce.

³ Australian Government Department of Home Affairs, [Organisational Resilience: Good Practice Guide](#), Australian Government Department of Home Affairs, 2024, accessed 25 February 2026.

⁴ Productivity Commission, [Five pillars of productivity inquiries – final reports](#), Productivity Commission, 2025, accessed 13 February 2026.

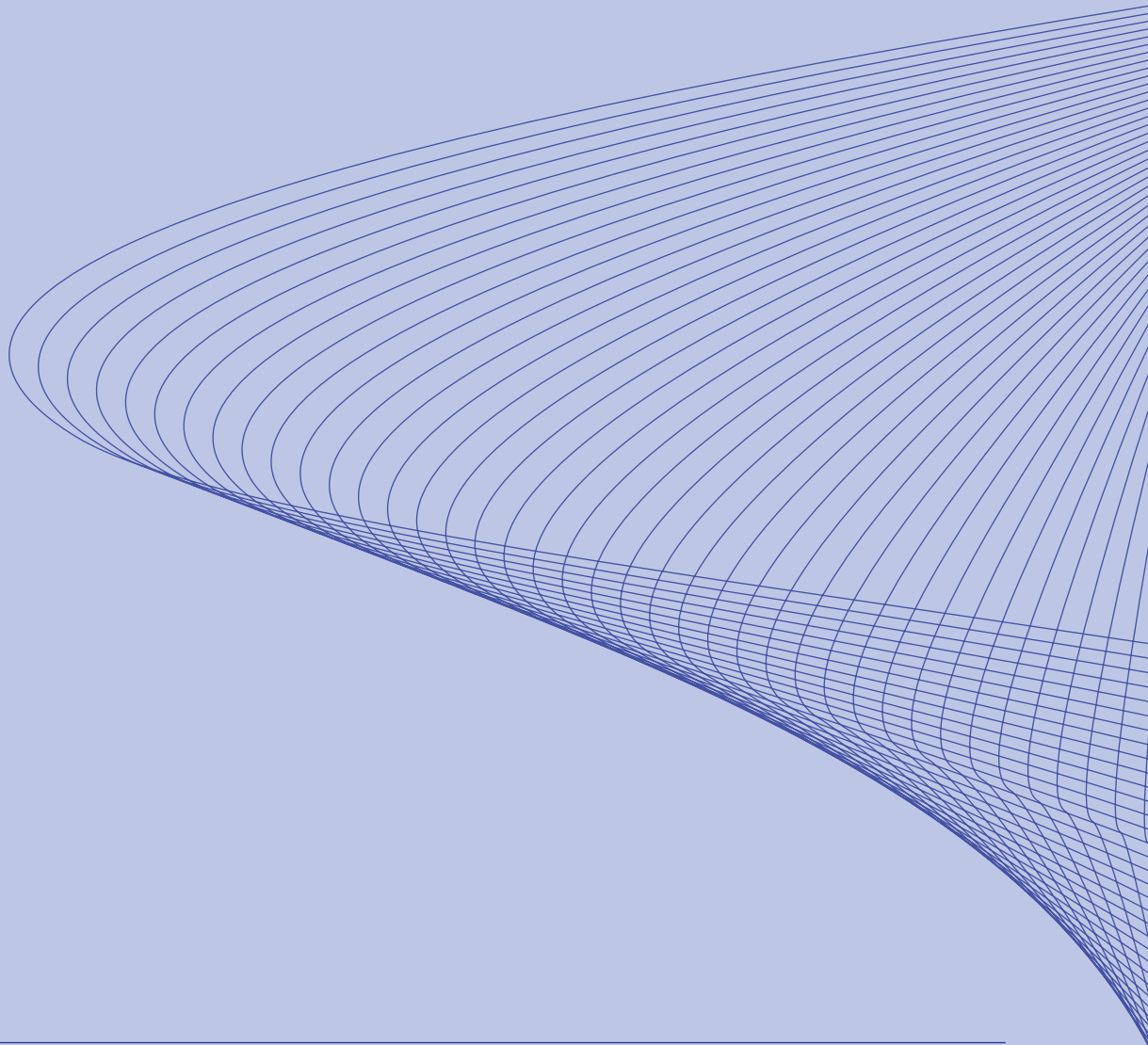
⁵ Productivity Commission, [Five pillars of productivity inquiries](#), Productivity Commission, 2025, accessed 25 February 2026.

⁶ Australian Government Digital Transformation Agency, [Policy for the responsible use of AI in government](#), Australian Government Digital Transformation Agency, 2025, accessed 25 February 2026; Australian Government Department of Finance, [National framework for the assurance of artificial intelligence in government](#), Australian Government Department of Finance, 2024, accessed 25 February 2026.

⁷ Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), [Director-General's Annual Threat Assessment 2025](#), ASIO, 2025, accessed 25 February 2026.

Correctional Services Industry-Sector Overview

The Correctional Services industry-sector plays a critical role in managing offenders. The workforce spans a broad range of occupations, including COs, who deliver custodial services in corrections facilities, and CCOs, who supervise offenders serving non-custodial sentences or parole in the community. The workforce also includes public servants working inside and outside correctional environments across functions such as administration, education, health, policy and intelligence.



In 2024-25, the net operating expenditure and capital costs for custodial corrections was \$7.3 billion and just under \$984 million for community corrections.⁸ Across Australia, there are 114 custodial facilities and a total workforce of 46,500.⁹ An analysis of the Correctional Services workforce profile identified the following trends:

- › **Workforce Growth vs. Demand:** The Correctional Services industry-sector workforce has grown at an average rate of 4.3 per cent per annum over the past five years.¹⁰ Despite overall industry-sector growth, the number of COs has decreased by 13.5 per cent over the same period, declining nationally from approximately 21,500 to 18,600.¹¹ The industry-sector workforce is projected to increase by 6.3 per cent over the next five years, and 11.2 per cent over the next ten years.¹² Therefore, the current rate of growth is not keeping pace with the increased number of individuals serving custodial sentences, which has risen by an average of 5.9 per cent.¹³ Growth in custodial sentences may generate downstream demand for CCOs as persons in custody transition to parole.
- › **Demand for Community Corrections:** The number of individuals serving a community corrections order has increased, rising by 3.9 per cent since 2020, growing on average 1.5 per cent per year.¹⁴ Recidivism rates tend to be lower for adults completing community orders (15.4 per cent returning to community corrections within two years) compared to persons in custody released from correctional facilities (44.5 per cent returning to correctional facilities within two years).¹⁵ At the same time, the ratio of individuals serving community corrections orders per CCOs has decreased from 16.5 in 2015-16 to 15.4 in 2024-25.¹⁶

⁸ Correctional facilities data from Productivity Commission 2026, [Report on Government Services](#), Corrective Services Table 8A.1., Workforce data from Jobs and Skills Australia, ATLAS Pro JSC Downloads, August 2025, downloaded 2 February 2026.

⁹ Productivity Commission 2026, [Report on Government Services](#), Corrective Services Table 8A.3.

¹⁰ Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), ATLAS Pro JSC Downloads, November 2025, downloaded 23 March 2026.

¹¹ JSA, ATLAS Pro JSC Downloads, November 2025, downloaded 23 March 2026.

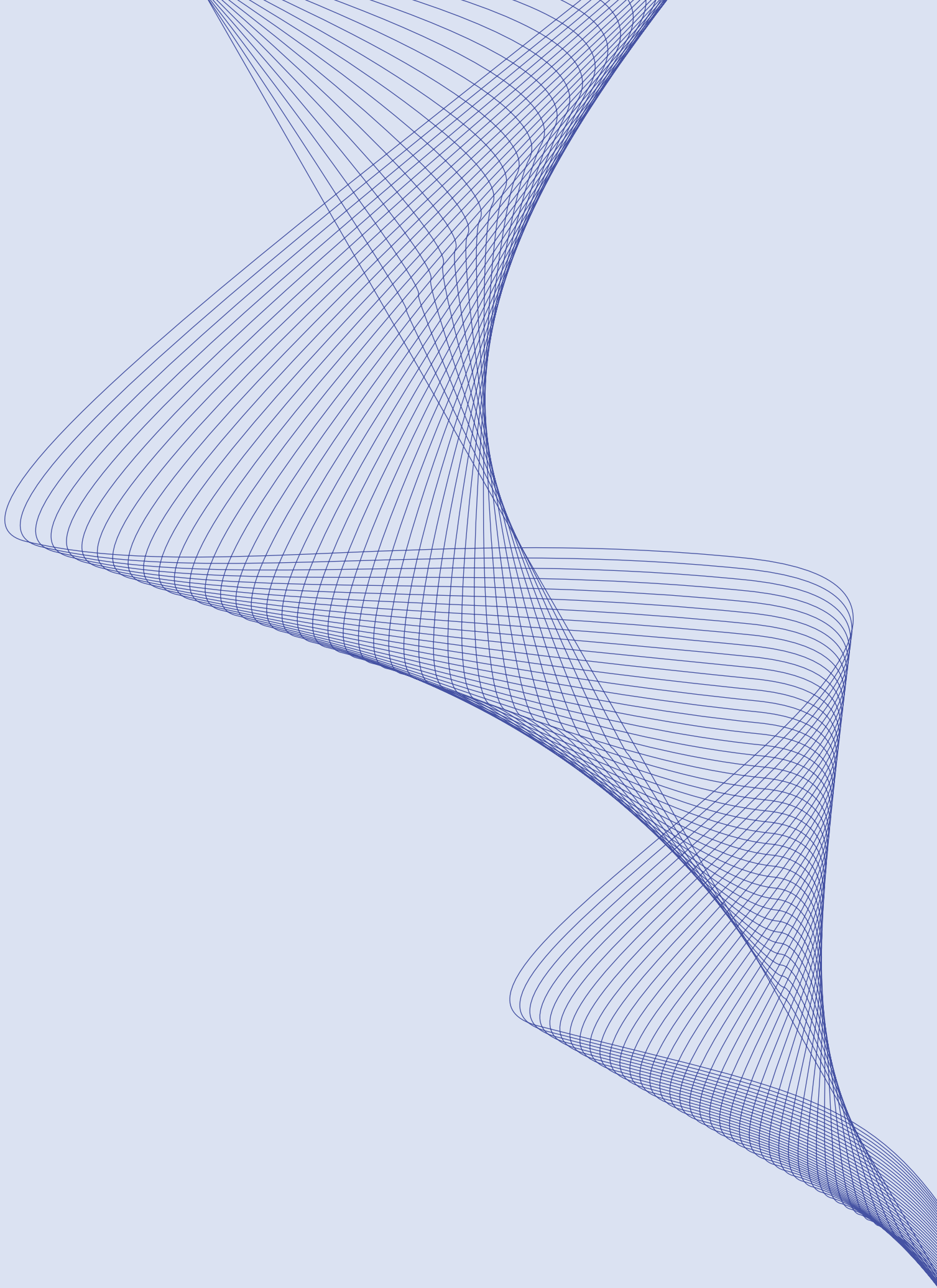
¹² JSA, ATLAS Pro JSC Downloads, August 2025 downloaded 2 February 2026.

¹³ Productivity Commission 2026, [Report on Government Services](#), Corrective Services Table 8A.3. Data comparison for individuals in corrections is 2023-4 to 2024-5. Individuals also serve non-custodial sentences in the community.

¹⁴ Productivity Commission 2026, [Report on Government Services](#), Corrective Services Table 8A.6.

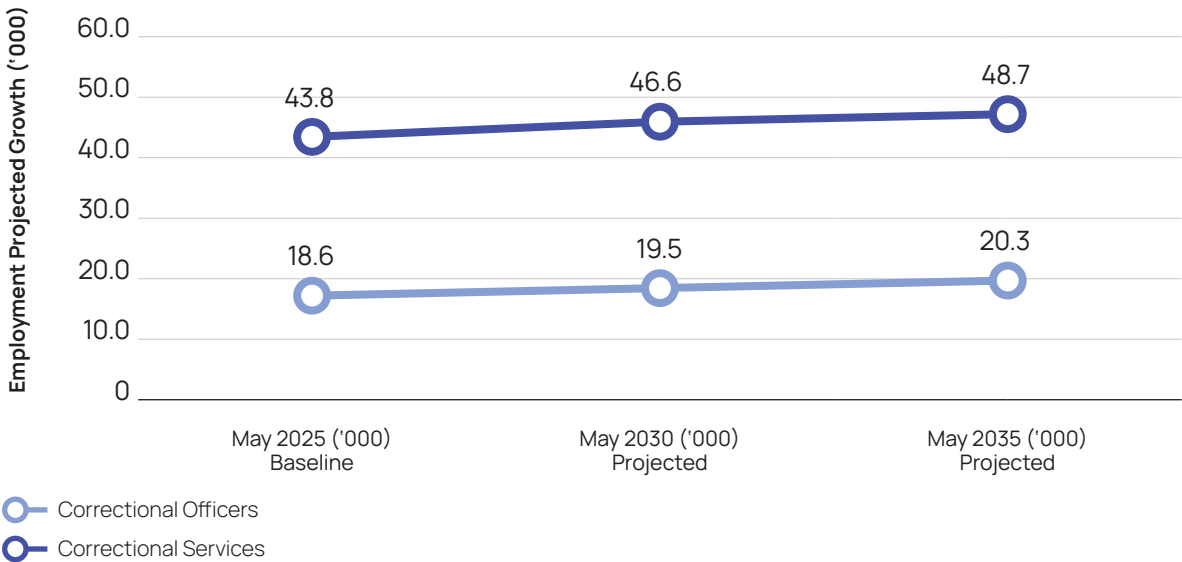
¹⁵ Productivity Commission 2026, [Report on Government Service – Table C Justice Services](#), Productivity Commission 2026, accessed 5 March 2026.

¹⁶ Productivity Commission 2026, [Report on Government Services](#), Corrective Services Table 8A.3. Data comparison for individuals in corrections is 2023-4 to 2024-5. Individuals also serve non-custodial sentences in the community. This group has not been included in the rate of growth for the custodial population.



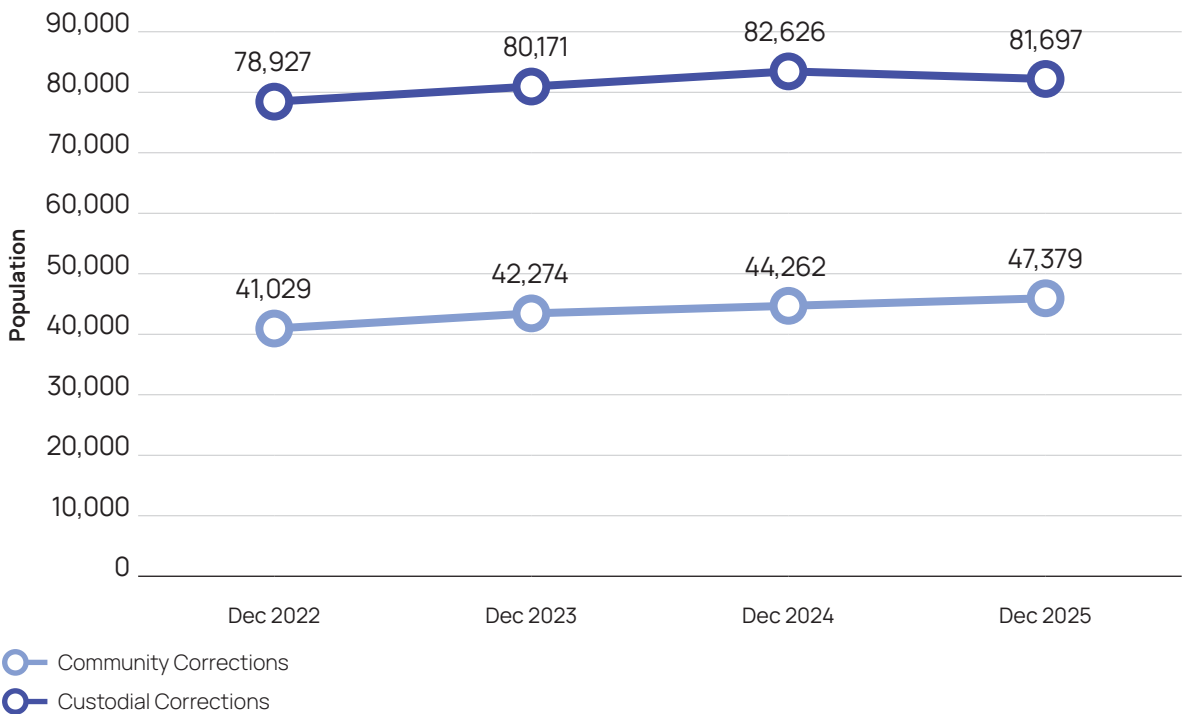
Workforce Growth vs. Demand

Correctional Services and Correctional Officer – Employment Projected Growth ('000)



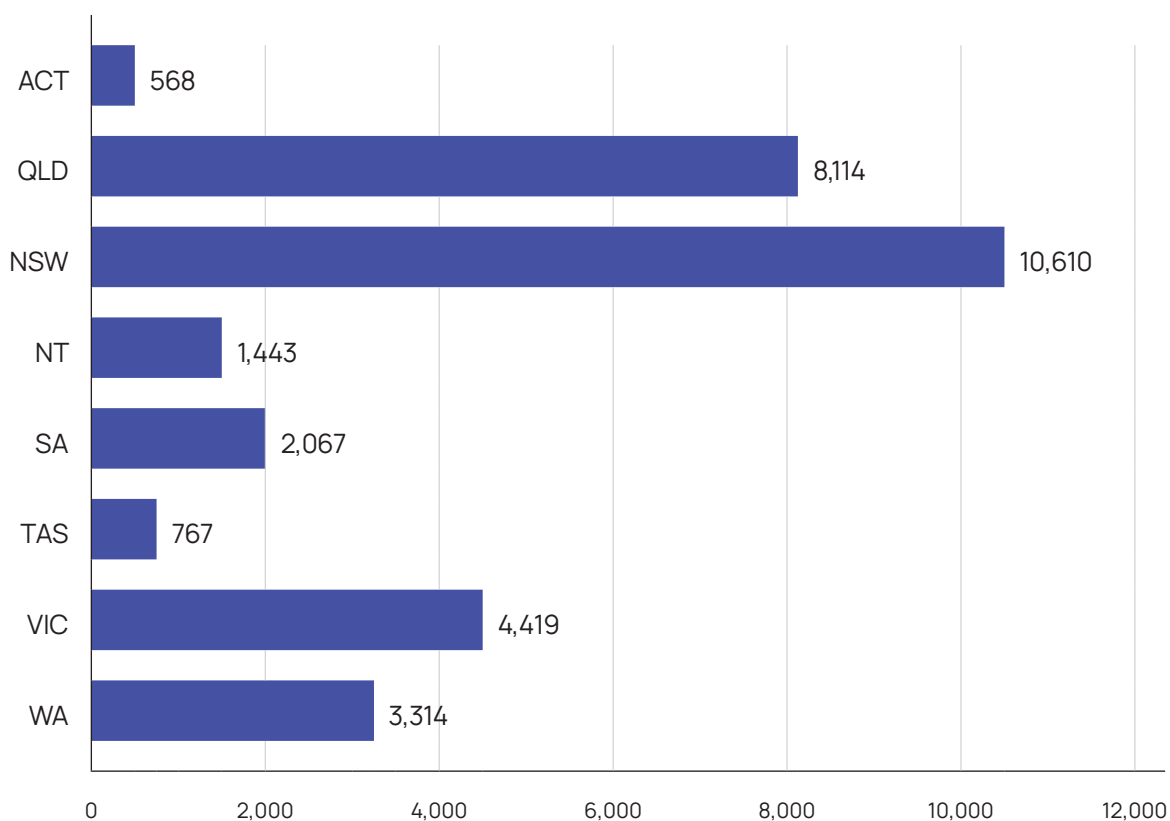
Source: Jobs and Skills Australia 2026, [Employment 10 year projections by JSCs and JSC sub-sectors \('000\)](#)

Persons in Custody and Serving Community Corrections Orders



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2026, [Corrective Services, Australia December Quarter 2025](#), Table 1

Correctional Services Employment Headcount by Jurisdiction (2025)

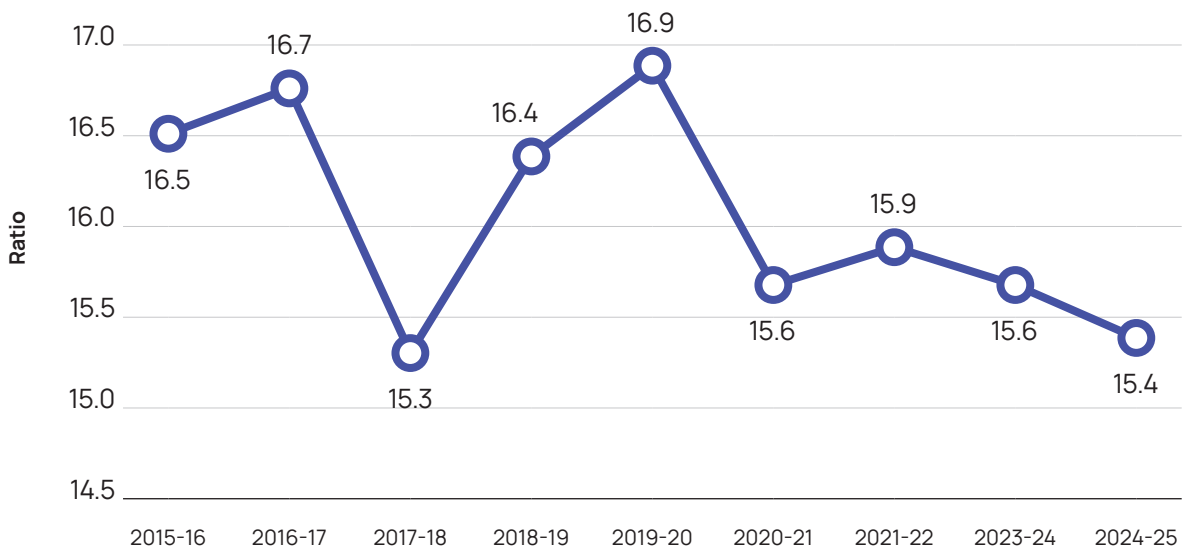


Source: State/Territory Correctional Services annual reports¹⁷
Note: Variations in workforce reporting practices across jurisdictions may affect comparability and figures should be considered indicative.

¹⁷ See the following annual reports of State/Territory Correctional Services and Departments of Justice, [Australian Capital Territory](#), [Queensland](#), [New South Wales](#), [Northern Territory](#), [South Australia](#), [Tasmania](#), [Victoria](#) and [Western Australia](#).

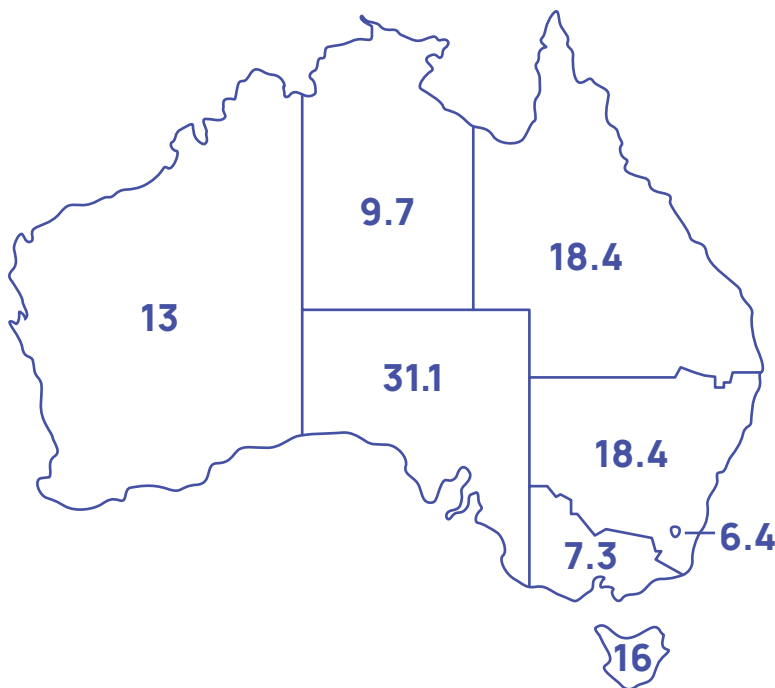
Demand for Community Corrections

Community Corrections Offender-to-Staff Ratio – Australia



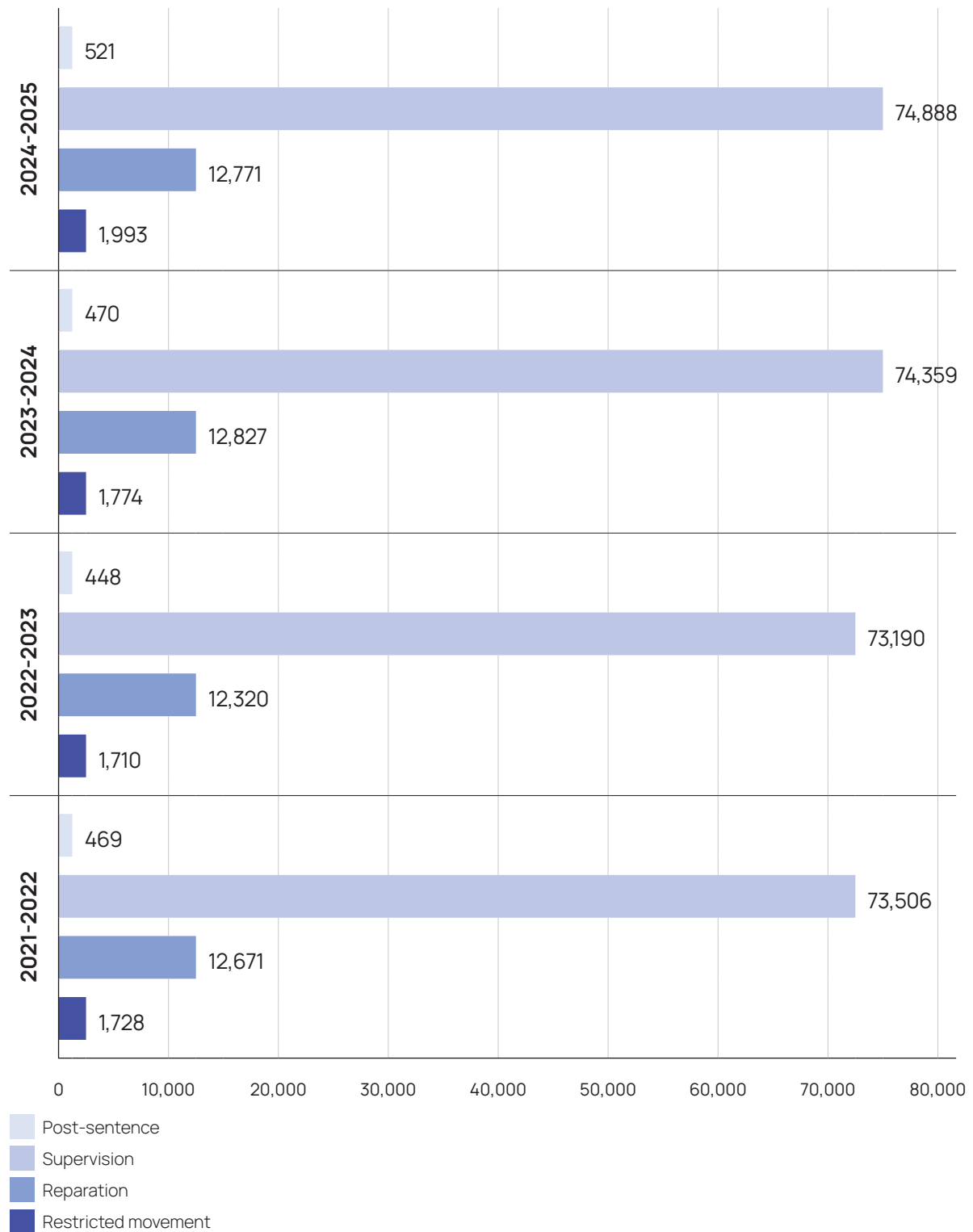
Source: Productivity Commission 2026, [Report on Government Services 2026 Justice Part C – 8 Corrective Services](#), Table 8A.9

Community Corrections Offender-to-Staff Ratio – by Jurisdiction



Source: Productivity Commission 2026, [Report on Government Services 2026 Justice Part C – 8 Corrective Services](#), Table 8A.9

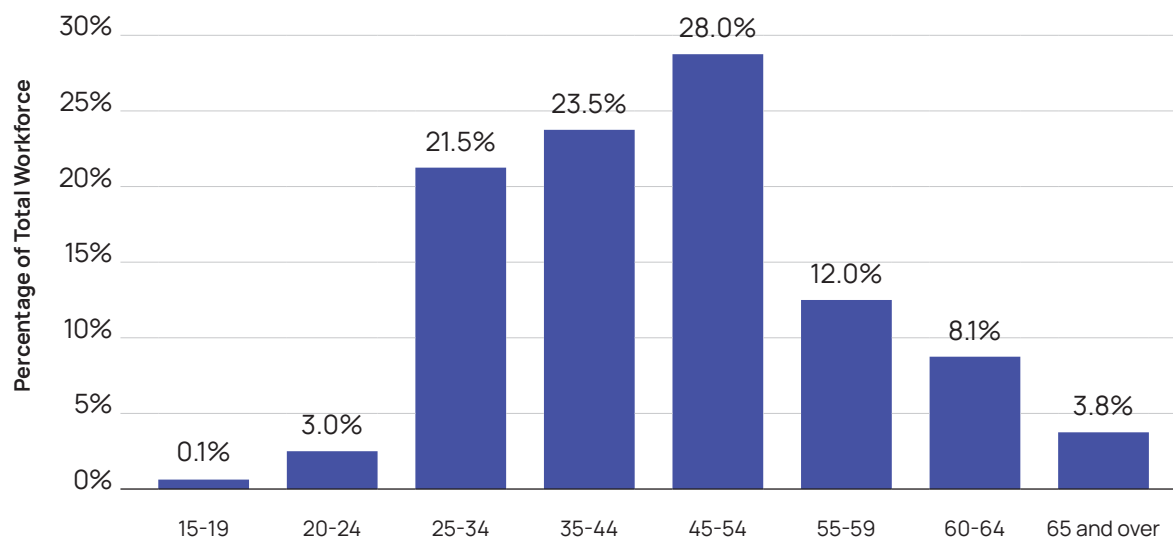
Community Corrections Offender-to-Staff Ratio – by Jurisdiction



Source: Productivity Commission 2026, [Report on Government Services 2026 Justice Part C – 8 Corrective Services](#), Table 8A.9

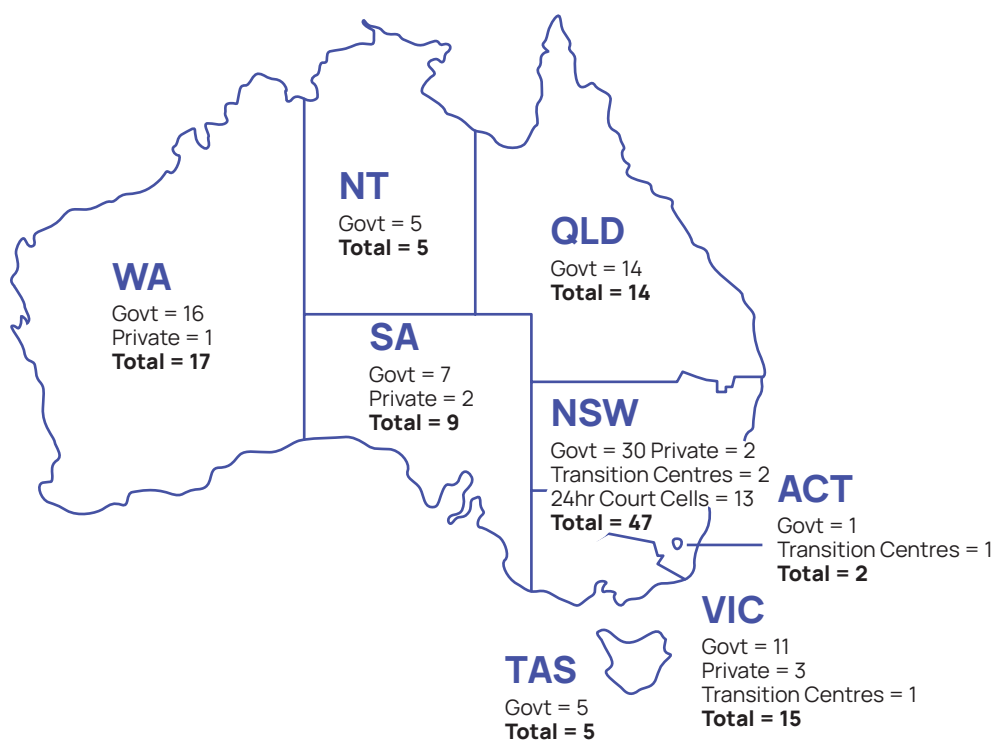
Industry Profile

Corrections Prisons Officers Workforce by Age



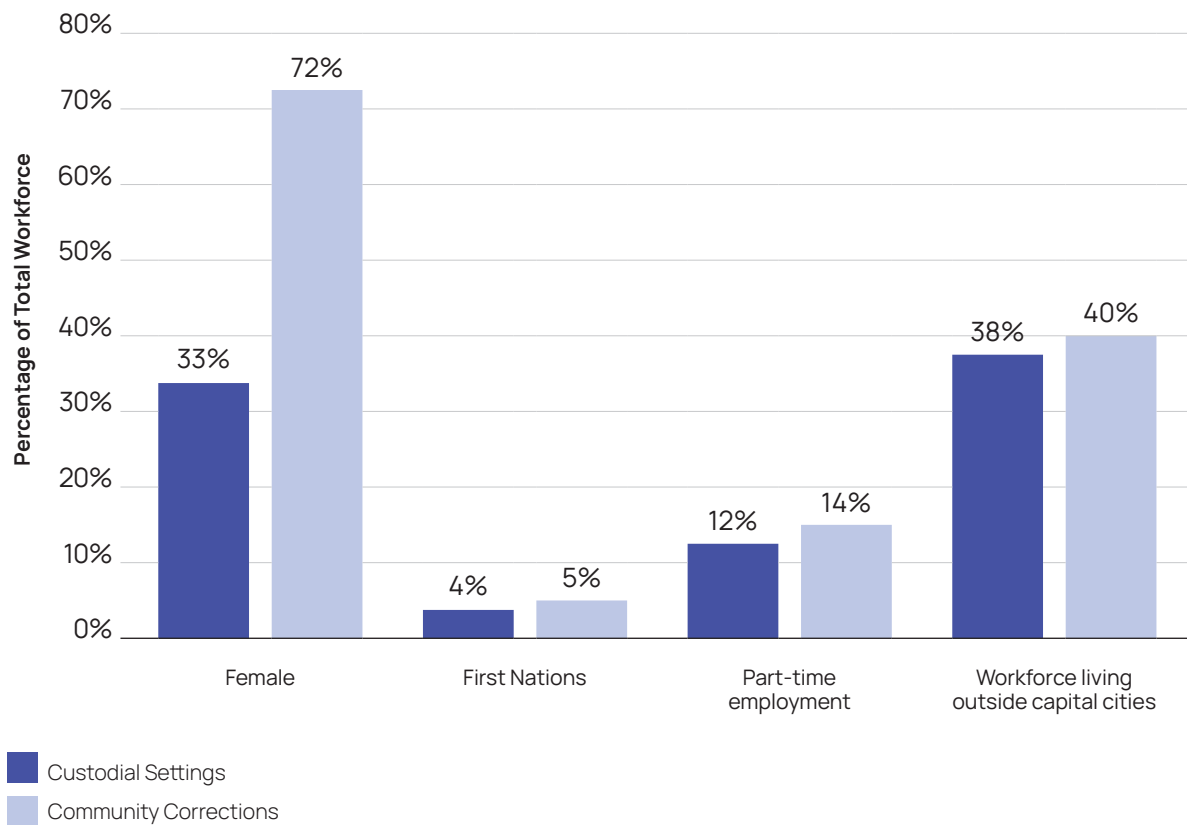
Source: Jobs and Skills Australia 2025, [Occupation – Demographic data \[table\]](#)

Correctional Custodial Facilities, Number (at 30 June 2025)



Source: Productivity Commission Report on Government Services, Justice Part C – 8 Corrective Services, Table 8A.3

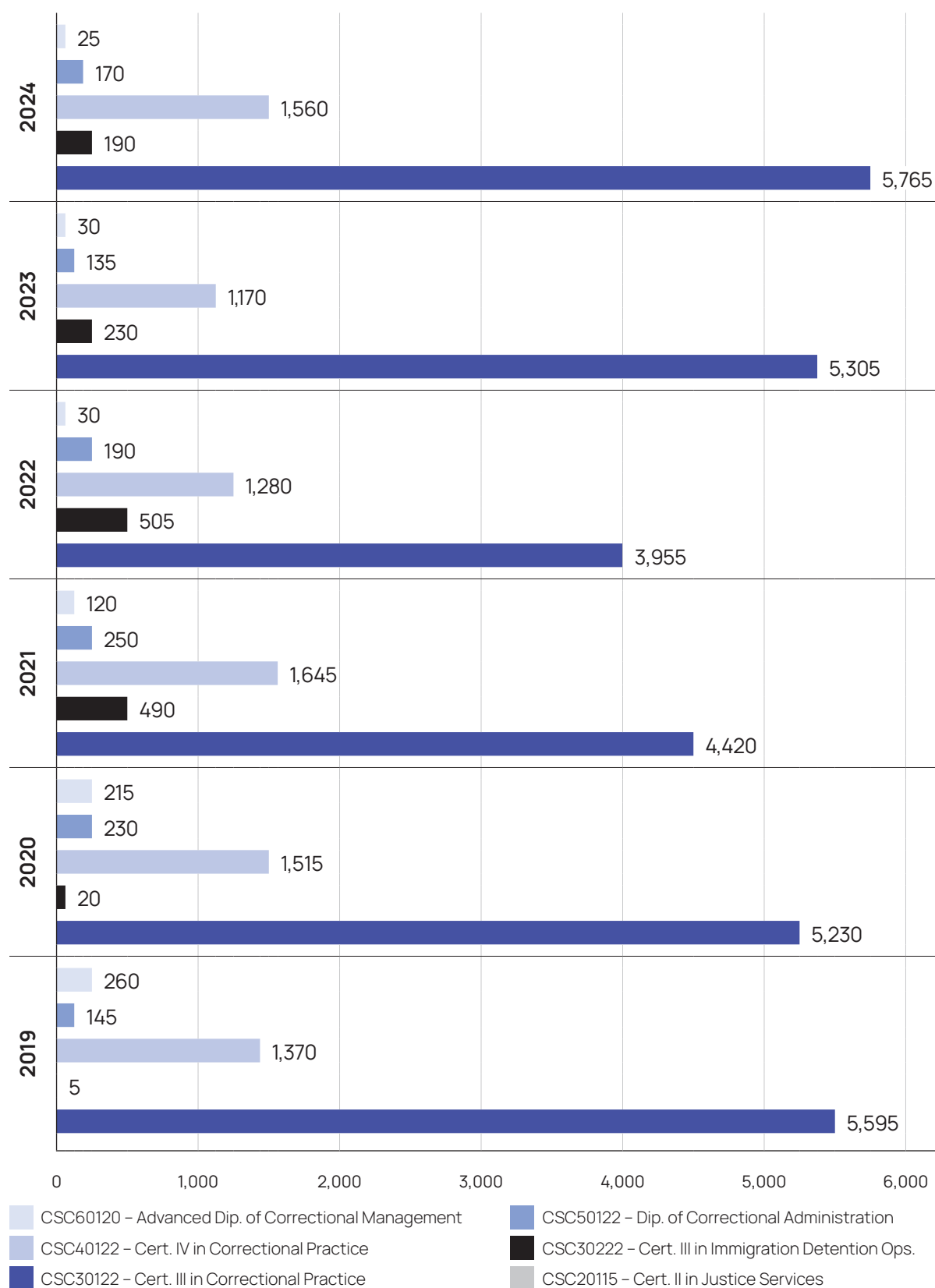
Workforce Characteristics – Custodial Settings and Community Corrections¹⁸



Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, Atlas Pro Overview – Correctional Services, 2025; Jobs and Skills Australia, Occupation and Industry Profiles – Occupations, 2025; Australian Bureau of Statistics

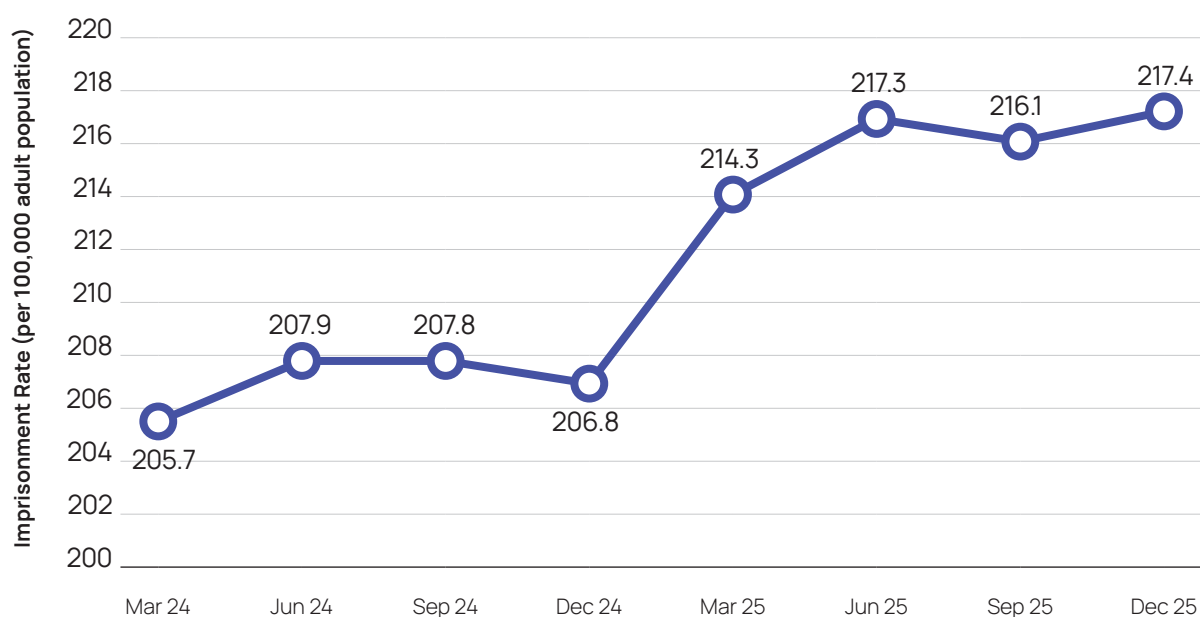
¹⁸ Data for the Community Corrections workforce – Female and part time employment is from Jobs and Skills Australia Occupation profile 2025 based on ANZSCO classification 411714 Parole and Probation Officers. First Nations and workforce living outside capital cities data is from ABS Table Builder using ABS 2021 Census dataset on ANZSCO classification 411714 Parole and Probation Officers. A Community Corrections Officer (411631) occupation has been created under the new OSCA classification; however, data is not yet available.

Correctional Services Training Package Enrolments



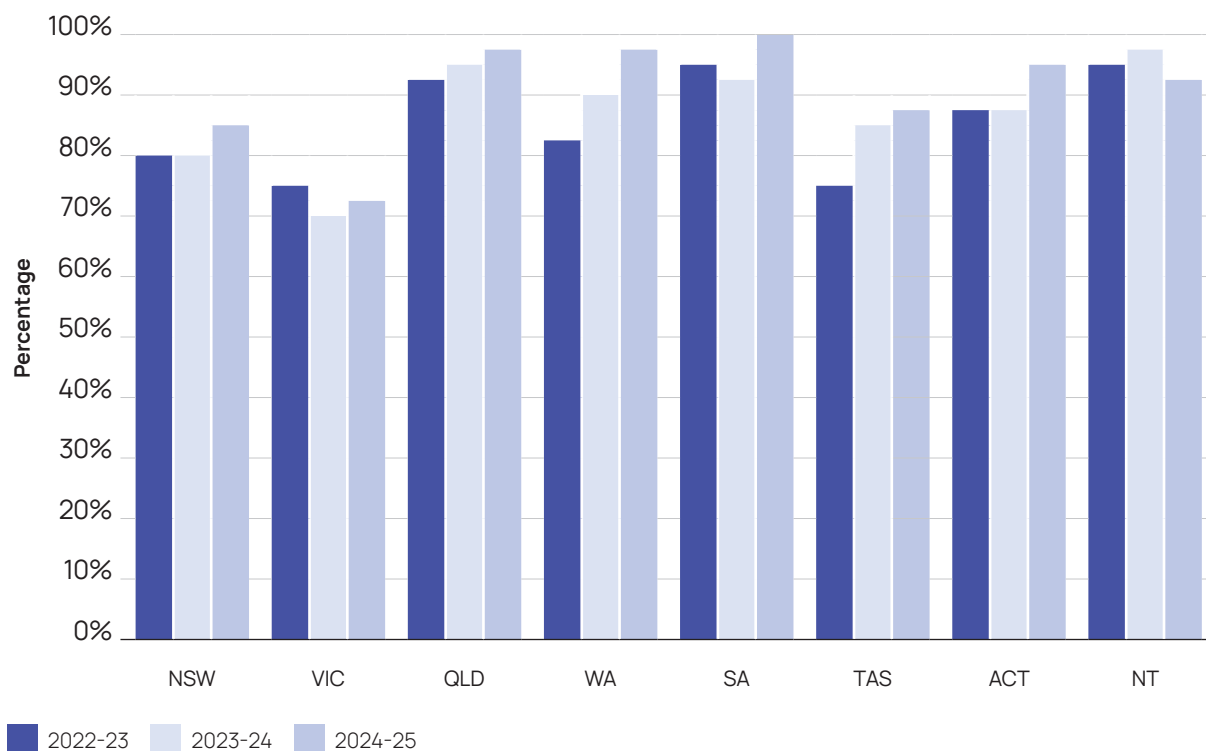
Source: NCVER 2025, Total VET students and courses 2024: program enrolments
Total, Training Package, CSC Correctional Services, Program Name, [data set]

Average Daily Imprisonment Rate (per 100,000 adult population) – Australia



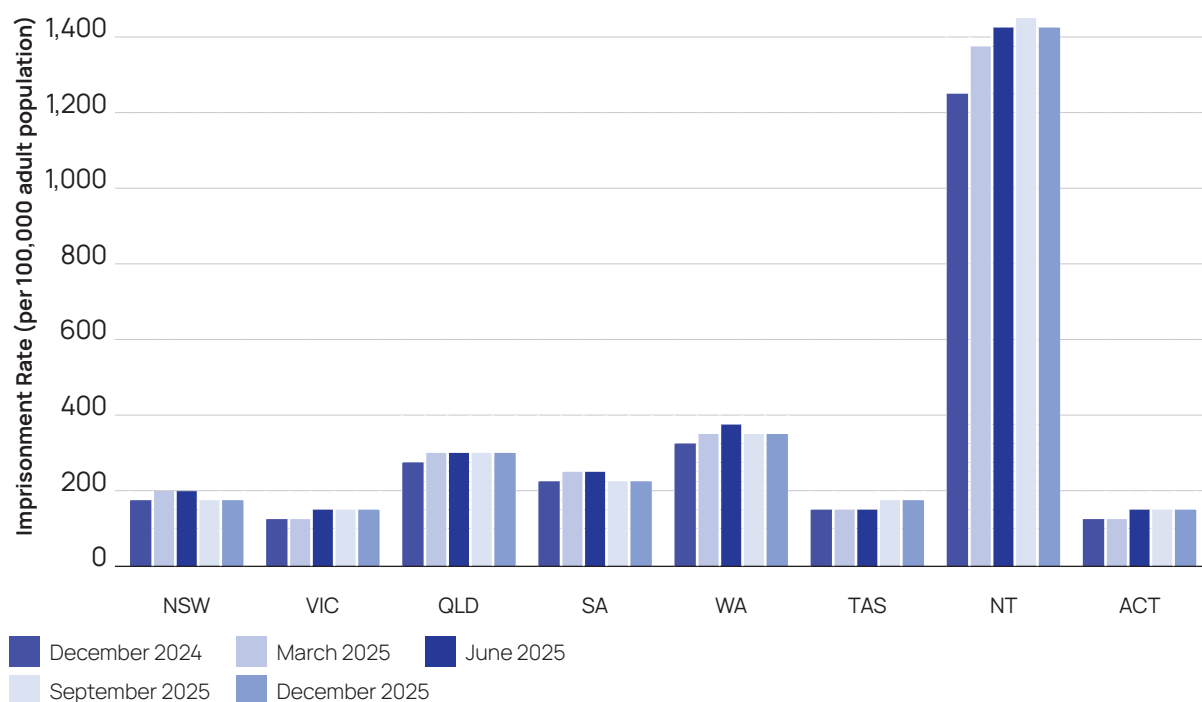
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Corrective Services, Australia – December quarter 2025, Table 3

Prison Capacity Utilisation by State and Territory



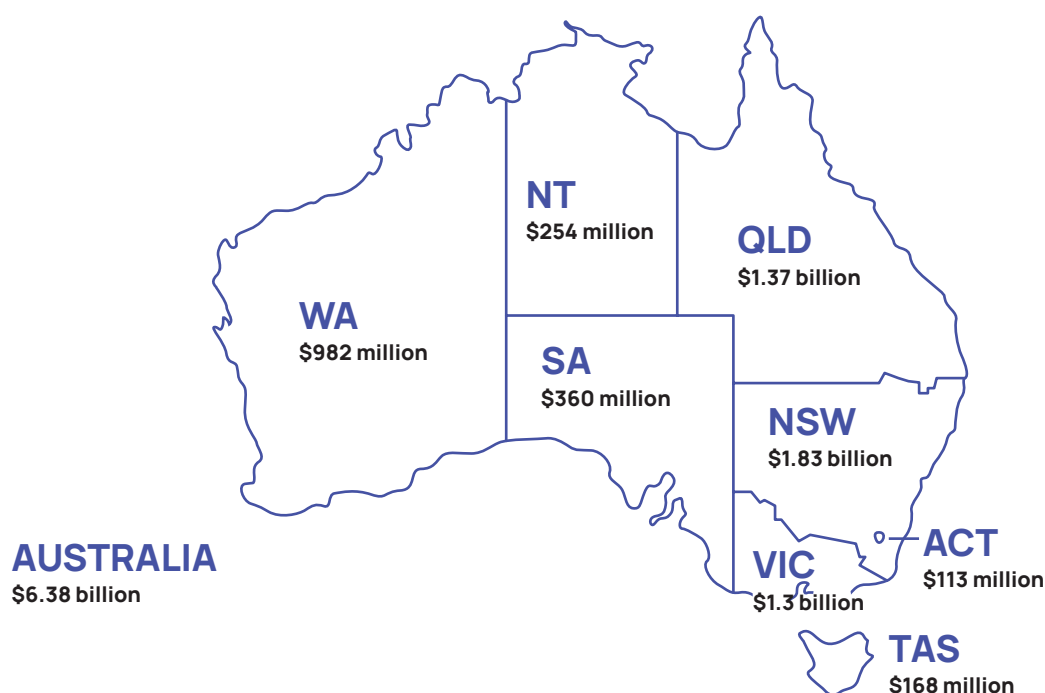
Source: Productivity Commission 2026 Report on Government Services, Justice Part C – 8 Corrective Services, Table 8A.15

Average Daily Imprisonment Rate (per 100,000 adult population) – State and Territory



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, [Corrective Services, Australia – December quarter 2025](#), Table 3

Real Net Prisons and Community Corrections Operating Expenditure 2024-25FY



Source: Productivity Commission 2026 Report on Government Services, [Justice Part C – 8 Corrective Services](#), Table 8A.2

Workforce Insights 2026: Community Corrections

Recent trends across Australia's Correctional Services industry-sector underscore the growing importance of community-based supervision and the workforce required to deliver it. While previous *Workforce Insights Reports* focused primarily on the custodial setting, this report focuses on community corrections roles which form an increasingly critical component of the criminal justice system.

The numbers of persons serving community corrections orders has continued to rise in recent years with community corrections orders representing the largest category of correctional supervision nationally. Further, the offender-to-staff ratio remains substantially high across all jurisdictions, emphasising the workload carried by CCOs. Projected growth in the Correctional Services workforce, alongside substantial public investment in the industry-sector across states and territories further emphasises the need to better understand the workforce capabilities required to support community corrections.

Public Skills Australia's *2024 Correctional Services Workforce Plan* and the *2025 Correctional Services Workforce Insights Report* identified two key challenges impacting the Correctional Services workforce:

- › **Recruitment pipeline:** Correctional Services organisations face a range of perception-based challenges impacting workforce recruitment alongside key drivers resulting in high attrition rates including support structures for new prison officers, increased workload and career pathway limitations.
- › **Implementation of VET training:** Challenges have been identified with the implementation of the *Certificate III in Correctional Practice*, the entry level qualification for the Correctional Services industry-sector.

To support the industry-sector to address these challenges, Public Skills Australia completed two projects in 2025 to provide deeper insights into their causes and potential mitigation strategies. These included:

- > **Drivers for Recruitment, Attrition and Retention (Corrections):** The *Drivers for Recruitment, Attrition and Retention (Corrections) Report 2025* (Drivers Report) examined public perceptions of working in the Correctional Services industry-sector and their impact on recruitment, attrition and retention. It identified five findings that will be considered by the Corrective Services Administrators' Council (CSAC) in 2026. Further information about this Report can be found in the *Workforce Insights: Update on 2025 Strategies* section (and in the attachments to this Report).
- > **Implementation Report:** The *Corrections Implementation Report 2025* (Implementation Report) focused on the skills maintenance and training challenges in relation to the implementation of the *Certificate III in Correctional Practice*. Public Skills Australia undertook a research and analysis project regarding the use of the qualification and made three recommendations. Further information about this Report can be found in the *Workforce Insights: Update on 2025 Strategies* section.

These projects focused on CO occupations in custodial settings rather than CCO occupations. Subsequently, the community corrections workforce became the primary focus for this Report. Stakeholder insights from the 2025 engagements, aided by further research, broadly identified that while CCO training is supported by the entry-level qualifications (*Certificate III and IV in Correctional Practice*), challenges remain with their implementation and delivery. This is being experienced and viewed in different ways by the industry-sector, with some reporting that the challenge was directly related to the qualifications and others reporting that it was related to how the qualifications are contextualised when implemented for training delivery. Both these perspectives will be considered to ensure that any mitigating strategies lead to the shared outcome sought by stakeholders.

Theme	Industry Insights
<i>Certificate III and IV in Correctional Practice</i>	> Community corrections roles require dynamic skills and are focused on rehabilitation and reintegration back into a community. This means that CCOs require the capability to support the reduction of recidivism and enable rehabilitation. > The CCO role is comparatively complex, often requiring an understanding of advanced concepts such as behavioural change, acceptance and commitment theory, trauma-informed response, alcohol and other drug treatments and training for dealing with sex offenders. As such, it is seen as more specialised than what the current <i>Certificate III in Correctional Practice</i> offers. Several jurisdictions reported that they only offered <i>Certificate IV</i> level training for CCO roles. > Consultations with the Correctional Services industry-sector indicated anecdotal examples of employees transitioning from CO roles to CCO roles, often after injury and as part of support for employee return-to-work plans. However, this pipeline into CCO roles is often limited by the recruitment requirement for higher education qualifications, which may impact the eligibility of COs to apply.

The Role of a Community Corrections Officer (CCO)

The role of CCOs is to assess and manage risk, monitor compliance with legal conditions (such as bail, parole and sentencing requirements) and respond to breaches of such conditions. CCOs provide case management and risk assessment of people who are serving a sentence (custodial and non-custodial) and assist in the transition and reintegration of offenders from custodial settings back into the community. They support behavioural change and seek to reduce the likelihood of reoffending.

Through research and consultation, Public Skills Australia identified several distinct challenges that have implications for the workforce and training specific to CCOs across jurisdictions within the Correctional Services industry-sector.

Entry Level Training and Specialisations for Community Corrections Officers

Stakeholders noted challenges in accessing appropriate skills specialisations through the *Certificate III in Correctional Practice* for CCOs. These skills are captured in Adult and Youth Community Specialisations across both *Certificate III* and *Certificate IV*. However, consultations and data verified that organisations are electing to train CCOs through the *Certificate IV in Correctional Practice* rather than the *Certificate III* (due to specialisation units of competency in the *Certificate III* not providing the sufficient complex knowledge required for the role). In some jurisdictions, stakeholders reported that the skills possessed by CCOs are also becoming increasingly valued in the custodial environment for COs.¹⁹

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Community corrections roles require dynamic skills and are focused on rehabilitation and reintegration back into a community. This means that CCOs require the capability to support the reduction of recidivism and enable rehabilitation.

¹⁹ Victorian Government, *Correctional Practice Framework*, Victorian Government, 2024. The refreshed framework better aligns with the work of community and custodial corrections following the 2023 *Cultural Review into Adult Custodial Practices*.

Career progression-related training

Career progression for CCOs and challenges in accompanying training was also highlighted as a significant challenge. As CCOs advance through the different government grades (or salary bands), with each level bringing greater complexity and responsibilities within their roles, stakeholders indicated that this progression often did not correspond with accredited skills development.

Consequently, most CCOs undertook further non-accredited training to augment their skill base in line with the increasing demands of their work duties. For management training especially, CCOs (and managers in the custodial systems) frequently returned to VET training to gain the necessary managerial qualifications at a higher Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) level in the Correctional Services Training Package.²⁰

In-sector transition

Consultation with the Correctional Services industry-sector revealed that while transitions from community corrections to custodial roles were relatively uncommon, there were successful examples of COs transitioning to community corrections roles. Stakeholders reported anecdotal examples of employees shifting from CO roles to CCO positions, often after injury and as part of support for employee return-to-work plans.

COs who move into community corrections bring valuable experience in managing offenders within the custodial environment, and this background is viewed as a strong foundation for case management roles. However, this potential pipeline from CO to CCO roles is often constrained by the recruitment requirement for higher education qualifications, which may impact the eligibility for COs to apply.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Consultations with the Correctional Services industry-sector indicated anecdotal examples of employees transitioning from CO roles to CCO roles, often after injury and as part of support for employee return-to-work plans. However, this pipeline into CCO roles is often limited by the recruitment requirement for higher education qualifications, which may impact the eligibility of COs to apply.

²⁰ Including the *Diploma of Correctional Administration* and the *Advanced Diploma of Correctional Management*.

Regional recruitment

Alongside training challenges are a shortage of CCOs in regional and rural areas. Stakeholders have reported challenges in formulating job packages to attract recruitment outside metropolitan areas, especially given that regional locations vary in their appeal to potential recruits. Moreover, community correctional work in such areas often involves long-distance travel to remote districts, which makes it harder to attract potential recruits.

These distinctive characteristics of community corrections work underscores the need for workforce planning and qualification design that recognises the context-specific capability requirements across the corrections system from the custodial to community levels in regional settings.

Certificate III and IV in Correctional Practice

For the *2026 Workforce Insights Report*, Public Skills Australia sought to explore and better understand the evidence gaps around the CCO workforce and the training available for these occupations. To better understand the challenges for CCOs, the interrelationship between the *Certificate III and IV in Correctional Practice* was explored, as well as current training and recruitment practices in different jurisdictions (including the acceptance of higher education degrees). The *Certificate III and IV in Correctional Practice* are qualifications in the CSC Correctional Services Training Package designed as entry level requirements for both COs and CCOs. The two tables below highlight the specialisations relevant to CCOs.

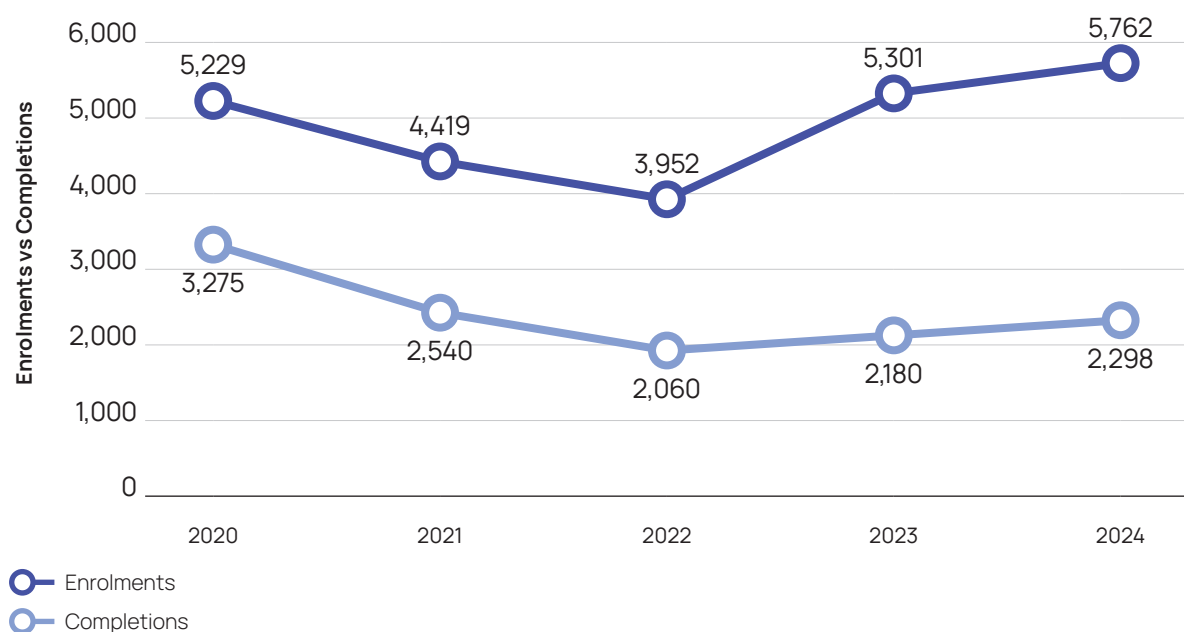
Certificate III specialisations

- › Adult Custodial specialisation
- › **Adult Community specialisation**
- › Youth Custodial specialisation
- › **Youth Community specialisation**

Certificate IV specialisations

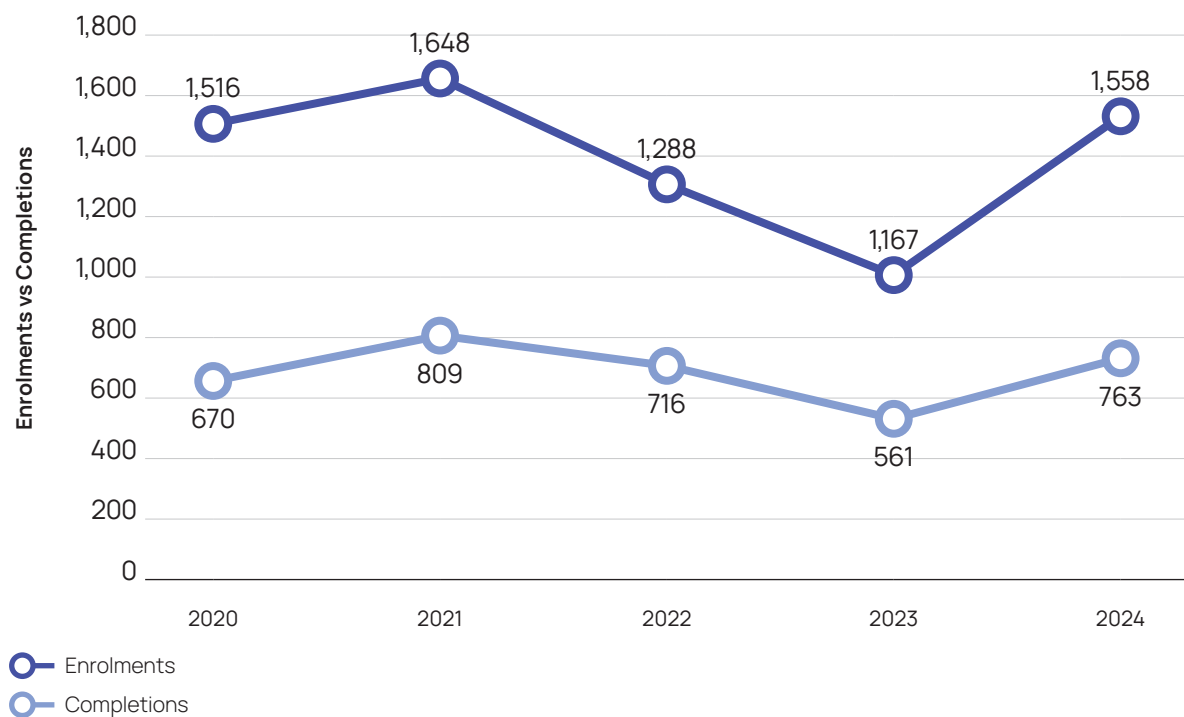
- › **Case Management specialisation**
- › **Community specialisation**
- › Emergency Response specialisation
- › **Supervision specialisation**
- › Health and Safety electives
- › Dog Handling electives
- › General electives

Certificate III in Correctional Practice



Source: NCVER 2025, Total VET students and courses 2024

Certificate IV in Correctional Practice



Source: NCVER 2025, Total VET students and courses 2024

Enrolment and Completion Rates

Stakeholders noted that some organisations were electing to train CCOs through the *Certificate IV in Correctional Practice* rather than the *Certificate III in Correctional Practice*. Enrolments in units of competency for the *Certificate III* unique to community corrections specialisations are estimated at approximately 160, whereas enrolments in units of competency for the *Certificate IV* community corrections specialisations are substantially higher at approximately 300.²¹ This is despite, as the graphs above indicate, 4,234 more enrolments in the *Certificate III* compared to the *Certificate IV* in 2024.²² Proportionally, significantly more people are enrolling in these specialisations in the *Certificate IV* compared to the *Certificate III*.

Low enrolments and completions in the community corrections specialisations are further compounded by some jurisdictions indicating that they also accept a relevant higher education degree in social sciences. In some jurisdictions, such qualifications are a condition of employment, while in others they are considered highly desirable but not required as a condition for employment.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

The CCO role is comparatively complex, often requiring an understanding of advanced concepts such as behavioural change, acceptance and commitment theory, trauma-informed response, alcohol and other drug treatments and training for dealing with sex offenders. As such, it is seen as more specialised than what the current *Certificate III in Correctional Practice* offers. Several jurisdictions reported that they only offered *Certificate IV* level training for CCO roles.

²¹ National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), Total VET students and courses: VOCSTATS, [data set], NCVER, 2025, accessed 23 March 2026. These numbers are rough estimates, with Public Skills Australia using the lower enrolment figure to differentiate between units of competency which are only included in the specialisations as opposed to those that may be available more broadly across the qualifications.

²² Graph data based on NCVER, Total VET students and courses: VOCSTATS, [data set], NCVER, 2025, accessed 23 March 2026.

CSC Correctional Services Training Package

Stakeholders generally supported all specialisations in both the *Certificate III* and *IV in Correctional Practice*; however, the following challenges were identified:

- › The *Certificate III in Correctional Practice* does not fully reflect the complexity of community corrections roles.
- › *Certificates III* and *IV in Correctional Practice* do not include emerging capability requirements such as trauma-informed practice, domestic and family violence, sex offenders in the community and mental health (including suicidal ideation).²³ As a result, some jurisdictions are utilising non-accredited training to bolster the VET qualifications.
- › Delivery of *Certificates III* and *IV in Correctional Practice* was identified by RTOs as challenging to contextualise for community corrections settings.

²³ Public Skills Australia 2025, Corrections Implementation Report, unpublished.

2026 Proposed Correctional Services Workforce Strategy

Public Skills Australia proposes the following strategy aligned to the workforce insights identified.

1

Collaborate with HumanAbility to analyse recent updates to the CHC Community Services Training Package to identify contemporary practice that could inform future updates to the Community Corrections specialisations in the officers *Certificate III* and *Certificate IV in Correctional Practice*.

Workforce Insight: Community Corrections

JSC Function: Training Product Development and Implementation, Promotion and Monitoring

Objective: to provide the Correctional Services Subcommittee an analysis of contemporary community services practice that could inform the Community Corrections specialisations in the *Certificate III* and *Certificate IV in Correctional Practice*.

Approach: In collaboration with HumanAbility, undertake an analysis of the recent updates to CHC Community Services Training Package addressing the following capability areas to consider contemporary practice in community services and case management and identify whether this may support CCO skills requirements:

- > community services
- > alcohol and other drugs
- > behavioural change management
- > trauma-informed response
- > training for working with First Nations people
- > training for dealing with sex offenders

The findings report will be presented to the Correctional Services Subcommittee for further action.

Key Stakeholders

- > HumanAbility
- > State and Territory Correctional Services
- > Private Correctional Service organisations
- > Public Sector Unions
- > Enterprise RTOs/RTOs

Deliverable: Findings Report

Impact: Support the Correctional Services by providing analysis of contemporary practice in similar capability areas in different industry-sectors.

Anticipated timing: 18-month project

Workforce Insights: Update on 2025 Strategies

Public Skills Australia's *2024 Correctional Services Workforce Plan*, identified two challenges impacting the Correctional Services workforce:

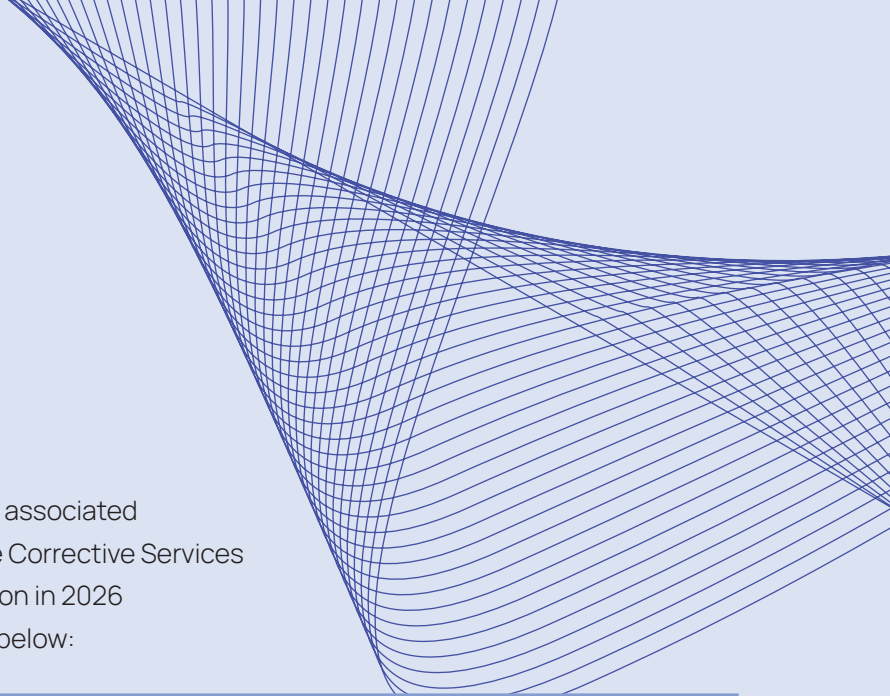
Demand Management	Workforce Mobility
› Correctional Services organisations face a range of recruitment, retention and attrition challenges, indicated by reduced employee numbers and increasing prison populations. This also manifests in attraction based challenges, relating to perceptions and stereotypical narratives about working in this industry-sector.	› Correctional services organisations face challenges in relation to participation in the VET sector and particularly with the implementation of the <i>Certificate III in Correctional Practice</i>, the entry level qualification for Correctional Services.

To support industry with these challenges, Public Skills Australia completed two projects in 2025 to provide deeper insights into their causes.

1. Demand Management

The *Drivers for Recruitment, Attrition and Retention (Corrections) Report 2025* (Drivers Report) examined public perceptions of working in the Correctional Services industry-sector and its impact on recruitment, attraction and attrition. This work supported several strategic priorities including:

Ministerial Priority 2026	Using strategic workforce planning and strong stakeholder engagement to continue building a shared, evidence-based view of the challenges and opportunities for industries and across JSCs.
Public Skills Australia Strategic Plan	Support industry-sectors to continue to build and maintain capable and mobile workforces that are future-ready.
Drivers of Change	Resilience of organisations to respond to strategic shocks.



The Drivers Report identified five findings and associated recommendations that were presented to the Corrective Services Administrative Council (CSAC) for consideration in 2026

The five findings are summarised in the table below:

Finding	Description
Low awareness and outdated perceptions impact recruitment pools.	There is low awareness of and outdated perceptions about the Correctional Services industry-sector that impacts recruitment pools. Generally, respondents indicated that they often imagined Correctional Services through a custodial lens: uniforms, razor wire and surveillance rather than as a diverse professional field.
The potential recruitment pool for Correctional Services could be increased significantly if more information is accessible about the variety of careers.	Around one-third of respondents indicated they had "never thought about" Correctional Services as a career option, signalling an awareness gap.
There are identifiable cohorts that could be targeted to improve Correctional Services recruitment pools.	Millennial female respondents presented an important diverse cohort when provided with targeted messaging addressing workplace safety concerns. Professional and degree-qualified respondents showed high receptivity to considering Correctional Services as a career. This was duplicated in respondent cohorts who held managerial roles.
Shifting narratives about Correctional Services changes perceptions and attitudes towards considering a career in this industry-sector.	Priority cohort respondents indicated that safety and meaningful impact messages resonated with them, particularly when supported by authentic workplace evidence. Respondents indicated that messaging effectiveness depends entirely on authenticity. Branding and communications without corresponding workplace improvements may simply increase the distance between promise and reality, ultimately undermining recruitment efforts.
Barriers to considering Correctional Services as a career were predominantly perceptual.	Respondents indicated that the strongest deterrents were fears about safety, emotional resilience and workplace culture, alongside uncertainty about personal capability. Respondents indicated that the perception of being judged by others was a deterrent, with nine per cent citing concerns about broader negative public perceptions and social stigma.

These findings were supported by the following recommendations:



Prioritise recruiting metropolitan Millennial males, Generation Z males and Millennial females.

Primary Outcome: Increased applicant pool.



Focus on opportunities to recruit professionals and managers into Correctional Services careers. Prioritise professionals and managers.

Primary Outcome: Quality candidates at all organisational levels.



Consider strategies to attract employees to relocate or commute to regional locations. Prioritise addressing the mismatch between the target cohort location (metropolitan focus) and facility location (predominantly regional), particularly in relation to commuting to and from work.

Primary Outcome: Improved regional facility recruitment.



Undertake targeted messaging campaigns that present the accurate and accessible information about working in Correctional Services. Prioritise rehabilitation focused narratives and genuine and authentic messaging as primary anchors, and sequence messaging to cohort types.

Primary Outcome: Reduced perception barriers and increased engagement.

Next Steps

Public Skills Australia is now engaging with CSAC to work through the implementation of the findings of the Report. The aim is to support the Correctional Services industry-sector to retain its workforce and manage and reduce attritional rates, while highlighting training opportunities.

2. Workforce Mobility

The *Corrections Implementation Report 2025* (Implementation Report) assessed the skills maintenance and training delivery challenges in relation to the implementation of the *Certificate III in Correctional Practice*. The Implementation Report supported the following strategic priorities:

Ministerial Priority 2026	This project will contribute to addressing Australia's productivity challenges, including undertaking activity that supports building a skilled, adaptable and inclusive workforce and embedding qualification reform principles to deliver streamlined, relevant and future-ready qualifications.
Public Skills Australia Strategic Plan	Support for the industry-sector through high-quality training products, assistance to effective training delivery and the fostering of a more capable workforce.
Drivers of Change	Challenges to workforce productivity.

The Implementation Report was delivered in multiple parts:

Part A	Provided details about the qualification including the packaging rules, RTOs approved to deliver and assess, enrolments, completions and the use of specialisations and electives. Information about the demographic profile of learners undertaking the qualification is also detailed.
Part B	Described the challenges reported by stakeholders when implementing the qualification. It includes an outline of the potential support initiatives aligned to each challenge.
Part C	Set out how the potential opportunities to support RTOs might be designed and implemented, including recommendations.
Part D	Outlined the consultation findings and associated recommendations.

The Implementation Report made the following recommendations:

Recommendation	Description
Develop a New Implementation Guide	Develop a qualification-specific Implementation Guide that includes specific direction on interpreting language used across the qualification, assessment models and appropriate support guidance aligned to known and emerging learner needs.
Good Practice Forums	Establish a Good Practice Forum series for Correctional Services industry RTOs and employers. This forum would focus on delivery and design challenges to support enhanced training quality and outcomes.
Culturally Appropriate Learning and Assessment Guidance	Develop guidance materials to support the development of culturally appropriate learning and assessment models, practices and tools.

Next Steps

Public Skills Australia is now engaging with CSAC to work through the implementation of the Report's findings. Public Skills Australia will also be working to support the implementation of the Report's findings which will assist the delivery of the *Certificate III in Correctional Practice*, including:

- › Develop an Implementation Guide tailored to *Certificate III in Correctional Practice*, incorporating culturally appropriate learning and assessment guidance.
- › Facilitate a series of events to foster national collaboration, build capacity and address implementation challenges previously identified.

Workforce Insights: Update on 2025 Strategies

Public Skills Australia's *2025 Correctional Services Workforce Plan*, identified two challenges impacting the Correctional Services workforce:

Workforce Lifecycle

Research and consultations indicated challenges across all stages of the workforce lifecycle contributing to increased workforce challenges.

- › **Workforce attraction:** Engagement indicated challenges to attracting a workforce that reflects the needs of the modern corrections environment.
- › **Workforce recruitment:** Existing recruitment challenges could influence how baseline requirements are modified to meet recruitment targets. Additionally, it was noted that the complexities of leave affect recruitment allocations, while regional facilities depend on either relocation funding or local recruitment which creates additional complexities. It was identified that recruitment practices for First Nations employees would benefit from a combination of cultural and role specific processes.
- › **Onboarding:** Pre-service training does not necessarily fully equip employees for the complexities of the physical and psychological demands of a Correctional Services role which may be driving retention challenges.
- › **Retention:** Limitations on learning and development opportunities, along with the mental health impacts (and increased psychological injury claims) in the industry-sector may be a contributing factor to retention.

First Nations Workforce Participation

The high attrition of First Nations employees is a challenge for the Correctional Services industry-sector, with provision of formal cultural safety and wellbeing supports adding a further challenge in small and regional facilities due to financial limitations. Retention of First Nations employees is also a challenge in some organisations due to resource constraints, such as low attendance to optional cultural awareness or competency training due to employee resourcing limitations.

To support industry with these challenges, Public Skills Australia completed two projects in 2025 to provide deeper insights into these challenges.

1. Correctional Services Skills and Training Pathways (Workforce Lifecycle)

The *2025 Correctional Services Workforce Insights Report* identified a strategy to review skills maintenance approaches throughout the workforce lifecycle. This was later retitled as the *Correctional Services Skills and Training Pathways* project and funded through activity project funding. The *Correctional Services: Skills and Training Pathways Report* was recommended to support Correctional Services through the development of comprehensive skills and training pathways in the industry-sector. Through consultation undertaken by Public Skills Australia for the *2025 Correctional Services Workforce Insights Report*, it was noted that accredited training is mostly aligned to role progression, whereas non-accredited training is used variably in each jurisdiction and may be undertaken at the employee's own direction in their own time. Further, resource constraints can impact the ability to provide diverse learning and professional development opportunities additional to any contractually mandated training.

It was recognised that training challenges may be contributing to ongoing workforce issues identified across the workforce lifecycle in the Correctional Services industry-sector. The intention of this project is to strengthen training and career pathways opportunities across the industry-sector.

This project aims to:

- › Map current occupational, career and training pathways within jurisdictions
- › Develop advice to strengthen occupational and educational pathways in Correctional Services
- › Identify opportunities for career progress into specialist operational roles to promote retention in the industry
- › Develop career outcomes and better training pathways to onboard, maintain and upskill Correctional Services employees
- › Identify areas of inconsistency in non-accredited training for future developments of the CSC Correctional Services Training Package.

This work will support several strategic priorities including:

Ministerial Priority 2026	This project will contribute to addressing Australia's productivity challenges, including undertaking activity that supports building a skilled, adaptable and inclusive workforce.
Public Skills Australia Strategic Plan	Support industry-sectors to continue to build and maintain capable and mobile workforces that are future-ready.
Drivers of Change	Challenges to workforce productivity.

Project Progress Update

This project is now in progress and is anticipated for delivery in December of 2026. For the next steps of this project, Public Skills Australia will deliver a report that will:

- › outline career and training pathways into key roles
- › identify key stages of development undertaken across jurisdictions and the usage of accredited training to address them
- › identify areas of non-accredited training that are used to bolster accredited courses
- › examine areas of potential update to the CSC Correctional Services Training Package.

2. First Nations Workforce Participation

A proposal to *Investigate Barriers to First Nations Workforce Participation* was put forward for further consideration in the *2025 Correctional Services Workforce Insights Report*. This strategy proposal sought to investigate barriers for First Nations people to participate in the Correctional Services workforce, focussing on attraction, attrition and retention. Following the launch of the *2025 Correctional Services Workforce Insights Report*, Public Skills Australia received a Statement of Federal Government priorities from the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations and Minister for Skills and Training. This letter set out a priority to work with First Nations peoples, industry (employers and unions) across all Public Safety and Government industry-sectors and other JSCs to advance the priority reforms under the *Closing the Gap National Agreement*.

Project Progress Update

Noting this strategy proposal was scoped alongside the Statement of Federal Government priorities, Public Skills Australia has begun commissioning a research project through a First Nations-led research organisation on First Nations workforce participation across Public Safety and Government industry-sectors (including Correctional Services). This project will deliver a report (for each Public Safety and Government industry-sector) that seeks to collect and analyse statistical data on workforce participation of First Nations people broken down by age, gender, qualification enrolment and attainment over the past five years. The report will further collect qualitative data based on interviews and case studies, identifying personal stories of success working in the Public Safety and Government industry-sectors and resultant education and training journeys. This will seek to understand the challenges faced by, and the factors that impacted successful employment and/or aligned training for First Nations people.

Existing Industry-Sector Strategies

New South Wales

Corrective Services NSW Strategic Plan: Towards 2030

NSW Government

2022 – 2030

The *Corrective Services NSW Strategic Plan: Towards 2030* (the Plan), sets out strategic priorities and outcomes for the NSW Corrections Workforce into 2030. Outcomes sought through this Plan include delivering a supported, engaged and competent workforce. The Plan further sets out six priorities including:

- › supporting employees
- › Closing the Gap
- › KPIs
- › enhanced case management
- › one team
- › reducing unnatural deaths

Under the Plan, NSW has advanced professional development through integrated training programs for employees, such as introducing the *Certificate IV in Correctional Practice: Integrated Rehabilitation Services Training* and redesigning and relaunching the *Certificate III in Correctional Practice: Correctional Officer Primary Training*.

How this informs Public Skills Australia's work

Consultation and engagement

The Plan provided high-level insight into the key priorities of the NSW Government for the Correctional Services workforce and informed the consultation approach.

2024 Workforce Strategies

Informed the context of the *Drivers for Recruitment, Attrition and Retention (Corrections) Report 2025* in its research of public perceptions of Correctional Services industry-sector, with reference to the Plan's priority of supporting employees by developing a capable, professional and safe workforce.

Informed the *Correctional Services Training Implementation Report 2025*, specifically the Plan identified that employees must be appropriately trained and supported to reduce reoffending, aligning with the consultation findings.

2025 Workforce Strategies

Informs the progression of the *Correctional Services Skills and Training Pathways* project and its next steps of identifying career and training pathways into key roles, specifically regarding the Plan's support for its employees to learn new skills and seek professional development.

Informs the progression of the *Investigate Barriers to First Nations Workforce Participation* project, specifically its priority of strengthening inclusive and safe workplaces which guided an examination of factors that impacted successful employment and/or aligned training for First Nations people.

2026 Workforce Strategies

Will inform the 2026 proposed Correctional Services workforce strategy through the Plan's priorities of supporting employees by developing a capable, professional and safe workforce and providing enhanced case-management to support offenders.

Northern Territory

Northern Territory Department of Corrections Strategic Plan 2024 – 2028

NT Department of Corrections

2024 – 2028

The *Northern Territory Department of Corrections Strategic Plan 2024-2028* (the Plan) sets out four priorities for Northern Territory Department of Corrections into 2028. These priorities include:

- › Stronger foundations by working across the corrections sector, supporting infrastructure, working across government and delivering legislative reform.
- › Investing in people by supporting workforce capability and workforce planning, promoting effective leadership, supporting health, safety and wellbeing and building culture.
- › Breaking the cycle by supporting evidence-based rehabilitation, enhancing health services, delivering culturally informed programs and supporting rehabilitation pathways.
- › Innovation through improving performance and productivity, streamlining policy and procedure, enhancing risk management.

This Plan sets out a clear focus on people and culture, which supports skilling and workforce planning.

How this informs Public Skills Australia's work

Consultation and engagement

The Plan evidenced the Northern Territory's Department of Corrections commitment to workforce planning and capability. This informed Public Skills Australia's consultation with Northern Territory Department of Corrections on the workforce priorities.

2024 Workforce Strategies

Informed the development of the *Drivers for Recruitment, Attrition and Retention (Corrections) Report 2025*, specifically the Plan's strategy of delivering workforce planning that considers attraction, satisfaction and retention added context to the report.

Informed *Correctional Services Training Implementation Report 2025*, reinforcing consultations findings in relation to the Plan's strategies of investment in workforce capabilities and development pathways.

2025 Workforce Strategies

Informs the progression of the *Correctional Services Skills and Training Pathways* project, specifically the Plan's investment in workforce capability and development pathways for employees aligns to the project aim of stronger occupational and educational pathways.

2026 Workforce Strategy

Will inform the development of the 2026 proposed Correctional Services workforce strategy, in relation to the evidence-based rehabilitation, enhancing health services, delivering culturally informed programs and supporting rehabilitation pathways.

Queensland

Mental Health Strategy 2022 – 2027

Queensland Corrective Services

2022 – 2027

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

The Strategy is being implemented through annual action plans, which monitor progress against the priority areas. The actions are ongoing or embedded in business as usual. Legislative amendments, improved information sharing and system wide mental health and trauma-informed initiatives have been delivered by Queensland Correctional Services groups and health partners.

How this informs Public Skills Australia's work

Consultation and engagement

The Strategy provided detail on Queensland Corrective Services approach to mental health support for persons in custody, and informed engagements with Queensland corrective services stakeholders in relation to skills for delivering mental health services.

2025 Workforce Strategies

Informs the development of next steps in progressing recommendations from the *Correctional Services Training Implementation Report 2025*, specifically a good practice forum to share practice between jurisdictions on professional development.

2026 Workforce Strategies

Will inform the 2026 proposed Correctional Services workforce strategy, particularly behavioural change and trauma-response competencies as it relates to the Strategy's focus areas of trauma-informed, culturally responsive practice and workforce capability uplift.

Queensland

Queensland Corrective Services Strategic Plan 2025 – 2029

Queensland Corrective Services

2025 – 2029

The *Queensland Corrective Services Strategic Plan 2025-2029* (the Plan) sets out four priorities for Queensland Corrective Services. These priorities are:

- › restoring community safety by holding offenders to account including by delivering responsive Correctional Services
- › reducing reoffending by delivering rehabilitative corrective services including by delivering perpetrator programs and targeted interventions
- › supporting a safer workplace for employees including by enhancing capability and capacity, and
- › building strong community partnerships to support community safety including by improving outcomes for First Nations people.

How this informs Public Skills Australia's work

Consultation and engagement

The Plan provided high-level insight to the key priorities of Queensland Corrective Services and informed consultation approach and focus.

2025 Workforce Strategies

Informs the progression of the *Correctional Services Skills and Training Pathways* project, specifically Objective 3 of the Plan, of supporting a safer workplace, including enhancing the capability and capacity to ensure workforce model responsiveness, adds context to the project's examination of training packages and qualifications.

2026 Workforce Strategy

Will inform the development of the 2026 proposed Correctional Services workforce strategy, specifically in relation to the Plan's objectives of delivering rehabilitative corrective services and supporting a safer workplace for employees by providing the workforce with the training they need to safely and effectively perform their duties.

South Australia

Department for Correctional Services Strategic Plan 2022 – 2026

Department for Correctional Services, Government of South Australia

2022 – 2026

The *Department for Correctional Services Strategic Plan 2022-2026* (the Plan) sets out five priorities for the South Australian Correctional Services workforce, these are:

- › reducing reoffending
- › Closing the Gap
- › creating high performing teams
- › building innovation and contemporary practice, and
- › being safe at work.

Since the release of the Plan, reoffending has reduced to 35.8 per cent, below the Plan's target of 36.8 per cent. In addition, the Plan has achieved growth in vocational educational training opportunities, improved post-release housing and supervision options, developed new culturally informed rehabilitation units and increased investment in employee safety, cultural capability and modern correctional infrastructure.

How this informs Public Skills Australia's work

Consultation and engagement

The Plan provided high-level insight to the key priorities of South Australian corrections. Focus on priorities such as Building Innovation and Contemporary Practice supports focus on workforce planning and informs Public Skills Australia's consultation approach.

2024 Workforce Strategies

Informed the development of *Drivers for Recruitment, Attrition and Retention (Corrections) Report 2025*, providing context to the challenges facing workforce planning and recruitment, attrition and retention in each jurisdiction.

Informed the *Correctional Services Training Implementation Report 2025*, during the consultation for this project. Particularly, alignment with the Plan's priority action of fulfilling training and development requirement.

2025 Workforce Strategies

Informs the progression of the *Correctional Services Skills and Training Pathways* project, contributing to the identify key stages of development undertaken across jurisdictions.

Priority 2 on Closing the Gap, including increasing First Nations employment rates and leadership, informs the progression of the *First Nations Workforce Participation* project, through further analysis of First Nations workforce participation trends.

2026 Workforce Strategy

Will inform the development of the 2026 proposed Correctional Services workforce strategy, specifically in relation to the Plan's objectives of fulfilling training and development requirements, employees actively contributing their expertise and the implementation of an end-to-end case management model.

South Australia

Anti-Racism Action Plan 2023 – 2028	
Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment South Australia	2023 – 2028
The <i>South Australian Public Sector Anti-Racism Action Plan 2023–2028</i> (the Plan), outlines five key priorities: › enabling employees to act against racism › embedding anti-racism into leadership and decision making › strengthening inclusive and safe workplaces › ensuring communications reinforce the commitment to anti-racism, and › maintaining accountability for anti-racism efforts. These priorities aim to proactively eliminate racial inequity and foster inclusion in the public sector. As reported by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment (OCPSE), most actions under the Plan are underway, some have been completed (six per cent) and none are delayed (as at November 2024). Monitoring, data collection, pilot training and First Nations workforce initiatives have been delivered, with most delivered by OCPSE, Wellbeing SA and other relevant agencies. Remaining actions in 2026–2027 focus on a race equity tool, further training and a strategy review.	
How this informs Public Skills Australia’s work	
Consultation and engagement The Plan provided detail on a key priorities in relation to anti-racism for all workforces in the South Australian government, including those in Correctional Services, and informed wider considerations in consultations with South Australian Correctional Services and wider South Australian Government stakeholders. 2025 Workforce Strategies Informs the progression of the <i>First Nations Workforce Participation</i> project, specifically the Plan’s priority of strengthening inclusive and safe workplaces. This adds context to the project’s ongoing examination of employment and training for First Nations people. 2026 Workforce Strategies Will inform the 2026 proposed Correctional Services workforce strategy, specifically around the priority of ensuring communications around the updates to the training package reinforce the commitment to anti-racism.	

South Australia

Aboriginal Employment, Retention & Professional Development Strategy 2024 – 2029

Department for Correctional Services, Government of South Australia

2024 – 2029

The *Aboriginal Employment, Retention & Professional Development Strategy 2024 – 2029* (the Strategy) was finalised in 2024 and aims to recognise and support the unique contributions of First Nations employees in South Australia's correctional system. It focuses on improving employment outcomes through culturally safe practices, professional development and retention initiatives. The strategy is part of a broader commitment to reducing incarceration rates among First Nations people and fostering a culturally-inclusive workforce.

How this informs Public Skills Australia's work

Consultation and engagement

Provided detail on a key priority in relation to First Nations employment and informed wider considerations in consultations with South Australian Correctional Services and wider South Australian Government stakeholders.

2025 Workforce Strategies

Informs the progression of the *First Nations Workforce Participation* project, specifically with reference to the Strategy's focus on improving First Nations recruitment, retention and professional development in the Correctional Services.

Tasmania

Changing Lives, Creating Futures – A Strategic Plan for Corrections in Tasmania 2023

Department of Justice Tasmania

2022 – 2026

Changing lives, creating futures – A Strategic Plan for Corrections in Tasmania 2023 (the Plan) provides a roadmap for Tasmanian Corrections. The Plan focuses on six strategic priorities:

- › improve lives and reduce harm through targeted rehabilitation and reintegration
- › supporting the workforce through recruitment and training
- › infrastructural improvements
- › Closing the Gap: Reducing the number of First Nations people in the Corrections system
- › focusing on safety for employees, inmates, remandees, persons in custody, and the community, and
- › greater collaboration between organisations to improve outcomes.

How this informs Public Skills Australia's work

Consultation and engagement

The Plan provided high-level insight to the key priorities of Department of Justice Tasmania and informed consultation approach and focus.

2024 Workforce Strategies

Informed the development of the *Drivers for Recruitment, Attrition and Retention (Corrections) Report 2025*, reflecting key elements like the Plan's focus on improving employee retention through engagement and career progression opportunities.

2025 Workforce Strategies

Priorities targeting investing in the workforce, such as revising, renewing and implementing best practice regarding its training framework informs the ongoing analysis work underpinning the next steps of the *Correctional Services Skills and Training Pathways* project.

The fourth priority, which addresses Closing the Gap, including increasing First Nations employment and addressing systemic barriers, informs the *First Nations Workforce Participation* project by supporting analysis of First Nations workforce participation trends.

2026 Workforce Strategy

Will inform the development of the 2026 proposed Correctional Services workforce strategy, specifically in relation to the targeted rehabilitation and reintegration priority, as well as its focus on professional development and training of correctional employees.

Victoria

Prison Workforce Strategy 2024 – 2034

Corrections Victoria, Department of Justice and Community Safety

2024 – 2034

The *Prison Workforce Strategy 2024 – 2034* (the Strategy), outlines a comprehensive plan to build a skilled, diverse and culturally safe prison workforce. It includes initiatives for recruitment, retention, professional development and leadership pathways, with a strong focus on First Nations workforce participation and wellbeing.

The Strategy was released in October 2024 and is in its early implementation phase. The Strategy is to be reviewed every two years, and most of its initial 2-year deliverables were scheduled for completion by 2026 but no publicly reported progress has been identified. Many of these two-year deliverables remain outstanding according to the Strategy's timelines, with most due for completion by October 2026.

How this informs Public Skills Australia's work

Consultation and engagement

The Strategy provided an overview of key priorities in relation to the Correctional Services workforce in custodial settings and informed the consultation approach.

2024 Workforce Strategies

Informed the analysis of the *Drivers for Recruitment, Attrition and Retention (Corrections) Report 2025* with its focus on attraction, recruitment and merit-based promotion, to attract enough new recruits from diverse backgrounds.

2025 Workforce Strategies

Informs the progression of the *Correctional Services Skills and Training Pathways* project by supporting analysis of skills maintenance and alignment accredited and non-accredited training with reference to the Strategy's aim of sustainable learning lifecycles and clear career pathways.

Informs the progression of the *First Nations Workforce Participation* project, specifically the key focus area of enhancing First Nations cultural safety and better supporting First Nations career pathways, which supports the analysis of workforce practices.

2026 Workforce Strategies

Will inform the proposed 2026 Correctional Services workforce strategy by underscoring activities to assess training against evolving capability requirements, specifically the Strategy's action area of reviewing learning and development needs of its workforce and refreshing pre-service and ongoing training.

Western Australia

Corrective Services Strategic Plan 2025 – 2030	
Western Australia Department of Justice Corrective Services	2025 – 2030
The <i>Corrective Services Strategic Plan 2025-2030</i> (the Plan) sets out four priorities for Western Australia Corrective Services: › build a strong culture of safety, respect and trust › create environments that facilitate positive change to reduce reoffending › drive better outcomes and positive change by partnering with Aboriginal people, and › develop a high-performing organisation where people are empowered. The Plan sets out a clear focus on people and culture, which supports skilling and workforce planning.	
How this informs Public Skills Australia’s work	
Consultation and engagement The Plan provided high-level insight to the key priorities of Corrective Services in Western Australia and informed consultation approach and focus. 2025 Workforce Strategies Informs the progression of the <i>Correctional Services Skills and Training Pathways</i> project by reinforcing the need for structured training and career pathways across workforce lifecycles, highlighted in the Plan's focus on workforce capability, professional development and retention. Priority 3 commitment to strengthening Aboriginal workforce participation informs the <i>First Nations Workforce Participation</i> project by supporting analysis of workforce participation trends and culturally responsive pathways. 2026 Workforce Strategies Will inform the 2026 proposed Correctional Services workforce strategy in relation to the priority of developing a high-performing organisation and the actions of increasing opportunities for professional development and fulfillment of training requirements and conducting a training needs analysis.	

Commonwealth Government Initiatives

Public Skills Australia's work is informed and guided by the Federal Government initiatives detailed in the table below.

National Agreement on Closing the Gap (Closing the Gap)	
National Cabinet (Formerly Council of Australian Governments)	2020 – 2031
Closing the Gap is a commitment from all Australian governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives to a fundamentally new way of developing and implementing policies and programs that impact the lives of First Nations people. This includes policies and programs impacting recruitment, health and social programs specific to First Nations peoples, which are relevant to the Public Safety and Government industry-sectors. Closing the Gap is jointly implemented by the Federal, State and Territory governments, along with Australian Local Government Associations and Coalitions of Peaks. It focuses on four priority reforms (strengthen formal partnerships and shared decision making; build the community-controlled sector; transform government organisations; and shared access to data) and 19 national socio-economic targets, covering areas such as life expectancy, education, employment, justice and child protection. Overall progress towards meeting Closing the Gap targets has been mixed. Implementation of Closing the Gap is ongoing to 2031. The Productivity Commission is tracking these targets. Closing the Gap performs a substantive role in informing Public Skills Australia's research and engagement efforts. Closing the Gap informed consultation and engagement for the <i>2026 Corrections Workforce Insights Report</i>. It will also inform the development and analysis of the proposed strategy <i>Collaboration with HumanAbility to analyse recent updates to the CHC Community Services Training Package to identify contemporary practice that could inform future updates to the Community Corrections specialisations in the officers Certificate III and Certificate IV in Correctional Practice</i>, when addressing the capability area of training for working with First Nations people.	

The Australian Government's Strategic Priorities

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

2022 – 2026

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

The Australian Government's Strategic Priorities are into the final year of their implementation by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet with the relevant APS departments and organisations. So far the Strategic Priorities, which have not been placed on set timelines, have achieved several outcomes, including hosting a Jobs and Skills Summit, developing a plan for cheaper child care, implementing fee-free Technical and Further Education (TAFE) and creating more university places, establishing the National Reconstruction Fund, introducing legislation for a national anti-corruption commission and strengthening strategic partnerships in the Pacific and South East Asia. Progress is still required for public health and aged care, improving housing supply and planning reforms and advancing government and budget sustainability.

The Australian Government's Strategic Priorities focuses on TAFE accessibility, to reduce skills shortages across all industry-sectors in Australia. This will also be a significant factor in the proposed strategy *Collaboration with HumanAbility to analyse recent updates to the CHC Community Services Training Package to identify contemporary practice that could inform future updates to the Community Corrections specialisations in the officers Certificate III and Certificate IV in Correctional Practice*, which will look at addressing CCO skills requirements.

Working for Women – A Strategy for Gender Equality

Australian Government Minister for Women

2023 – ongoing

The Working for Women strategy outlines a framework for the Australian Government to improve national gender equality. It sets out five priority areas and reports on a range of outcomes and indicators annually to monitor Australia's progress. These priority areas are:

- › Priority Area 1 – Gender-based violence
- › Priority Area 2 – Unpaid and paid care
- › Priority Area 3 – Economic equality and security
- › Priority Area 4 – Health
- › Priority Area 5 – Leadership, representation and decision making

Specific to JSCs, Priority Area 3 focuses on improving gender pay gaps, supporting access to skills and training and reducing occupational and industrial gender segregation.

To date, the Australian Government has increased female recruitment into trades and other occupations through apprenticeship support, fee-free TAFE and targets in the Australian Skills Guarantee, along with including gender equality as a national priority in the National Skills Agreement.

In March 2025, the DEWR launched the Advancing Gender Equality in Gender Segregated Industries grant program, directly linked to Priority Area 3. This grant program received a \$28.5 million extension in December 2025.

Priority Area 3 of the Working for Women strategy – addressing economic equality and security – has informed the development of Public Skills Australia's future work, in the proposed strategy *Collaboration with HumanAbility to analyse recent updates to the CHC Community Services Training Package to identify contemporary practice that could inform future updates to the Community Corrections specialisations in the officers Certificate III and Certificate IV in Correctional Practice*, which will consider priority cohorts in contemporary practices for community services, for the capabilities of future CCOs.

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

Jobs and Skills Australia

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 employees to 84,000 employees by 2050.

The reports make 50 recommendations to support governments in focusing their efforts on how skills shortages can be averted in the set time, resources and legislative constraints and government objectives. Broadly, the recommendations cover the issue areas of participation and attraction, hiring and retention, transitioning employees and communities, roles and responsibilities, critical occupations, education and training and transport. Implementation remains ongoing and long-term, aligned with the 2050 net-zero target.

These reports provided contextual information for growing workforces in other industry-sectors within Public Skills Australia's remit of Public Safety and Government. This provided insights into workforce pressures that may be felt by the Correctional Services industry-sector, due to modernising workforce needs and was considered for the *2026 Corrections Workforce Insights Report*.

Australian Cyber Security Strategy

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 cybersecurity by 2030.

The Strategy is structured around six 'cyber shields' (strong citizens and businesses, safe technology, world-class threat sharing, protected critical infrastructure, sovereign capability and resilient regional/global leadership).

These are to be delivered in three stages or 'Horizons' (2023-2025 strengthening the foundations, 2026-2028 scaling efforts across the whole economy and 2029-2030 leading the development of new cyber technologies). Progress to date has been on the foundational aspects of the Strategy, with the initial work under 'Horizon 1' (2023-2025) concentrating on improving incident reporting and response mechanisms, introducing legislative reforms, piloting threat-sharing initiatives and raising government and critical infrastructure security standards. Overall coordination sits with the Department of Home Affairs, specifically through the Australian Cyber Security Coordinator. The remaining two horizons are to be implemented over the next four years up to 2030.

Cyber security was identified as a key theme during scoping for the proposed strategy *Collaboration with HumanAbility to analyse recent updates to the CHC Community Services Training Package to identify contemporary practice that could inform future updates to the Community Corrections specialisations in the officers Certificate III and Certificate IV in Correctional Practice*. New technologies and the cyber security risks they pose will be an ongoing consideration in Public Skills Australia's engagement with the Correctional Services industry-sector.

Unlocking the Potential of VET

Qualification Reform Design Group

2024

In March 2024, the Qualification Reform Design Group (QRDG) provided advice to Skills Ministers on reforming the VET qualifications system. This included advising that:

- › Qualification and unit of competency design and development processes should be reviewed and updated where appropriate.
- › The VET system should be consolidated by removing training products that are under-utilised or unnecessarily duplicated.
- › The Training Package Organising Framework should be updated, where necessary.

As a result, Public Skills Australia undertook a Demonstration Project that consulted widely to determine the efficacy of updating qualification and unit of competency templates. This report was delivered to the QRDG in Q3 2024.

In December 2024, the QRDG provided their final report and recommendations to Skills Ministers, based on national consultation and findings from the JSC Demonstration Projects. The recommendations from this report centred around modernising VET qualifications by implementing a purpose-led, principles-based approach to qualification design. As a result, JSCs are responsible for ensuring qualifications serve a clear purpose, are linked to workforce needs and are not unnecessarily duplicated.

The advice from the ongoing QRDG work, directly informed the proposed strategy of *Collaboration with HumanAbility to analyse recent updates to the CHC Community Services Training Package to identify contemporary practice that could inform future updates to the Community Corrections specialisations in the officers Certificate III and Certificate IV in Correctional Practice*, as it will look to review and update the CHC Community Services Training Package.

Occupation Standard Classification for Australia

Australian Bureau of Statistics

2024 – ongoing

Formerly known as the Australia New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupation (ANZSCO), the Occupation Standard Classification for Australia (OSCA) is a standardised framework for classifying occupations in Australia. As part of the replacement process from ANZSCO to OSCA in 2024, the ABS announced that OSCA will undergo regular updates in accordance with the OSCA Maintenance Strategy, which was released in 2025.

The changes to OSCA outlined in the Maintenance Strategy involve stakeholder engagement and are timed to ensure that each Census of Population and Housing uses the most recent update. Under the Strategy, the first round of consultations and feedback with stakeholders on proposed changes to OSCA are scheduled to be completed in August 2026, with the next update to be published in March 2027 before the data release of the 2026 Census in October 2027.

Public Skills Australia has in the *2026 Corrections Workforce Insights Report* and will in future, where possible, utilise the most up-to-date version of OSCA to accurately report on occupational insights with whole-of-economy standards.

2024 Core Skills Occupation List – Key Findings Report

Jobs and Skills Australia

2024 – ongoing

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

The 2024 CSOL Key Findings Report compiled a list of 456 occupations considered appropriate for the Core Skills Stream of the new employer-sponsored temporary SID visa. In addition to updating the list, JSA examined the drivers of skill shortages through CSOL analysis and stakeholder engagement and identified a 'suitability gap' category – occupations where there are enough qualified applicants, but they are not regarded as suitable by employers (e.g. auditors, electronics engineers, software and applications programmers). JSA also identified a 'retention gap' category – occupations with below-average rates of retention such as construction and hospitality jobs and child carers. JSA's consultations to inform the 2025 CSOL opened in August 2025 and JSA submitted its advice to Government for consideration in October 2025.

The CSOL report provided contextual information for engagement and consultation of the *2026 Corrections Workforce Insights Report*, in particular, insights into recruitment and retention for specific occupations.

Better Together – The Jobs and Skills Report 2024

Jobs and Skills Australia

2024 – ongoing

This report was released in November 2024 as part of JSA's mandated obligations to provide insight on the Australian labour market and advice on workforce needs and priorities. This report details evidence aligned to five strategic pillars to enable a more prosperous economic future, including:

- › **Fostering inclusive participation:** Focused on broadening employment opportunities through identifying and removing barriers for people and communities.
- › **Understanding today's workforce:** Detailing data to build an evidence base that informs and addresses current and emerging labour market and skills needs.
- › **Shaping Australia's future workforce:** Projecting forward to plan for the opportunities and challenges of Australia's future workforce needs.
- › **Optimising pathways and system architecture:** Monitoring, analysing and advising on the effectiveness of the VET system as key to skilling the workforce.
- › **Activating an informed dialogue:** Detailing stakeholder engagement across the VET system to provide the best evidence and advice on Australia's current and future workforce and skills needs and opportunities.

This report outlines JSA's key current and emerging datasets that provide useful insights on the intricacies of Australia's labour market for use in the development of strategic workforce planning for the JSCs.

The Better Together – The Jobs and Skills Report 2024, provided insight for the *2026 Corrections Workforce Insights Report* for industry-sector engagement. Strategic pillar four, Optimising pathways and systems architecture, directly relates to the proposed strategy of *Collaboration with HumanAbility to analyse recent updates to the CHC Community Services Training Package to identify contemporary practice that could inform future updates to the Community Corrections specialisations in the officers Certificate III and Certificate IV in Correctional Practice*, as it proposes to review recent updates of the VET Training Packages for the Corrections industry-sector.

Training Package Organising Framework

Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council

2025 – ongoing

In July 2025, the Training Package Organising Framework (TPOF) was updated based on advice from the QRDG in December 2024. Housing the Training Package Products Development and Endorsement Process Policy (TPPDEPP), Training Package Products Policy (TPPP) and the Standards for Training Packages, the TPOF, sets out the process for developing and seeking approval of new VET training products for JSCs. As a JSC, Public Skills Australia will continue to adhere to the TPOF to ensure the Australian VET system is high-performing and readily supports student and industry needs.

The updated TPOF provides specific guidance to all projects that may result in changes to any training products. This includes the *2026 Corrections Workforce Insights Report*, where the TPOF provides guidance on best practice development and approval of VET training products for proposed strategies, such as *Collaboration with HumanAbility to analyse recent updates to the CHC Community Services Training Package to identify contemporary practice that could inform future updates to the Community Corrections specialisations in the officers Certificate III and Certificate IV in Correctional Practice*.

Five Pillars of Productivity Inquiries – Final Reports

Productivity Commission

2025 – ongoing

The Productivity Commission has provided 47 recommendations across 'five pillars' of productivity policy:

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

At the time of drafting this report, the Australian Government is yet to provide response to the recommendations.

The recommendations of this report provided important context for developing stakeholder engagement material for the *2026 Corrections Workforce Insights Report*. Public Skills Australia substantially engaged with pillar two, building a skilled and adaptable workforce, and will continue to monitor the progress of these recommendations for future work.

Opportunity and Productivity: Towards a Tertiary Harmonisation Roadmap Report

Jobs and Skills Australia

2025 – ongoing

This report seeks to articulate the benefits of a more harmonised tertiary sector and provides recommendations on how to create a sustainable pathway forward in collaboration with key stakeholders. It outlines 19 key recommendations, across three categories (enabling the tertiary harmonisation roadmap, early priorities for the roadmap and medium-term horizon roadmap priorities) to work towards a harmonised system that can tackle national challenges, address skilled workforce shortages and improve productivity.

The report has provided insightful recommendations which have been utilised in stakeholder engagement for the development of the proposed project, *Collaboration with HumanAbility to analyse recent updates to the CHC Community Services Training Package to identify contemporary practice that could inform future updates to the Community Corrections specialisations in the officers Certificate III and Certificate IV in Correctional Practice*, which aims at addressing skilled workforce shortages in community corrections services through the analysis of recent training package updates.

Gender Economic Equality Study

Jobs and Skills Australia

2025 – ongoing

The Gender Economic Equality Study explored three challenges for the jobs and skills systems that contribute to gender economic inequality:

- › occupational segregation
- › pay gaps and gendered divides in education
- › training and skills systems

The study was reported over three papers, with the third and final paper *Speeding up progress towards gender economic equality* being released in October 2025. This paper sets out 10 recommendations to address challenges in the jobs and skills system that perpetuate inequality and impact productivity:

1. Deliver a three-year 'Shifting the Dial on Gender Segregation' action and evaluation agenda
2. Introduce early career learning into schools to intervene earlier in gendered study choices
3. Embed gender targets and reporting across future National Skills Agreements
4. Coordinate national action to reduce gender segregation in VET pathways for shortage occupations
5. Support First Nation women through a standalone economy-wide plan
6. Accelerate inclusive, safe and respectful workplaces and training settings
7. Normalise men's participation in paid and unpaid care work
8. Adopt the Gender Segregation Intensity Scale (GSIS) to guide and measure progress
9. Further address gender bias in labour market and skills frameworks
10. Expand research, data and intersectional analysis to strengthen accountability

The recommendations of the paper have provided strategic and important goals for Public Skills Australia to work toward, and have been influential in projects undertaken in 2025-2026, such as the *Workforce Lifecycle Project*, by providing context on priority cohorts to improve gender equality across the jobs and skills systems.

Occupational Shortage List

Jobs and Skills Australia

Ongoing

The Occupational Shortage List (OSL), which was formerly the Skills Priority List, offers an annual point-in-time review of the status of Australian occupations. Specifically, the OSL reports on whether occupations (at the 4-digit and 6-digit ANZSCO level and the 6-digit OSCA level) are experiencing shortages nationally and for each State and Territory in regional or metropolitan areas.

The OSL was last updated in 2025. The latest list differed from previous iterations due to the fact that in 2024 the ANZSCO classification framework for occupations was replaced with the OSCA framework. In terms of the 2025 OSL results, it was reported that 29 per cent of occupations (293 out of 1022 assessed) were in national shortage, which was 4 per cent lower than 2024 (33 per cent) and more than 7 per cent lower than 2023 (36 per cent). The OSL in 2025 also added 29 occupations newly in shortage compared to 2024, most of which were roles related to health, science, technicians and trades and machinery operators and drivers. As at February 2026, JSA had started the 2026 OSL survey but it had not yet confirmed a publication date for this year's list.

The OSL provided important context for stakeholder consultation preparation for the *2026 Corrections Workforce Insights Report*. This list indicates, on a national level, where specific occupation gaps currently exist and enabled Public Skills Australia to pursue engagements with Correctional Services stakeholders on whether these demands exist within their contexts.

2027 and Beyond

Public Skills Australia has built on the *2024 Workforce Plans* and the *2025 Correctional Services Workforce Insights Report* in the development and delivery of the *2026 Correctional Services Insights Report*. These reports continue to be the strategic centrepiece guiding annual Business Plans for Public Skills Australia, alongside Ministerial, industry-sector and other priorities (e.g. Royal Commissions and Inquiries).

The *2027 Workforce Insights Reports* will firstly focus on the broader priorities detailed below and may be delivered throughout 2026-27:

- › Inclusion and participation of First Nations people, women and other genders in the Public Safety and Government workforces.
- › The use of AI and digital transformation and the impact of these technologies on the Public Safety and Government workforces.

Additionally, the *2027 Workforce Insights Reports* will focus on any other emerging priorities impacting the Correctional Services industry-sector, including:

- › Workforce training, recruitment and retention in rural regional and remote areas.
- › Language, Literacy, Numeracy and Digital (LLND) skills support in training the Correctional Services workforce.

Beyond these focused lines of inquiry, the *2027 Workforce Insights Reports* will seek to examine the impact of the Drivers of Change identified in this year's reports on our industry-sector workforces.

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

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

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

2026 CORRECTIONAL SERVICES
WORKFORCE INSIGHTS REPORT



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